

What about the economy, stupid?

Winning strategy, favourable breeding grounds and internal divisions:
the German populist radical right AfD in its European context

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Summary in Brief

After only two years as a “single issue Eurosceptic party” (Taggart, 1998, p. 368), the AfD developed into a full-fledged member of the European populist radical right party family. Clearly, the party has radicalized in the cultural dimension, appeals to voters who want to flag out their anti-establishment protest, and the intensified refugee immigration to Germany has additionally catalysed its electoral success. On the contrary and typical for the literature on European populist radical right parties, the role that the economic dimension played in the rise of the party family’s German offshoot remains largely in the dark. This dissertation confirms that as for many European populist radical right parties, also for the AfD, the economic dimension is “secondary” (Mudde, 2007, p. 119). However, the empirical analyses also reveal that the AfD employs its subordinate issue strategically in line with the political opportunity structure and its electorate’s demands. The party’s anti-statist (ordo-)liberal economic positioning matches the preferences of even the deprived layers of its electorate – an exception within the European party family – and constitutes an important pillar for the party’s electoral success. What is more, the AfD successfully plants its seed in economically distressed regions and municipalities that are disappointed by poor public services. The party lights up the narratives of undeserving immigrants, widely shared in the German society and tabloid press. In fact, all over Europe different varieties of welfare chauvinism encroach upon economically left-leaning groups of voters. Due to their opposing economic policy demands, the AfD has not yet found its way into these electoral layers, however, increasing welfare chauvinist policy proposals signal first rapprochements. In the end, the unique German populist radical right’s economic policy outline allows a glimpse on the potential dividing lines within the highly diverse European group of parties. The AfD’s most recent demand for ‘Dexit’, the German exit from the European Union, shows the difficulties to hold together the populist radical right party family: Not only does the AfD oppose the loss of German sovereignty, but its nativist core ideology also bars the party from contributing billions of German tax money to other (mostly Eastern and Southern European) countries. Fierce disputes within the party family over economic policies and the distribution of EU funding are the price for a rigid nativism and the room to manoeuvre European populist radical right parties maintained in their secondary dimension: economics.

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List of Abbreviations

AfD	Alternative für Deutschland
BA	Employment Agency
BDI	Federation of German Industries
BU	Banking Union
CHES	Chapel Hill Expert Survey
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union
CMU	Capital Markets Union
CSU	Christlich Soziale Union
DPMA	German Patent and Trademark Office
DPP	Danish People's Party
DVU	Deutsche Volksunion
ECB	European Central Bank
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists
EFA	European Free Alliance
EFDD	Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy
ENF	Europe of Nations and Freedom
EP	European Parliament
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Fund
ESM	European Stability Mechanism
ESS	European Social Survey
ESSM	European Single Supervisory Mechanism
EU	European Union
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei
FN	Front National

FPÖ	Austrian Freedom Party
FrP	Norwegian Progress Party
GLES	German Longitudinal Election Study
GKV	Statutory Health Insurance
INKAR	Indikator und Karten zur Raum- und Stadtentwicklung
IW	German Economic Institute
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
NLD	New Liberal Dilemma
NPD	Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
PiS	Law and Justice
PRRP	Populist Radical Right Party
SentiWS	SentimentWortschatz
SOEP	Socio-Economic Panel
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland
SRSP	Structural Reform Support Programme
SVP	Swiss People's Party
UBI	Universal Basic Income
UKIP	UK Independence Party

Acknowledgements

The idea for this dissertation project's research agenda was sparked several years before I started writing the first words of my first contribution in 2018. The *Alternative für Deutschland* was still in a fledging stage and its mutation into Germany's leading post-WWII populist radical right party successful on the federal-level was still a long way off. Still, the astonished German public speculated about the socio-economic structure of the party's electorate and the economic motives behind its first electoral achievements. With my colleagues at the German Economic Institute, *Dr. Judith Niehues* and *Dr. Knut Bergmann*, we decided to dive headfirst into an empirical journey into the issue with the goal of setting straight misleading facts widely shared in the public. Despite my fascination for the debate on the economics of populism, the AfD's multiple chameleonic shifts soon let me hit the wall of my unidimensional perspectives as an economist. The sprawling confusion nourished the idea that only a more interdisciplinary perspective would enable a thorough understanding of the party's strategy, its electorate, and its breeding grounds. I approached *Prof. Dr. Karl-Rudolf Korte* with a respective exposé and was kindly received with open arms to kick off a Ph.D. in political sciences. While *Prof. Dr. Karl-Rudolf Korte* allowed me all possible freedoms to pursue my research agenda, he offered his inexhaustible knowledge on German parties and German democracy whenever advice and guidance was needed. Among the many scholars, whom I discussed my ideas and hypotheses with and who influenced this dissertation, it is these three that I like to express my appreciation the most.

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Thank you.

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PART I: Introductory remarks

1. Economic policy: The populist radical right's stepchild

The populist radical right is on the rise in Europe. Since Cas Mudde's observation in 2013 that "in electoral terms it is the most successful new European party family since the end of the Second World War" (2013, p. 4), European populist radical right parties (PRRPs) have achieved several notable successes: In the United Kingdom, *UKIP* (today: *Brexit Party*) leader Nigel Farage fuelled the Brexit campaign leading the UK out of the European Union. In Italy, *Lega Norte* (today *Lega*) managed to temporarily form a government, putting party leader Matteo Salvini and the immigration issue on the daily political and media agenda. In France, *Front National* (FN, today: *Rassemblement National*) leader Marine Le Pen lost to Emmanuel Macron only in the final round of the 2017 presidential elections, threatening the established parties with her run for the following term. In Eastern Europe, the governments in Hungary and Poland held their countries in a firm grip, even proclaiming a transformation into "illiberal democracy" (Sata and Karolewski, 2020, p. 206). It is these side effects that Wolfgang Merkel has in mind when he registers "critical tendencies in the political system [...] if anti-system and right-wing populist parties gain in strength" (2018, p.9).

The burgeoning literature that developed around the rise of these newly founded parties quickly made an important point to distinguish the *New Right* from "traditional" (Ignazi, 1997, p. 54) (neo-)fascist parties. Despite their common anti-pluralist taste for 'illiberalism', as well as their anti-immigration stances, and extreme cultural positionings, it is a constituting feature of 'New Right' parties that they do not oppose democracy or even 'foreign' cultures as such (Mudde, 2007).

In Germany, the year 2013 saw the foundation of a new political competitor, the *Alternative für Deutschland* (*AfD*). Within only a couple of years, the *AfD* mutated into a populist radical right party and constituted the electorally most successful political entrepreneur since the foundation of the German *Green Party* during the 1980s. In the blink of an eye, "German exceptionalism" (Rachmann, 2017) – the absence of a notable radical right-wing force on the federal-level – ended and only shortly before published articles, asking "Why a right-wing populist party emerged in France but not in Germany?" (Bornschiefer, 2012, p. 121), became obsolete. In fact, the 'representational gap' in the cultural dimension that was opened by the transition of the traditional representatives on the German political right, the conservative *CDU/CSU*, to a "mild conservatism" (own translation, Korte, 2008, p. 8) was soon occupied by the new *Alternative*.

Typically for a populist radical right competitor, extreme anti-immigration positionings and rhetoric became its poster child and unique selling point (Lewandowsky, 2015; Ceyhan, 2016; Franzmann,

2016a). In this context, with the stark increase in refugee migration to Western Europe and Germany in 2015 and 2016, it becomes comprehensible that the increasing support for the radical right all over Europe (Davis and Deole, 2017; Steinmayr, 2017), was interpreted as “a gift” (own translation, Gauland quoted in Spiegel Online, 2015) to the *AfD* official Alexander Gauland.

More generally, Philip Manow’s (2018) influential contribution understands the rise of the European ‘New Right’ as a backlash against globalization that in Western Europe (and particularly Germany) appears as a backlash against ‘unlimited’ immigration. The newly arrived immigrants in combination with improving election results for the populist radical right triggered an ongoing and profound scholarly debate around the question if actual ‘exposure’ to refugees provokes voters to shift to the right (Barone et al., 2016; Becker and Fetzer, 2016; Dustmann, 2019; Steinmayr, 2021).¹ In Eastern Germany where the population share of foreigners used to be traditionally low and the influx possibly crossed the perception threshold, the physical presence of refugees in specific towns bore no explanatory power at all for the strong *AfD* election results in the region (Schaub et al., 2021). In the same vein, but more generally, Andreas Steinmayr (2017) concludes that “refugee migration may impact support for far-right parties on the one hand through factors that only vary over time, but little over smaller geographical areas (macro-level)” (p. 26). Accordingly, in Germany the massive increase in the immigration issue’s salience in 2015 activated anti-immigration sentiment that then motivated people at the ballots to pick the new party on the far right, independent of personal encounters of any sorts with foreigners (Schaub et al., 2021). Also, for *AfD* support after its radicalization there was little controversy about the importance of anti-immigration sentiment on the micro-level (Dilling, 2018; Arzheimer and Berning, 2019; Hansen and Olsen, 2019), seconding the finding that anti-immigration sentiment is the single most important factor in explaining support for the European populist radical right (Norris, 2005; Ivarsflaten, 2008; Arzheimer, 2009b, 2018). Finally, the dominance of the immigration issue, largely explaining the success of the European party family, has manifold yielded populist radical right parties the brand “anti-immigrant” (Gibson, 2002; Arzheimer, 2013, p. 75) – a label that was also quickly expanded to the *AfD* (Decker, 2015, p. 29).

On the anti-immigration end – or broader in the overall socio-cultural dimension – the literature that revolved around the electoral success of the radical populist right is very conclusive and this synopsis gladly builds on the consistent findings. The starting point of the following analyses, however, is the understanding that the populist radical right party family and therefore also the *AfD* need to be understood as a “multifaceted phenomenon” (Arzheimer, 2018, p. 159) that cannot simply be reduced to isolated questions of identity, authoritarianism, and immigration. In fact, the extensive literature

¹ See Allport’s (1954) ‘contact hypothesis’ for the counterargument that actual contact with immigrants might mitigate anti-immigration sentiment.

following Mudde (2007) classifies the traditional core of European party competition, the economic dimension, as merely “secondary” (Mudde, 2007, p. 119) for the populist radical right’s success. Whereas, given the all-dominant role of immigration and culture this understanding is comprehensible, it cannot hide the unique feature such a setting entails for an entire party family: ‘freedom’ in a major dimension of party competition. Since economic policy does not constitute the populist radical right’s primary dimension and is not even covered by its core ideology, members of the party family own the structural advantage of ample room to manoeuvre in economic and welfare state questions. Finally, the ex-ante ambiguity of the economic dimension makes comparative analysis cumbersome, but an equally fascinating route to follow up on.

On the supply side, Elias et al. (2015) line out the flexibility of strategical options, the populist radical right discovers in party competition over culture and economics. Those range from *uni-dimensionally* operating in the cultural dimension and particularly in the immigration issue, to *blurring* the economic dimension altogether, or *subsuming* economic positions under the cultural attic. Finally, the traditional *two-dimensional* strategy can also be a route to take, depending on the political opportunity structure and, importantly, on the characteristics of the electorate. Even if a populist radical right party chooses to take a pronounced stance in the economic dimension, however, these positionings vary significantly (Otjes et al., 2018). It is up to the respective party *how* an economic positioning is fleshed out *if* it decided to take up one in the first place.

On the demand side, the radical right has come a long way since its origins as the exclusive representative of small shop owners and oftentimes attracts large and increasing shares of the working class (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Arzheimer, 2013). Drawing on different societal strata or targeting very specific socio-demographic layers, a comparative analysis of the populist radical right supporters’ socio-economic characteristics reveals very few similarities (Rooduijn, 2018). Famously, Mudde (2007) concludes: “the hunt is on for *the* populist radical right voter, even though empirical studies of the electorate of these parties have shown *he* does not exist” (italics in original, p. 225). Since the European populist radical right has supplied a wide variety of economic policy platforms, electorates have been not only heterogeneous within but also between parties. Regarding their economic policy preferences, common ground can be found where the economic dimension is intermingled with the cultural core identity (Abts et al., 2021). The prime example of such a combination is welfare chauvinism, the structural discrimination of immigrants in the welfare state. Manow (2018) even argues that the equal treatment of immigrants and natives in the German social benefits system mobilized a significant protest against established parties who formed and supported the status quo of the welfare state.

In the contextual dimension, the claim prevails that economic crises and more specifically “places that don’t matter” (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018, p. 189) provided favourable breeding grounds for the populist

radical right. Since for many party family members the economic dimension rode on the cultural core identity's coattail it is rather unclear why economic distress would per se boosted populist radical right election results at first sight. The inroad for this widely shared assumption is disenchantment: If people felt 'left-behind' *because* they perceived politicians misrepresented their interest, they might have well blamed the establishment for economic distress or even an economic crisis at their doorstep. In this sense a (perceived) economic crisis in combination with a (perceived) crisis of representation can easily spill over into a "crisis of democracy" (Merkel, 2018, p. 1). Nevertheless, in times of economic crisis scholars stress the importance of competition with parties mobilizing similarly through disenchantment on the political left (Ramiro, 2016).

The following synopsis looks at the populist radical right in the economic dimension from a supply side, demand side, and contextual perspective. The first goal is to assess the way the economic dimension is employed by the new party family member from Germany, the *Alternative für Deutschland*, from this threefold angle:

- *Which economic policy platforms – if any – does the party bring forward on the supply side? Which economic policy preferences does its electorate hold on the demand side?*
- *Which – if any – role does economic policy play for the party's electoral successes?*
- *What are favourable contextual and 'attitudinal breeding grounds' for the party to plant its seed?*

Second, the present synopsis intends to uncover the roots and implications of welfare chauvinism, the single common European populist radical right economic policy:

- *Which actors in the public debate reiterate the strong and prevailing narrative, maligning immigrants' deservingness in the welfare state?*
- *What are the consequences of the widespread support for welfare chauvinism within a traditionally left-leaning electorate for the populist radical right's potential electoral expansions?*

Finally, the synopsis turns to the divisive potential divergent economic positions may develop for political projects and policy congruence:

- *What is the dividing potential of economic policy for the European populist radical right?*

The five contributions summarized in this synopsis (see Table 1 for an overview) second the notion that the success of European PRRPs is rooted in the cultural dimension, and the economic dimension is indeed "secondary" (Mudde, 2007, p. 119). However, focussing on the German PRRP shooting star *AfD*, this dissertation strictly opposes the post-Mudde (2007) silence on the relationship between the

populist radical right and the economic dimension. The findings rather stress the importance of country-specific political opportunity structures, the special (socio-economic) characteristics of the electorate, and local economic 'breeding grounds'. Although successful European PRRPs share few similarities in their economic policy strategies, their economic agenda still follows an inherent logic. Freedom to pick a country-appropriate economic policy, however, hinders European wide cooperation in the face of divergent national economic interests – despite all commonalities among the European populist radical right in the cultural dimension. The interpretation that nativism bears an inherent dividing potential provides an insightful theoretical derivation from this finding. Exceptionally in Europe, the German *AfD*'s 'winning formula' includes anti-statist (ordo-)liberal economic policies that match even the 'proletarianised' layers of its electorate, and the party's electoral successes increase with the degree of regional economic distress. Hence, sound place-based economic strategies for 'left-behind' regions, in contrast to far-reaching redistribution schemes, are promising avenues for established parties to challenge its new competitor. Since the *AfD* builds its cultural agenda on the economic denigration of immigrants as 'welfare scrounger' who put a strain on the welfare state, additionally, established parties need to question the deep-rooted narratives around immigrants' undeservingness in the society and media. The fact that welfare chauvinism is present all over Europe and even in large parts of economically left-leaning voters discloses PRRPs' possible inroads into established parties' electorates. In Germany, the *AfD*'s (ordo-)liberal grounding has until today prevented such a strategy, however, stronger demands for immigrants-only reciprocity barriers for welfare access are a probable cherry on the cake of its future 'winning formula'.

The different contributions apply a considerable mix of up-to-date econometrics and draw on a wide variety of different data sources. Zooming in on the *AfD* electorate, and its relationship to the supplied policy platforms, individual-level logistic regressions are employed to construct predictive margins logistic regression plots. To investigate the *AfD*'s success in a small-area study, a geo-referenced dataset is compiled from partly unstructured data. Maximum likelihood spatial simultaneous autoregressive error models confirm the baseline regressions in robustness checks. The low positioning of societal groups in the deservingness hierarchy conveyed by media welfare state coverage is analysed through a mixture between a dictionary based quantitative sentiment analysis and a qualitative narrative analysis. Individual-level multi-nominal logistic regression models with country fixed effects and multi-level random slope regressions are employed to pin down contradictory welfare conditioning. Finally, a cross-factional policy Congruence Index is designed to identify the characteristics of radical right voting behaviour in the European Parliament (EP).

To develop this far-reaching and multilayered research agenda, the remainder of this synopsis is structured as follows. *Part II* is initiated by a chapter that clarifies and defines the relevant concepts

that are deployed throughout the contributions. A separate chapter provides a detailed literature review on the European populist radical right – and more specifically the German *AfD* – in the economic dimension. Seconding the structure introduced in the introductory remarks, the rundown of the evolution of the field is split into supply side, demand side and context. *Part III* focuses on the rise of the German populist radical right party and contains two chapters, presenting the empirical puzzle, method, and data, as well as the results of the first and second contribution, respectively. The first contribution (“The *AfD*’s winning formula – no need for economic strategy blurring in Germany”) brings together the *AfD*’s supply and demand side, the second contribution (“The more the better? Political implications of the diverging supply of public services in Germany”) zooms in on contextual characteristics that go along with the party’s electoral success. *Part IV* focuses on welfare chauvinism as the populist radical right’s single most important common ‘attitudinal breeding ground’. One chapter summarizes the third contribution (“Bild-Online’s inequality headlines – a mouthpiece of the deservingness hierarchy?”) that focuses on the role of German tabloid media in reproducing the typical populist radical right views on the welfare state; another chapter, introducing the fourth contribution (“Contradictory welfare conditioning – differing welfare support for natives versus immigrants”), touches on the remarkable diffusion of welfare chauvinism far beyond the European populist radical right’s core electorate. *Part V* contains a summary of the fifth and final contribution (“The more the better? Political implications of the diverging supply of public services in Germany”) that researches the dividing potential of the divergent economic policy approaches within the European populist radical right. *Part VI* concludes by summarizing the contribution, by deriving the key lessons to draw from the synopsis, and by providing an outlook that specifically reflects the implications of *the* political and economic incident all-dominant during the coming years: the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 1: Overview of contributions

<i>First Contribution: “The AfD’s winning formula – no need for economic strategy blurring in Germany”</i>	
<i>Research question</i>	How has the <i>Alternative für Deutschland</i> ’s economic policy addressed its electorate’s challenging socio-economic structure?
<i>Method and data</i>	Combination of economic policy supply (Chapel Hill Expert Survey) and demand, socio-economic characteristics, and common attitudes (German Longitudinal Election Study) in individual-level logistic regression models (<i>AfD</i> support as the dependent variable). Compilation of predictive margins logistic regression plots for a comparison of the perceived supporter-party distance in the economic and cultural dimension over time.

<i>Results</i>	Despite its 'mild proletarianisation', <i>AfD</i> supporters are united in their opposition to state interventions and redistribution. The <i>AfD</i> 's economic policy supply matches these preferences well. (Ordo-)liberal policy preferences in combination with below average incomes constitute an exception among European PRRPs. All in all, the <i>AfD</i> 's comprehensive 'winning formula' consists of an emphasized cultural right anti-immigration positioning and an opposition to the political establishment in combination with a less emphasized anti-redistribution positioning.
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Second Contribution: "*The more the better? Political implications of the diverging supply of public services in Germany*"

<i>Research question</i>	Does a less intense public good supply in rural Germany go along with an alienation of the population from established parties, finally triggering a turn to the <i>AfD</i> ?
<i>Method and data</i>	Compilation of a rich geo-referenced dataset on the municipal-level, including a Public Services Index in the dimensions medical, transport, digital, and educational infrastructure mainly from INKAR and several unstructured data sources. Population weighted OLS regression models, complemented with rural subsample regressions (<i>AfD</i> election outcome as dependent variable). Maximum likelihood spatial simultaneous autoregressive error models as robustness checks.
<i>Results</i>	Infrastructure upgrading in rural areas does not constitute the anticipated silver bullet against German PRRPs successes. Comparatively poor infrastructure correlates with strong <i>AfD</i> election results particularly in middle-sized towns. A prosperous labour market in combination with a future oriented economy are key for established parties to battle the populist radical right

Third Contribution: "*Bild-Online's inequality headlines – a mouthpiece of the deservingness hierarchy?*"

<i>Research question</i>	Does the German media coverage reproduce the widely shared deservingness hierarchy, displaying immigrants and unemployed as undeserving?
<i>Method and data</i>	SentimentWortschatz (SentiWS) dictionary-based sentiment analysis of 838 Bild-Online articles on the old, the sick, the unemployed, and the immigrants in the context of the welfare state. Qualitative rating of articles and narrative analysis of the conveyed group specific deservingness.
<i>Results</i>	Bild-Online mirrors and catalyses the deeply rooted welfare deservingness hierarchy of the German society. Whereas the old and the sick are portrayed as overly deserving, the unemployed and the immigrants from Eastern Europe are defamed as 'welfare scroungers', reflecting the popular <i>welfare populism</i> as well as <i>welfare chauvinism</i> . Refugees, on the other hand, are described positive as 'highly motivated' and 'honest', despite the costs for the welfare state that they are expected to cause.

Fourth Contribution: “*Contradictory welfare conditioning – differing welfare support for natives versus immigrants*”

<i>Research question</i>	Why do even people who favour a highly redistributive welfare state support conditions on immigrants’ welfare access?
<i>Method and data</i>	Identification of contradictory welfare conditioning. Individual-level multinomial logistic regression models with country fixed effects based on supporters of Universal Basic Income (UBI) in the European Social Survey (ESS) (Chauvinism Index as dependent variable). Multi-level random slope regression models, including several macroeconomic controls as a robustness check.
<i>Results</i>	The ‘New Liberal Dilemma’ (NLD) needs a novel perspective. Deeply rooted welfare chauvinism even among traditional left-leaning voters opens an electoral potential for many European PRRPs. Whereas <i>extreme welfare chauvinists</i> seem to be lost for established parties, there are ways to prevent a turn to the right of the larger group of <i>reciprocity chauvinists</i> .

Fifth Contribution: “*One for one and none for all – the radical right in the European Parliament*”

<i>Research question</i>	Does European PRRPs’ economic nativism limit the party family in unfolding their joint political muscles?
<i>Method and data</i>	Analysis of radical right roll call voting of 293 votes in the European Parliament’s legislative period between 2014 and 2019. Compilation of a policy Congruence Index that measures party family divisions in economic topics as well as regarding the authoritarian regimes Russia and China.
<i>Results</i>	In any topic under analysis, the radical right constitutes by far the most divided party family. The nativist core ideology might unite the party family in cultural questions, in economic issues parties rather claim the stakes for their own countries. Even regarding their foreign authoritarian brothers in arms from Russia and China, the radical right fails to find common ground. The party family is particularly divided between Western Europeans, who favour cooperation with Russia but neglect the funding of EU investment projects and Eastern Europeans, who intend to exploit EU funding and endorse investments from China.

PART II: European PRRPs – what about the economy, stupid?

2. Clarification of relevant concepts

Before discussing the recent development of the German populist right in the context of its party family, its economic policy supply and demand as well as its ‘breeding grounds’, it is important to clarify several key concepts. The following chapter only provides a short literature overview over essential definitions applied throughout the course of this synopsis. First, the *populist radical right party* family is defined ideologically to serve as a reference point for the common ground that the parties start from. Second, the relationship between PRRPs and their opposition to the European Union is discussed. This topic turns out to be of particular importance to understand the recent evolution of the German ‘New Right’. Third, the foundation of anti-immigration based economic policies, the welfare state deservingness hierarchy present in most European societies, is introduced. Fourth, and building up on the low deservingness of immigrants in European welfare states, *welfare chauvinism*, the main undisputed similarity of PRRPs economic policy supply and demand is discussed.

2.1 Defining the populist radical right party family: An ideology-based approach

Although since the 1990s the radical right represents by far the most researched party family (Mudde, 2016), the boundaries of the right-wing group of parties has oftentimes been vague and inconclusive: *Radical right* (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995; Rydgren, 2018a), *extreme right* (Hainsworth, 2000), *right-wing extremist* (Beyme, 1985), or *far right* (Golder, 2016) are the most common among a plethora of unclear generic terms that try to ringfence the heterogeneous group of parties. All definitions share the intention to clearly distinguish the ‘New Right’ from ‘old’ fascist parties. The most convincing theoretical concept aimed at clearly defining a ‘New Right’ European party family for comparative analysis is developed in Mudde’s (2007) now classic monograph which dubs the party family *populist radical right*.

As a minimum party family definition, Mudde (2007) specifies his understanding of a nativist core ideology. Based on the *nouvelle droite*’s notion of *ethnopluralism* (De Benoist, 1985) – namely that every culture is equally unique and valuable as long as it remains pure –², nativism is understood as a combination of nationalism and xenophobia. On the one hand, nationalism as described by Ernest Gellner (1983) is a political doctrine aimed at building up a monocultural nation state and combines *state nationalism* (territorially based) as well as *ethnic nationalism* (racially based). On the other hand, a xenophobic ideology inherently considers non-natives and non-native culture as a threat to the nation state’s homogeneity. Hence, defining nativism culturally, as a combination of nationalism and

² This sort of ethnopluralism was coined “differentialist nativism” by Betz (2003, p. 195) and crucially differs from biologically based racism or even the notion of cultural superiority that prevailed among classical fascist or neo-fascist parties.

xenophobia, establishes a differentiated in-group based on ethnicity, race, religion, or any other characteristic that could possibly carry cultural traits. Again, it needs to be clarified that PRRPs' nativist ideology does not entail in-group superiority over the out-group per se, but 'only' due to the latter's threat that comes from the presence in the former's home country.

As a second characteristic to PRRPs' ideology, Mudde (2007) adds *authoritarianism*. Based on Bob Altemeyer's (1981) interpretation of the Frankfurter Schule's *authoritarian personality*, originally developed by Theodor Adorno et al. (1969), an authoritarian ideology clearly applies double standards. It draws on a moral impetus from uncritical in-group submission and far-reaching out-group aggression. Through this lens, ideological authoritarianism is not inevitably understood as anti-democratic nor ethnocentric, but certainly as highly supportive of strictly enforced 'illiberal' 'law and order' politics that prevent violations of a conservative way of life.

Finally, Mudde (2007) understands PRRPs to pertain a *populist* ideology that splits the society into the established 'corrupt elite' and the 'pure people'. Since the former putatively ignores the latter's interests, PRRPs feel legitimized to step in and enforce the people's *volonté générale* politically. Hence, demanding the introduction of or the increased respect for plebiscitary politics constitutes a common populist manifesto claim. Morally, the 'people's will', once revealed, stands above any other stakeholders' possible claims until finally legitimizing politics without any sort of juridical or moral guardrails.

Such a definition understands PRRPs as *radical* in the sense that they fundamentally oppose specific aspects of the liberal democracy. Namely, those that try to protect minorities and to politically represent the society in its plurality. PRRPs are categorized as *right* in the sense that inequalities are understood to follow a natural order. Thus, the phrase *radical right* describes the parties' nativist illiberal ideological stance; naming it *populist* adds an additional characteristic to describe its anti-establishment appeal. Populism in itself is considered a "thin-centred-ideology" (Mudde, 2004, p. 544) that only operates through another full-fledged ideology. Whereas in the case of PRRPs the accompanying ideology is nativism, other varieties of populism evolve around entirely different ideological stances (La Torre, 2019).

In contrast to former analyses that are further discussed in Chapter 3.1, such a definition explicitly excludes any sort of a party family overreaching economic policy agenda that Mudde (2007, chapter 5) considers at best as "secondary" (p. 119). In fact, PRRP's common ground in the ideological driving seat are found to be a nativism that sharply divides the world into an in-group and an out-group on a cultural line. Adopting the described conception of the populist radical right, illustrates why immigrants, the elite, as well as societal groups with a pluralist, universalist, or individualist agenda

face PRRPs' fierce hatred. In line with Carl Schmitt's (1963) notion that politics is ultimately constituted through a friend-foe distinction, the party family defines its in-group "*ex negativo*" (italics in original, Mudde 2007, p. 64) and by moralistically maligning the out-group (Mudde, 2004). PRRPs are therefore in a desperate need for a salient socio-cultural controversy. The vivid socio-cultural cleavage³ that ran high between supporters of "the silent revolution" (Inglehart, 1977) and "the silent counter-revolution" (Ignazi, 1992) is thus strongly associated with the rise of the populist radical right (Rydgren, 2007). Such a bird's eye view on PRRPs' ideology and the cleavage it capitalizes on explains why the migration issue has played a significant role in shaping PRRPs' positioning and electoral success (Rydgren, 2008b; Arzheimer, 2009a), but in the end, turned out to be one among many radical cornerstones of a broader "identitarian and communitarian ideological turn" (Betz, 2003, p. 195). The 'New Right' party family rallied around a large traditionalist identity flag and constitutes itself as an antithesis to cosmopolitan 'New Left' movements (Bornschieer, 2010).⁴ Kitschelt and McGann's (1995) categorization still holds that PRRPs' core socio-cultural positioning consists of an anti-immigration stance, a focus on cultural traditionalism in combination with a defence of the 'common man's' language, a rejection of environmental movements, and an endorsement of 'law and order' politics.

2.2 Euroscepticism: "Yes to Europe, No to Brussels"⁵

Throughout the decades when 'frozen' European party systems were predominantly organized around salient economic cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967), scholars have found that on the national-level parties' positionings on the European Union (EU) resembled strongly and thus bared little if any persuasive power for their voters (van der Eijck and Franklin, 1991). European Parliament elections, mirrored national elections and were merely secondary in their nature (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Hix and Marsh, 2011).

For observers of the highly polarized post European and Financial Crisis European party scene that quarrels fiercely over European Integration (Hutter and Kriesi, 2019), the finding that the European Union formerly represented a non-issue might come as a surprise. In most European democracies, different party families have long since occupied distinctive positionings of "contingent or qualified opposition, as well as [...] outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration" (Taggart, 1998, p. 366). Critique of the European integration developed into a more general form of *Euroscepticism*, ranging from parties of soft Euroscepticism (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2004) to those

³ In line with the literature on PRRPs discussed in this synopsis, the term cleavage is applied for deeply rooted, and ideologically grounded societal divisions that align specific groups politically, and not in the tighter understanding of Bartolini and Mair (1990).

⁴ See Zürn and Wilde (2016) for a current summary of the ideological polarization between cosmopolitanism and communitarianism.

⁵ Mudde (2007, p. 168) quotes this slogan from the Spanish *Democracia Nacional*. In slightly modified versions the pro-Europe anti-EU theme has become the battle cry of PRRPs on Europe and the EU.

whose “very raison d’être is opposition to the EU” (Taggart, 1998, p. 368). The latter apply Euroscepticism in its purest manifestation and form a group of “single issue Eurosceptic parties” (Taggart, 1998, p. 368).

Students of the European populist radical right have carved out the *Maastricht Treaty* as the line of demarcation that triggered a turnaround in both the salience of and party positioning in the European issue (Harmsen and Spiering, 2004; Mudde, 2007). With the path paved for a ‘bicycle like’ European integration process,⁶ formerly Euroenthusiastic key members of the PRRP party family, including the French *Front National*, defected and henceforward attacked the European Union. In their eyes, the EU constituted an elitist, universalist, and multiculturalist body that presumably turned into a vital threat to the in-group, the party had sworn to protect. Ultimately, the perils of a European *federation*, including an intensified transfer of competencies from national to trans-national-level, as well as the dissolution of borders, triggering uncontrolled numbers of immigration, emerged to be ideologically incompatible with the parties’ nativist core ideology (Mudde, 2007).

Until today, PRRPs endorse the idea of European cooperation, common historically grown cultural (and religious) roots, and the economic profits stemming from a common market, however, they understand Europe as a *confederation* of sovereign nation states (Startin, 2010). This ideal was clearly seen as endangered by the integrationist developments within the European Union. Speaking with Mudde (2007), PRRPs common Euroscepticism is marked by the opposition between a general Europhilia, in combination with a strong disdain for the EU as a competitor to the nation state.

In general, Euroscepticism is not limited to but natural for the political right as it “comes at no ideological costs” (Vasilopoulou, 2018, p. 126). Although their nativism generally divides PRRPs (Fieschi, 2000), their common opposition to European integration, in combination with a tactical necessity to cooperate, binds the party family together (Startin, 2010). Strategically, Euroscepticism turned out to be highly convenient for PRRPs as established parties showed little interest in prominently addressing questions of European integration and left a wide ‘representational gap’ for competitors (Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2015). Such a setting represented a favourable political opportunity structure for the introduction of the new cleavage to the political arena and particularly small PRRPs intended to seize issue ownership, rallying around the unrepresented Euroskeptical views within the electorate (Vasilopoulou, 2018).

Rising tensions among EU member countries during the sovereign debt crisis additionally boosted the EU issue’s salience, when North-Western financed bail-out packages resulted in harshly enforced

⁶ Jacques Delors introduced the bicycle metaphor to argue for an ‘ever closer union’ of European nations. Similar to a bicycle that presumably has to be kept moving to prevent a fall, it was argued that a deceleration of the European Union’s integration would destroy the entire European project (Emerson, 1998).

austerity measures in the South (Kriesi and Grande, 2016). Accordingly, PRRPs in Northern or Western member states particularly capitalised on the rising Euroscepticism. These parties kept stressing the downsides of European solidarity and the risks of a putatively looming ‘transfer union’ for their countries’ state finances (Hutter and Kriesi, 2019). The extreme stances that Eurosceptic parties took on the European issue in a crisis-torn and polarized environment then again triggered a stronger overall issue salience (Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2015) and made Euroscepticism key to several PRRPs’ positionings (Vasilopoulou, 2018).

2.3 Deservingness hierarchy: “Who should get what and why?”⁷

The welfare state – understood as a crucial institution “predominantly preoccupied with the production and distribution of social well-being” (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 1) – is one of the most disputed issues of the political economy and can be traced back to Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967) famous class cleavage that has shaped today’s party systems over decades (Mair, 1997). In many capitalist democracies, voters’ preferences and parties’ positionings still range from an extreme rejection of state interventions by economic libertarians to a fundamental endorsement of the state by Keynesians and socialists.⁸

Nevertheless, the historically grown and country specific organization of the welfare state is much more complex than the unidimensional question of more or less redistribution. In fact, welfare states need to fundamentally weigh up different programs and stakeholders. By depicting numerous highly contradictory layers of deservingness, Wim van Oorschot (2000) has made the puzzle of extremely strong preferences for a solidaristic welfare state and the fierce defence of in-group privileges most explicit. When zooming in on different potential groups of ‘the needy’, the multifaceted nature of welfare state support becomes apparent: Redistribution preferences might indeed remain strong, however, only for recipients with very specific characteristics.

Experimental findings from social psychology have long since pointed to the importance of in-group/out-group conflicts as determinants of distributional matters. On the one hand, in-group privileges can be rather motivated by ‘pure’ in-group preferences and less by out-group hostility (Brewer, 1999). On the other hand, rebutting a putative *homo oeconomicus*, which maximizes his individual or his groups’ profits, experiments have revealed that also in randomly assigned groups subjects develop a taste for punishing out-group members – even if such behaviour results in lower in-group profits (Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel et al., 1971). “Maximum in difference” (Tajfel et al., 1971, pp. 101–

⁷ van Oorschot (2000).

⁸ See European Social Survey (<https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>) for party supporters’ preferences and Chapel Hill Expert Survey (<https://www.chesdata.eu/>) for expert judgements on party positionings.

102) between 'us' and 'them' becomes people's uncontested guiding principle once group identity takes centre stage.

Ingesting the ample body of research from social psychology on group identification into the realm of political economy and sociology helps to understand why people evaluate different stakeholders' welfare demands differently. Abram Swaan (1988) dubs the in-group membership "proximity" (p. 16) and stresses the role of kin but also geographic distance to the birthplace. Fay Cook (1979) conceptualizes deservingness of potential welfare recipients to rely on the "pleasantness" (p. 41) in the relationship between providers and receivers of a certain welfare program. Banting et al. (2020) finds that "a sense of shared membership or community" (p. 205) is necessary to foster cohesion in a redistributive welfare state. Finally, van Oorschot (2000) subsumes 'pleasantness' and 'proximity' under "identity" (p. 36), a dimension that is shared among people with an equal set of characteristics and that strongly divides once specific – for example ethnic – markers differ.

In line with theories of intergroup conflict, strongly stigmatized ethnic minorities and immigrants have a long tradition of being perceived as less deserving in the US (Gilens, 1999; Alesina and Glaesner, 2004). The putative contradiction between a multicultural society and an inclusive welfare state has been discussed under the label 'New Liberal Dilemma' (Newton, 2007). The discussion resonates that large numbers of immigrants could gradually weaken support for redistribution (Goodhart, 2004).

In fact, also elaborate empirical studies from European welfare states confirm a persisting degradation of welfare demands on the basis of ethnicity or immigration status (van Oorschot, 2000, 2006): Across the board, foreigners in Western and Eastern European countries alike find themselves by far at the bottom of the deservingness hierarchy and have little if any chances to escape their low deservingness standing (Reeskens and van der Meer, 2019). The unemployed who have also faced a long history of stigmatization come second to last (Furnham, 1982; Furaker and Blomsterberg, 2003). People affected by risks that are "life course-related" (Jensen, 2012, p. 275) rank the highest on the deservingness scale. The most deserving group of needy is represented by the old; closely followed by the sick and disabled. This solidarity rank ordering (the old, the sick, the unemployed, and the immigrants) turns out to be deeply rooted in popular culture – independent of individual socio-economic factors (van Oorschot, 2006).

The described welfare deservingness hierarchy resonates especially among people with right-wing political attitudes (Goldschmidt, 2015) and PRRP supporters (Afonso and Papadopoulos, 2015). These groups also tend to perceive a stronger abuse ('overuse') of such welfare programs (van Oorschot and

Meuleman, 2012).⁹ Hence, the persisting deservingness hierarchy in Western European welfare states plays into the hand of PRRPs and their exclusive ideology: Translated into welfare state policy, the depiction of unemployed “welfare scroungers” (Koster et al., 2013, p. 6), the “welfare queens” (van Oorschot, 2006, p. 26), and “cheaters” (Ivaldi, 2013, p. 8) results in “welfare populist” (Koster et al., 2013, p. 3) positions. Hence, *welfare populism* entails the accusation “that the welfare state does not do what it is supposed to do, that is, supporting the ‘common man’ in need of social assistance” (Koster et al., 2013, p. 15). Policies and policy preferences targeted against the very bottom of the deservingness hierarchy, against ‘the unknown foreign’, or – even more salient – against ‘the unknown foreign’ who carries other negative stigmata of an undeserving out-group earned the name *welfare chauvinism* (Mudde, 2007, 130-132).

2.4 Welfare chauvinism: “Welfare for us but not them”¹⁰

Steadily, ‘Welfare for whom?’ rose to the fundamental question that PRRPs mutually place at the core of their economic policy manifestos (Abts et al., 2021). This development, including the intent to exclude people who do not belong to a culturally, religiously, or ethnically defined in-group entirely, or partly from welfare eligibility, received significant attention from pundits interested in PRRPs’ economic policy platforms. Such policy supply and demand has been described as “conditional solidarity” (van Oorschot, 2000, p. 43), “economic nativism” (Otjes et al., 2018, p. 270), “exclusive solidarity” (Lefkofridi and Michel, 2017, p. 234), or “welfare nativism” (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2018, p. 311). In the end, all these labels describe what Andersen and Bjørklund (1990) in their review of Scandinavian radical right parties’ welfare policy have coined “welfare state chauvinism – the welfare services should be restricted to ‘our own’” (p. 212).

In fact, *welfare chauvinism* as a description of “social closure based on the deservingness criterion of identity” (Abts et al., 2021, p. 21) has become the prevalent caption of a general support for the welfare state, while at the same time arguing for a certain inferiority on non-natives’ claims (Mudde, 2007). Also, ‘natives first’ like “reverse affirmative action” (Rydgren, 2008b, p. 746) can be subsumed under the umbrella of welfare chauvinism. A respective policy agenda can revolve around excluding the out-group *directly* from welfare benefits by arguing for restricted eligibility. An example of such a policy is constituted by the *Front National*, postulating a 20-year residence threshold in France, in order to qualify for minimum pension (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2018). Also, welfare chauvinist policies can work through limiting access *indirectly* through cuts in programs that non-natives rely on most (Careja et al.,

⁹ Roosma et al. (2016) state that welfare recipients’ ‘overusing’ of benefits represents the ‘Achilles heel’ of perceived welfare deservingness despite great general support for welfare programs as such. Furthermore, the individual perception of ‘overuse’ depends strongly on the collective image of welfare recipients in public.

¹⁰ Alesina and Glaesner (2004, p. 134).

2016). An example of such a policy is enacted by the *Danish People's Party (DPP)*, enforcing general cuts in social assistance in Denmark that non-natives rely on disproportionately (Careja et al., 2016).

Due to the populist radical right's ideology laid out in Chapter 2.1, welfare chauvinist policies come natural to PRRPs. On the one hand, welfare chauvinism matches the nativist core ideology and resonates among their potential electorates: Different analyses have revealed an especially low perceived deservingness of immigrants among people holding anti-immigration attitudes (Mewes and Mau, 2012; Alesina et al., 2019). On the other hand, PRRPs – oftentimes from their oppositional backbenches – in line with their populist ideology tend to blame the 'corrupt elite' for dismantling the welfare state (Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2016). As laid out above, this very populist form of welfare positioning that protests against an allegedly misrepresentation of the hard working 'common man' has been named *welfare populism* (Koster et al., 2013, p. 3). The fact that in several European economies, even social democratic parties, have abandoned their unrestrained welfare protection positionings and joined the established consent around pro-Europeanization and pro-globalization positionings, offered PRRPs to engage in a salient welfare-immigration blame game (Lefkofridi and Michel, 2017). Combining populist and nativist policy platforms, PRRPs revolt against welfare cutbacks that concern their 'hard working' native in-group and subsequently demand for specific reciprocity barriers for non-natives or reshuffling welfare directly from immigrants to natives.

What is more, welfare chauvinist economic policies have become more and more popular among populist radical right parties. As discussed further in Chapter 3, many PRRPs only recently endorsed welfare state issues and proposed pro-welfare policy platforms (Lefkofridi and Michel, 2017; Afonso and Renwald, 2018). In general, pro-welfare policy platforms, advocated by the radical right, carry the immanent dilemma for these parties that undeserving non-natives could profit from the respective programs. In this sense, by intermingling the socio-economic and the socio-cultural dimension in welfare chauvinist economic policies (Koster et al., 2013) PRRPs managed to overcome their pro-welfare contradiction in line with their core ideology and exploit the popular (un)deservingness hierarchy (van der Waal et al., 2010).

Having understood the nature of welfare chauvinist policies and their anchors in the underlying deservingness hierarchy, it is important to grasp *how* PRRPs implement their economic policy agenda. In fact, welfare chauvinist policies are based on narrative communicational groundwork, trying to foster the undeservingness of non-natives through repetitive communication campaigns. By and large, Jens Rydgren (2008b) identifies two common and salient welfare chauvinist frames: First, immigrants are constantly demonized as a threat to natives' jobs and unemployment is depicted to follow from high migration numbers. Second, non-natives are portrayed to be attracted by a "welfare magnet" (Borjas, 1999, p. 607) and putatively 'overuse' the welfare state intentionally (Lefkofridi and Michel,

2017). Once immigrants have access to a European welfare state, they allegedly happen to be unwilling to contribute to the native economy and get stigmatized as “lazy parasites living on state subsidies” (Rydgren, 2008a, p. 173) by PRRPs. Finally, as a result of the PRRPs’ negative framing of non-natives, their socio-economic characteristics and labour market performances are strongly underestimated by natives (Alesina et al., 2018) and more redistributive welfare states turn out to rather trigger welfare chauvinist attitudes (Arzheimer, 2009a).

3. Evolution of the field

Having ingested the key concepts, the following chapter seeks to provide a more thorough review of literature on the significance of economic policy for PRRPs’ electoral success. During the post WWII-period, ‘Western’ politics have to a significant degree revolved around economic questions in general and the design of the welfare state more specifically (Mair, 1997; Achterberg, 2006). Therefore, it might come as a surprise that in his seminal contribution to the field, Mudde (2007) claims that economic policy is merely “secondary” (p. 119) to the populist radical right. In strict contrast to this understanding, an entire strand of literature stresses its importance for PRRPs’ electoral success (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995; Ivarsflaten, 2005; Lange, 2007; Bornschier, 2010; Oesch and Rennwald, 2018). The present synopsis aims at combining both readings: *Because* economic policy does not come first for the radical populist right, the parties gain significant room to manoeuvre depending on the country specific political opportunity structure as well as on the potential electorate.

Chapter 3.1 summarizes the discussion on PRRPs’ economic policy, building up on Klaus von Beyme’s (1988) division between supply and demand side. As a third analytical layer, the regional and small-area perspective is adopted. More specifically, Chapter 3.2 turns to the most recent developments in Germany and the focus of this synopsis: Germany’s new populist radical right party *Alternative für Deutschland*, its relationship to the party family, and the role economic policy has played for its evolution, electorate, and ‘breeding grounds’. The literature review closes with Chapter 3.3, giving a short summary of Part II, and identifying research gaps to be addressed in the contributions summarized in the following sections.

3.1 PRRP’s welfare state and economic policy: A ‘Copernican Revolution’

Whereas PRRPs are unambiguously positioned on the cultural axis and their taste for welfare chauvinism (see Chapter 2.4) has found broad empirical support, both over time and regions, they vary considerably in their general economic policy stance. The first subsection depicts the controversial debate on populist radical right parties’ supply of economic policy. In line with Kitschelt and McGann (1995), the supply side is understood to be not only determined by the electorate but rather driven by

strategic party competition within the political opportunity structure. Second, the heterogeneous economic policy proposals raise the question how PRRPs' electorates are (mis)represented socio-economically. Hence, the second subsection also zooms in on the social strata who support PRRPs on the micro-level. The final subsection takes up the hunt for spatial regional-level socio-economic patterns.

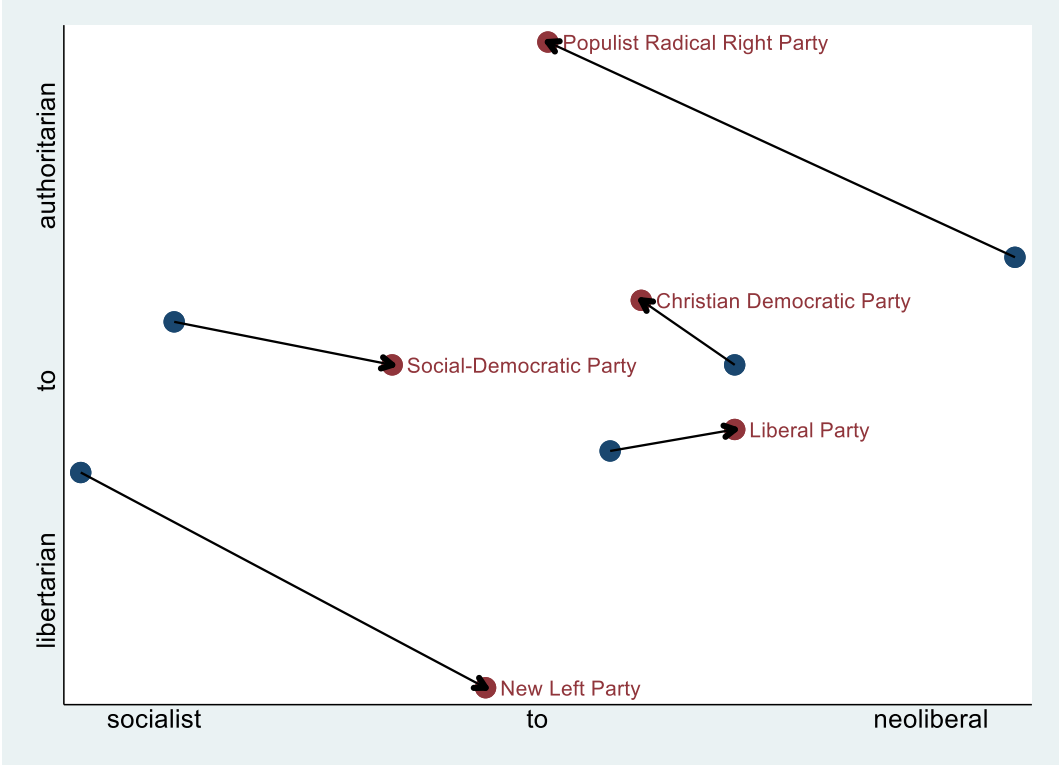
3.1.1 Supply side: The long journey from neoliberalism to welfare champion

The most influential scholars of the field during the 1990s, Herbert Kitschelt and Hans-Georg Betz, understood the evolution of the 'radical right' as an antagonism to the 'New Left' parties (see Chapter 2.1) which clearly endorsed post-materialist and universal values as well as the welfare state (Betz, 1994; Kitschelt and McGann, 1995). Since pro-state and pro-welfare economic policies constituted crucial pillars of the 'New Left's' ideology and manifestos, the populist radical right ideological antagonists at the time were understood to have naturally picked the very opposite economic policy outline and endorsed neoliberalism. Betz (1993b) even describes "neo-liberal populism" (p. 679) as one dominant strand of PRRPs of the time and leaves little doubt where the parties stood economically: "The resulting programme marks a revival of radical liberalism. It calls for a reduction of some taxes and the abolition of others, a drastic curtailing of the role of the state in the economy and large-scale privatisation" (Betz, 1993a, p. 418). On the same page, Kitschelt and McGann (1995) bring forward their famous 'winning formula' of "economically rightists, free-marketeering, as well as politically and culturally authoritarian positions" (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995, p. vii). Elisabeth Ivarsflaten (2005) adds that rhetorically, the "anti-tax, anti-'nanny state', Poujadist or welfare backlash component" (p. 468) was wrapped into "public sector bashing" (p. 469). This combined policy platform is interpreted to be a strategical answer to a party system that competed mainly on the economic axis and left open a 'representational gap' in the competitive space. Hence, in line with their populist ideology during the welfare state's "golden age" (Esping-Andersen, 1994), when all major parties allegedly joined forces – also in the economic dimension – PRRPs took a decisive anti-welfare position and in their typical populist manner portrayed themselves as the sole opponent of 'the elite'. What is more, as a reflex to increasing globalization, the neoliberal policy supply met a very specific demand by people employed in internationally competitive sectors (see the following subsection 3.1.2 for a thorough discussion) (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995).

The prime example of a PRRP employing the 'winning formula', during the 1980s and 1990s, was clearly constituted by the French *Front National* (today: *Rassemblement National*). Nevertheless, despite other parties such as the *Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ)* having partly followed the French lead, neoliberalism as one of PRRPs' main ideological traits was soon openly questioned (Mudde, 1999). In fact, McGann and Kitschelt (2005) themselves qualify the importance of extreme right-wing economic

policy for their ‘winning formula’, however, by still arguing that a certain free-market appeal is indispensable for some PRRPs’ electoral success. More generally, Kitschelt (2004) identifies a rotational shift in party competition from the economic to the cultural dimension: In the 1970s, when the party system still revolved around the economic issue, PRRPs supplied the clearest form of neoliberalism. As depicted in Figure 1, along the general centrist convergence on economic issues, also PRRPs converged into more centrist positionings. With social democratic and ‘New Left’ parties having shied away from extreme economic policies, PRRPs as their antithesis subsequently mimicked such behaviour and moderated their economic agenda accordingly. The economic centrist convergence in stylized Western European party competition is retraced by Sarah De Lange (2007), who also refutes ‘liberal’ or ‘neoliberal’ economic policy as a characteristic of PRRPs after the 1990s. By and large, PRRPs cashed in on the decreasing polarization and salience of the economic dimension and profited from increasing interest in socio-cultural positionings (Spies and Franzmann, 2011; Bornschier, 2018).

Figure 1: Stylized party competition development from the 1970s to the turn of the millennium



Source: based on Kitschelt (2004)

What is more, also from a purely populist point of view, the changes in the supply of PRRPs’ economic policies followed an inherent logic. As much as the populist radical right exploited a putative pro-welfare state consensus during its “golden age” (Esping-Andersen, 1994), in the face of high public debt levels during the aftermaths of economic crises in Europe, they joined the radical left to defy the established parties and their widely applied fiscal tightening (Alonso-Muñoz and Casero-Ripollés, 2020).

In fact, several scholars even argue that the populist radical right pulled a ‘Copernican Revolution’ and went all the way as to endorse leftist economic positions: In an earlier contribution, Anton Derks (2006) argues that PRRPs’ economic populism adopted a general egalitarian position. After the turn of the millennium, PRRPs’ systematic move to the left in the welfare issue has been remarked (Afonso and Renwald, 2018) as well as their turn towards protectionism (van der Waal and Koster, 2018). More boldly, Lefkofridi and Michel (2017) even claim PRRPs have “repositioned themselves as champions of the welfare state” (p. 234), developed a “left authoritarianism” (p. 234), and competed in the natural realm of social democratic parties. What is more, as has been discussed in Chapter 2.4, the populist radical right seemed to have discovered that pro-welfare stances can be spiced up with nativist welfare chauvinism (Abts et al., 2021). Again, the *Front National* – once prime example of a neoliberal PRRP with Jean-Marie Le Pen proclaiming himself to be the ‘French Ronald Reagan’ – was found on the forefront of such behaviour, arguing for tax increases and welfare state expansions (Afonso and Renwald, 2018) in combination with welfare chauvinist positionings such as the exclusion of immigrants from medical assistance (Ivaldi, 2013). In order to prevent redistribution to the undeserving out-group, the new pro-welfare stance forced PRRPs ideologically into welfare chauvinist policy proposals.

In contrast to McGann and Kitschelt’s (2005) weary defence of their ‘winning formula’, the overreaching evidence is that economic rightists among PRRPs have lost momentum. Even if neoliberalism has constituted a key characteristic and success factor of the populist radical right in the past, in such unambiguity this is no longer the case. Nevertheless, for several prominent populist radical right parties such as the *Swiss People’s Party (SVP)*, the *Norwegian Progress Party (FrP)*, and the *Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)* the old ‘winning formula’ remains rather intact (Afonso and Papadopoulos, 2015; Otjes et al., 2018; Rooduijn, 2018; Rathgeb, 2021). Economics has become (or always was) “secondary” (Mudde, 2007, p. 119) to PRRPs and thereby enabled that the respective “economic positions [...] differ not only depending on the party studied, but also when this party was studied” (Ivarsflaten, 2005, pp. 469–470).

3.1.2 Demand side: Dealignment and realignment confusion

In the previous chapters, the evolution of PRRPs as the antithesis to ideologically mainstreaming ‘New Left’ movements and their positioning on the cultural axis has been outlined (Betz, 1994; Kitschelt and McGann, 1995; Bornschier, 2010). Accordingly, PRRP electorates’ “silent counter revolution” (Ignazi, 1992) resulted in an open “cultural backlash” (Inglehart and Norris, 2016). Their support is based on opposition to pro-immigration, pro-EU, postmaterialist, universalist, emancipatory ‘New Left’ movements who managed to establish an anti-traditional, anti-communitarian, anti-nativist, and anti-‘law and order’ paradigm (Inglehart, 1977; Ignazi, 1992; Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2018b). As ‘the

(cultural) elite' in mainstream parties largely adopted 'progressive' attitudes, feelings of political alienation rose among PRRP supporters whose view of life has allegedly become 'reactionary' (Eatwelt, 2000). With their moral signposts vanishing in the eyes of the rest of the society, PRRP supporters became "losers of cultural modernization" (Bornschieer, 2018, p. 220). In fact, their distinctive cultural attitudes have unambiguously been identified as *the* necessary condition to support the populist radical right (Norris, 2005; Mudde, 2007; Ivarsflaten, 2008; Arzheimer, 2018). Nevertheless, PRRP support is more multilayered than simple cultural authoritarianism.

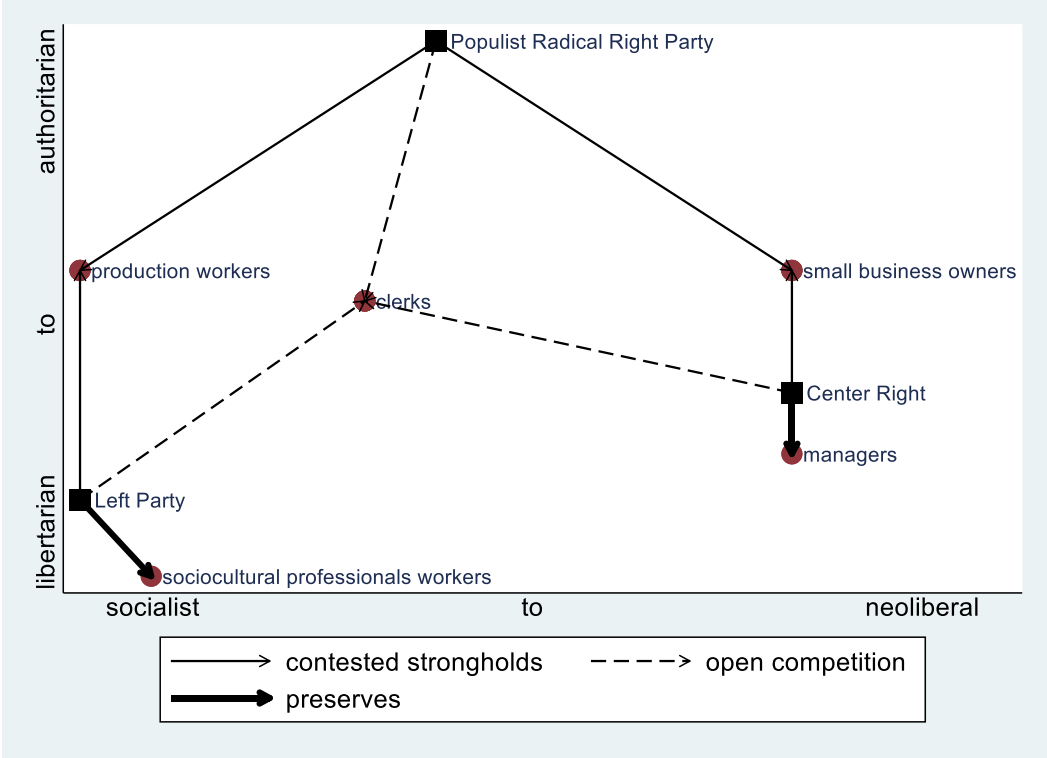
First and foremost, the fundamental socio-cultural cleavage between 'authoritarian' and 'libertarian' values (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995) has always been intermingled with the socio-demographic dimension and followed clear educational patterns. 'Progressive' 'New Left' social climbers endorsed a 'libertarian' cultural stance and opposed traditionalists with lower education levels who took an 'authoritarian' position (Kriesi, 1999). As a consequence, lower education levels have been carved out as a persistent characteristic of populist radical right supporters (Knutsen, 2003; Ivarsflaten and Stuager, 2013).¹¹ In the same vein, certain occupational characteristics and work logics align with political preferences: 'Socio-cultural professionals' for example tend to be 'progressive' in the economic as well as the cultural dimension and thereby oppose 'managerial professionals' – a potential future target for PRRPs (Oesch, 2008b; Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014).

Second, Oesch and Rennwald (2018) corroborate the importance of the outlined cultural cleavage structures for PRRP support, adding that, independent of the cultural dimension, the long-established economic cleavage over welfare state and public finance issues still structures electoral competition between historically grown socio-economic classes. As PRRPs' electorates combine the economic 'left' working-class and the economic 'right' small shop owners labelled the 'petty bourgeoisie', two traditionally unaligned – in the economic dimension even antagonistic – groups (see Figure 2), a fierce debate revolved around the persistence of the 'old' class based economic cleavage. Scholarship has come a long way trying to explain why these groups pooled their electoral power to lift PRRPs to the very core of Western party system upheaval. Originally, Kitschelt and McGann (1995) in their understanding of PRRPs' 'winning formula' provide the influential 'globalisation loser' argument to explain how PRRPs snatched a significant share of the working-class from traditional left parties. In their reasoning, economic pressure, originating from global competition, attracted the working class employed in competitive industries through neoliberal economic policy proposals. The workers were presumably unwilling to risk their company and their own jobs for paying high taxes in order to finance state employees' salaries, the 'undeserving' unemployed, or immigrants who ultimately compete for similar jobs. Hence, they ended up dealigned from their traditional political representatives on the

¹¹ See Bornschieer (2018) for an up-to-date review of the education cleavage's importance for the PRRP electorate.

political left and realigned with the ‘petty bourgeoisie’ as well as with the populist radical right. In this interpretation, populist radical right parties’ ‘winning formula’ supply matched the electoral base very well in both dimensions.¹²

Figure 2: Stylized party competition for specific electoral groups



Source: based on Oesch and Rennwald (2018)

With the working class and the ‘petty bourgeoisie’ jointly forming the main pillars of PRRP electorates, the “movement of crisis” (Krebo, 1982) hypothesis – even in a version of globalization induced (fear of) economic desperation, driving PRRP supporters to the polls (Kriesi, 1999) – turned out to be overly simplifying (Mols and Jetten, 2016).¹³ Populist radical right electoral success was not necessarily built on economic grievances (Ivarsflaten, 2008) and even if the group of economic ‘losers’ is extended to ‘potential losers’, who are “rather secure but objectively can still lose something” (Minkenberg, 2000, p. 187), the globalisation issue related mobilization potential of the European working class for PRRPs remained limited: In the end, rather social status anxieties (Gidron and Hall, 2017) and less sectoral trade exposure seemed to have motivated workers for picking a PRRPs at the ballot (Bornschieer and Kriesi, 2013).¹⁴ Although European PRRP supporters have a particular negative view on the general

¹² Although representatives of unions and social democratic parties rather emerge on the ‘libertarian’ end of the socio-cultural cleavage, since Lipset’s work on “working-class authoritarianism” (1959, p. 482) it does not come as a surprise to see shares of the working class itself persistently taking the opposite cultural stance (Arzheimer, 2013).

¹³ See Mudde (2007, p. 205) for criticism of the understanding of longer periods of (concerns about) globalization driven economic deprivation as ‘crisis’.

¹⁴ See Chapter 3.1.3 for a review of recent publications analysing the impact of globalization shocks on regional PRRP election success.

economy as can be shown with regards to the labour market (Diermeier and Niehues, 2019), Simon Bornschieer (2018) summarizes “the radical right are not the most marginalized groups in economic terms, and not particularly concerned about losing their jobs either” (p. 223). The divergence of perception and reality as well as individual and general concerns turns out to be an especially pronounced phenomenon among supporters of PRRPs.

Even if globalization-imposed marginalization played a role in mobilizing for PRRPs, it would remain highly unclear that ‘capitalist’ (in contrast to ‘socialist’) policy platforms would have actually served to realign working class and the populist radical right. Ivarsflaten (2005) prominently opposes the dealignment hypothesis and argues that although working class and ‘petty bourgeoisie’ rallied around PRRPs’ cultural policy offer, they remained divided in their preferences for economic policy (see Oesch and Rennwald (2018) and Figure 2). In fact, the working class’ falling for neoliberalism is generally contested (Arzheimer, 2008) and its mobilization has been found to work rather through the cultural dimension (Oesch, 2008a). Hence, the “unusual structure of the populist right electorate” (Ivarsflaten, 2005, p. 466) has divided PRRP supporters economically. Depending on the party’s respective positioning at least one of the groups chooses the populist radical right *despite* and not *because of* any of the parties’ economic positioning (Oesch, 2008a).

What is more, two developments amplified the economic polarization within PRRPs’ electorates. First, over time the working class has gained in importance and replaced the original electoral core of small shop owners (Oesch, 2008a; Arzheimer, 2013; Rydgren, 2013; Oesch and Rennwald, 2018). Second, and along with the predominance of the working class over the ‘petty bourgeoisie’, PRRP electorates experienced a ‘proletarianisation’ (Minkenberg and Perrineau, 2007; Arzheimer, 2013; Bornschieer, 2018).¹⁵ In standard Downsian rational-choice based voting models, the attraction of lower socio-economic strata is generally expected to trigger a turn to more left-leaning economic policy demands (Meltzer and Richard, 1981). However, the ‘proletarianisation’ has been modest in size (Arzheimer, 2013) as still rather highly specialized working class members picked the populist radical right at the ballot (Oesch, 2008b, 2008a) and those who lost their jobs tended to turn away from PRRPs to left parties (Kurer, 2020) or to abstain generally from elections (Kaeding et al., 2016).

Factoring in the supply side discussion (see Chapter 3.1.1), the increased electoral intake from a (in economic issues) traditionally left leaning working class, further explains the PRRPs’ shift to more centrist or even left positions on economic issues and the welfare state (Lefkofridi and Michel, 2017; Afonso and Renwald, 2018). A centrist strategy allows PRRPs to enter the highly competitive competition for the electoral group of clerks who have not converged into their core electorate yet

¹⁵ Ignazi is the first to notice a “proletarianisation and (uneven) radicalization” (2003, p. 216) within radical right electorates.

(see Figure 2). The accommodation of the working-class constituencies, however, came increasingly at the expenses of the 'petty bourgeoisie's' neoliberal economic interest. In their difficulty to address their electorate's conflicting economic interests, PRRPs have lately turned to blur their economic positioning entirely and focus on their work-horse of socio-cultural radicalism (Rovny, 2012, 2013).

3.1.3 Context: "Places that don't matter"¹⁶ as favourable 'breeding grounds'

Similarly to the rejection of PRRP support as a 'movement of crisis' on the individual-level (see Chapter 3.1.2) – and even with regards to the gradually growing group of (perceived) 'globalization losers' – also the socio-economic factors that provide favourable 'breeding grounds' in regional or cross-country comparison do not unanimously point to economic crisis. On the country-level, austerity policies caused by economic distress have provoked electoral difficulties for the European populist radical right (Grittersová et al., 2016). A prime example is represented by the rise of the populist radical left in the crisis-torn European South during the sovereign debt crisis in comparison to the electoral success of PRRPs in the economically much more robust European North (Hobolt, 2015; Manow, 2018; Hutter and Kriesi, 2019). As a convincing counterargument against the favourable impact of economic distress on PRRP election outcomes, Dennis Spies (2013) shows that nation-wide economic crises cause an unfavourable opportunity structure for the populist radical right. An increased salience of the economic issue comes at the cost of PRRPs' socio-cultural mobilization.

To test the implications of economic downturn on election results empirically, earlier studies have employed socio-economic macro-level variables in cross-country correlation models. With regards to the oftentimes chosen labour market variables, results can without any doubt be summarised as ambiguous and inconclusive.¹⁷ Whereas some scholars find a positive relationship between macro-level unemployment and PRRP support (Jackman and Volpert, 1996; Golder, 2003), others retrieve a negative correlation (Arzheimer and Carter, 2006) or no relationship at all (Lubbers et al., 2002). One conclusion that can be drawn from the puzzle around economic distress and PRRP election results is that the implications of economic difficulties have to be considered in the context of the welfare state. In fact, a large safety net is found to cushion the impact of high unemployment rates on PRRP election results (Swank and Betz, 2003) – particularly in the face of high immigration numbers (Arzheimer, 2009a).

The difficulties to establish a robust relationship on the macro-level made small-area studies fashionable that exploit the variance of place-based socio-economic variables and election outcomes within countries. Those studies reveal that regional-specific economic difficulties as well as competition with immigrants – induced as a shock by the Great Recession or as a long run process

¹⁶ See Rodríguez-Pose (2018, p. 189).

¹⁷ See Mudde (2007) and Arzheimer (2018) for a more thorough but equally inconclusive overview.

through globalization and enforced austerity policies – indeed went along with stronger support for PRRPs and higher probabilities to choose ‘Leave’ in the UK referendum on the EU (Rydgren and Ruth, 2011; van Gent and Musterd, 2013; Essletzbichler et al., 2018; Manow, 2018; Fetzner, 2019). More specifically, within-country imbalances have been amplified by intensified globalization that boosted the economy in regions with competitive industries and at the same time left a series of rustbelts where formerly prosperous industries were shut-down and sourced-out (Dorling, 2010; Dauth et al., 2018). Recently, economists have developed an innovative identification strategy to strengthen the *causal* link between China related globalization shocks and the regional rise of radical right-wing populists.¹⁸ Autor et al.’s (2020) evidence from the US has been reproduced in several studies, namely in 15 European countries (Colantone and Stanig, 2018b), in Britain (Colantone and Stanig, 2018a), in France (Malgouyres, 2017), in Germany (Dippel et al., 2018), and in Italy (Barone and Kreuter, 2021).¹⁹

In his review of this strand of literature, Dani Rodrik (2020) picks up the loose ends of economic distress and the cultural cleavage, concluding that in the end, globalization shocks worked their way to populist radical right votes through culture and identity. Thus, economic spatial segregation reinforced the well-known socio-cultural value conflict between societal groups in prosperous urban areas and those in declining rural regions (Enos, 2017; Norris and Inglehart, 2019; Wilkinson, 2019). In the same vein, David Goodhart (2017) prominently advances the reading that capitals were home to the ‘cosmopolitan’ tribe of ‘anywheres’ who determined politics and represent ‘the elite’. On the contrary, ‘somewheres’ were trapped in the rural areas that they considered *home*, however, that were of little interest for the economic and political elite. As ‘somewheres’ were morally rooted in their lands *and* lacked the skill-sets necessary for high-skilled jobs in the metropolitan areas, they were unable to move to the jobs. On the downside, politicians were allegedly unwilling to grasp the mindset of ‘somewheres’ and to address respective demands in economic policy.²⁰ Due to low tax incomes, regional governments failed to provide relevant infrastructures such as train stations, hospitals, or schools (Altwegg, 2018; Hall, 2020). The result was a “geography of discontent” (Dijkstra et al., 2019, p. 1), a “regional resentment” (Spicer, 2018, p. 15), or even a “density divide” (Wilkinson, 2019) that finally translated into a ‘ballot box revolt’ in “places that don’t matter” (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018, p. 189).

This highly influential debate triggered a lively discussion, how established political ‘elites’ could win back the electorate that allegedly turned towards the populist radical right. First, established parties

¹⁸ Autor et al. (2020) are the first to exploit the exogeneous variation in Chinese exports to eight developed economies as an instrumental variable to account for endogeneity of manufacturing employment in the US. The industrial composition within US commuting zones, thus, allows to identify the causal effect of China’s import penetration on the differently exposed US regional manufacturing sectors.

¹⁹ Also, see Rodrik and Di Tella (2019) for innovative experimental evidence from the US, stressing the manipulative potential of trade shocks, priming voting preferences.

²⁰ See Guilluy (2018) and Le Bras (2015) for a similar argument regarding French urban and semi-urban ‘left-behind’ regions.

seemed somewhat helpless to address some PRRPs' shift to chauvinist pro-redistribution agendas (The Economist, 2018). As the discussion on PRRPs' demand side has shown, non-chauvinistically proposing more welfare might not match the electorate's ideology and bears the risk of triggering a salient welfare chauvinism debate that comes along with highly redistributive welfare states (see Ennsner-Jedenastik and Köppl-Turyna (2019) and Chapter 2.4). Furthermore, even in 'left-behind' regions it is not necessarily the 'economic losers' that chose PRRPs at the ballot (see Chapter 3.1.2). Second, 'orthodox' economic policies fail to provide help for 'left-behind' places fostering the impression that 'the elite' turned their back on these areas and their inhabitants (The Economist, 2016). In the face of low mobility of locally 'rooted' societal strata in places of economic distress, cumbersome and economically (presumably) inefficient policy approaches range from bringing 'jobs to the people', to strengthening the supply of public infrastructure, or supporting forward-looking education clusters (The Economist, 2017b). Those policy approaches have turned out to be difficult and costly, and small-area studies are missing to provide a convincing empirical link for effects on regional PRRP election results.

3.2 A new populist party for Germany: The *AfD*'s development into a PRRP in fast forward
Having lined out the evolution of the field regarding characteristics of the populist radical right's economic policy supply, demand, as well as its favourable 'breeding grounds', this section turns to the PRRPs' new offshoot in Germany within the equivalent dimensions – supply, demand, context. At the federal-level, until the *AfD*'s rise the German political system had repelled the populist radical right advance. On the one hand, it has been argued that the German conservative parties (*CDU/CSU*) managed to represent the electorate classically prone to PRRPs' policies (Bale and Krouwel, 2013). On the other hand, it is found that in the cultural and anti-immigration dimension the conservatives colluded with the social democratic SPD to not polarize issues to the extremes (Bornschier, 2012).

Another common explanation claims that the relatively low polarization of the cultural dimension stemmed from the German historical experience with 'National Socialism', having made parties and voters specifically cautious with regards to radical right parties (Art, 2006). On the regional-level, however, radical right competitors emerged and managed to enter several state parliaments. First, *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD)* and *Deutsche Volksunion (DVU)* represented the infamous "traditional" (Ignazi, 1997, p. 54) extreme right, offering neo-fascist policies in combination with a 'social-national' economic policy platform (Backes, 1996). Second, the *Republikaner* intended to mimic the early *Front National* and to turn into a modern PRRP, including a rather neoliberal – although still welfare chauvinist (Dörre, 2020) – stance in economic questions (Backes, 1996; Ignazi, 2003).

With party after party on the right end of the German party system falling into insignificance, German right-wing intellectuals in close cooperation with the French *nouvelle droite* constituted the network *Aktion Neue Rechte* to prepare what ‘New Right’ pioneer Armin Mohler (1970) calls a “conservative revolution” (own translation, Mohler quoted in Salzborn, 2016, p. 40). The new political group borrowed from Antonio Gramsci (1980), a Sardinian Marxist who conceptualized an ideological subversion triggered by a minority of intellectuals, subliminally infiltrating the predominate ideology, language, and mindset. Centred around Götz Kubitschek the ‘New Right’ thinktank *Institut für Staatspolitik (IfS)*, the publishing house *Antaios*, and the magazine *Sezession* were founded. Furthermore, right-wing content was supplied by *Compact*, *Tichys Einblick* or *Pi-News* (Stahl, 2019).

Whereas the German ‘New Right’s’ cultural agenda unmistakably paved the way for a radical populist right party in Germany (Göpffarth, 2020), in the economic issue their groundwork turned out to be much less clear cut. On the one hand, former editor in chief of the economically liberal magazine *Wirtschaftswoche*, Roland Tichy, followed a generally market liberal economic agenda in his digital platform *Tichys Einblick* (Tichy, 2021). On the other hand, staff members of the former communist activist Jürgen Elsässer’s *Compact* magazine named themselves “left patriots” (own translation, Fuchs and Zimmermann, 2016, p. 25) and *Antaios* editor, as well as *Sezession* author Benedikt Kaiser (2019) proposed the French *Front National’s* recent economic turn to welfare chauvinism as a role model for a German “solidarity patriotism” (own translation, Kaiser, 2020). Hence, economically speaking it remained an open question on which end a successful PRRP in Germany would emerge and if economics would play a role after all. Looking back at the development during the 2010s, on first sight it might be surprising that Germany’s first federally successful populist radical right party did not revolve around the refugee migration to Germany, but already several years before around the European Economic and Financial Crisis. The following subchapters carve out that the opposite is the case.

3.2.1 Supply side: From a Euroskeptic ‘professors’ party’ to a neoliberal PRRP?

Founded on 6 February 2013, during the height of the European Economic and Financial Crisis, the *Alternative für Deutschland* clearly intended to constitute an opposition to the presumably hegemonic Euro support as well as EU ‘integrationist’ stance within the German party system. More specifically, the party understood itself as a mouthpiece of protest against the foundation of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) that putatively violated the EU’s ‘no-bail-out’ clause for crisis torn European economies (Alternative für Deutschland, 2013). The *AfD’s* monothematic focus on macroeconomic issues and (ordo-)liberal economic theory in their manifestos shaped the party’s characteristics during this founding period (Franzmann, 2014). The extreme focus on economic issues was also reflected in the founding fathers’ professions: An archived register of the founding members of the

Wahlalternative 2013 – the loose group that predated the foundation of the later *AfD* only by a couple of months – lists 58 members of which a whopping 17 held professor titles in economics (Wahlalternative 2013, 2012).²¹ Amounting to 28 professors in total and led by speaker Prof. Dr. Bernd Lucke (professor of macroeconomics), the party was soon baptised ‘professors’ party’ (Sieber, 2013).

Robert Grimm (2015) argues that the party was built on German ordoliberal elites’ Euroscepticism that burst out regularly since the *Maastricht Treaty* and eventually found its formal political representation. The name itself caricatures Angela Merkel’s interpretation of the Euro as without any alternative – “if the Euro fails, Europe fails. [...] the Euro cannot fail and will not fail” (Merkel quoted in Grimm, 2015, p. 267). Former president of the Federation of German Industries (BDI) and former *AfD* member Prof. Dr. Hans-Olaf Henkel is quoted criticising Germany’s “Euromantic” (Henkel quoted in Grimm, 2015, p. 265) explorations while Lucke condemned Merkel’s EU rescue policies as violations of the “rule of law” (Lucke quoted in Grimm, 2015, p. 266). Another predominant pillar of the *AfD* was constituted by its critique against expansionary monetary policy led by the European Central Bank (ECB) and the fear of looming inflation (Arzheimer, 2015). Typically for the development of a later PRRP (see Chapter 2.2), the *AfD* was classified as a “single-issue Euro-sceptic party” (Taggart, 1998, p. 368), however, the generally pro-European but anti-Euro party was rather placed at the softer end of the Euroskeptic continuum (Arzheimer, 2015; Grimm, 2015). At this early stage, the party’s positioning in the EU issue was congruent to its economic convictions. Importantly, the technocratic criticism of ‘the professors’ was brought forward as a logical economic reasoning that opposed the established parties’ putative European sentimentalism as the driving force of their economic policy (Lewandowsky, 2015). Without any doubt, during the founding period the *AfD*’s political DNA was a liberal (Schärdel, 2017), neoliberal (Rosenfelder, 2017), or market radical (Niedermayer and Hofrichter, 2016) economic policy.

More generally, the party was largely interpreted as a broad backlash against the establishment and as a fierce opposition against the ‘softening’ of the *CDU* under Angela Merkel – not only but also in economic terms (Dilling, 2018). Simon Franzmann (2016a) even claims the discontent with a lack of conservative politics in Germany and not the Euro-critique represented the real motivation for the foundation of the *AfD*. The later party leader Alexander Gauland (2018) himself mentions opposition to a globalization friendly hegemonic ‘urban elite’ as a motivational driver behind his party. As argued by Arzheimer and Carter (2006), long years of grand coalitions trigger fatigue with established parties and generally provide favourable political opportunity structures for new competitors on the far right. Mapped on the German political system, the established parties failed to provide a policy platform that combined economic and political conservatism, providing room for the rise of a PRRP (Bornschieer,

²¹ With only 6 of the 58 founding members being female, in this case the label ‘founding fathers’ seem justifiable despite its technical incorrectness.

2012). Enthusiastically, the *AfD* occupied the open 'representational gap' in the competitive space (Franzmann, 2014; Art, 2018) that Karl-Rudolf Korte (2008) had identified as a misrepresentation on the conservative end of the cultural dimension long-since.

During the founding period, the party lacked radical and nativist programmatic gunpowder to be classified populist radical right (Arzheimer, 2015; Niedermayer, 2015). Nevertheless, parliamentarians started to address the immigration issue in a typical far right manner from early on (Ceyhan, 2016), and more generally, party officials' communication and their tactical agenda already contained significant traces of populism (Lewandowsky, 2015; Franzmann, 2016a). At the ballot, this combination led to a decent (although below the five percent hurdle) result in the federal election of 2013 and even greater successes in several subsequent state elections. Only after a short slump in the polls (Niedermayer and Hofrichter, 2016), the controversy between those members who rather supported the economic Euro-critique ('(ordo-)liberal economic wing') and those who rather favoured radical anti-immigration platforms ('national conservative wing') was already exhibited at the 2014 party convention in Aschaffenburg preparing the elections for the European Parliament (Lewandowsky, 2015). After successful European elections (7.1 percent), the *AfD*'s declining approval rates weakened the leading '(ordo-)liberal economic wing' and resulted in the party's split with party leader Lucke, who himself had let the genie out of the bottle by "calling the ghost of populism" (Franzmann, 2016a, p. 457) and then being ousted at the party convention in Essen 2015 (Dilling, 2018).

Consequently, five of the seven Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and many disappointed Euro-critical party members left the *AfD* and followed their former party leader into political insignificance (Franzmann, 2016b).²² Under the leadership of Frauke Petry the 'national conservative wing' clearly prevailed, even though, with Jörg Meuthen at least one of the party leaders still represented the '(ordo-)liberal economic wing'. This strategical turn proved to be successful, especially after the grand coalition under Angela Merkel opened the borders for refugee migration in 2015. Immediately, the immigration issue replaced the EU Economic and Financial Crisis as the *AfD*'s (Art, 2018) as well as the entire German political party system's main topic (Korte, 2017).²³ Suddenly owning the party competition's most salient topic, the party radicalized further and applied a xenophobic rhetoric that is until today unmatched in German federal politics.²⁴ Meanwhile, the party's electoral performance improved significantly, resulting in a row of spectacular state election results and a 12.6 percent vote share in the federal election 2017 (Art, 2018). As history repeated itself, the leader, this

²² Only three of the founding fathers remained *AfD* party members until 2021 (Fuchs, 2021).

²³ After Angela Merkel announced publicly that a group of refugees trapped in Budapest was allowed to move on to Germany, more than one million people arrived at the German borders applying for asylum. Whereas Merkel's decision was applauded by large parts of the political left, very soon she was criticized from the ranks of her own party and her sister party CSU, let alone the populist right.

²⁴ Echoing such offending statements in this synopsis would only give them unnecessary room and is thus desisted.

time Petry, lacked the political muscle to master the party's nativist ghosts and left the party after the election – into political insignificance. The way the party went through its leaders and the internal clashes between the '(ordo-)liberal economic wing' and the 'national conservative wing' suggests the classification as one of the typical radical right "weakly organised, poorly led and divided parties" (Carter, 2005, p. 98).

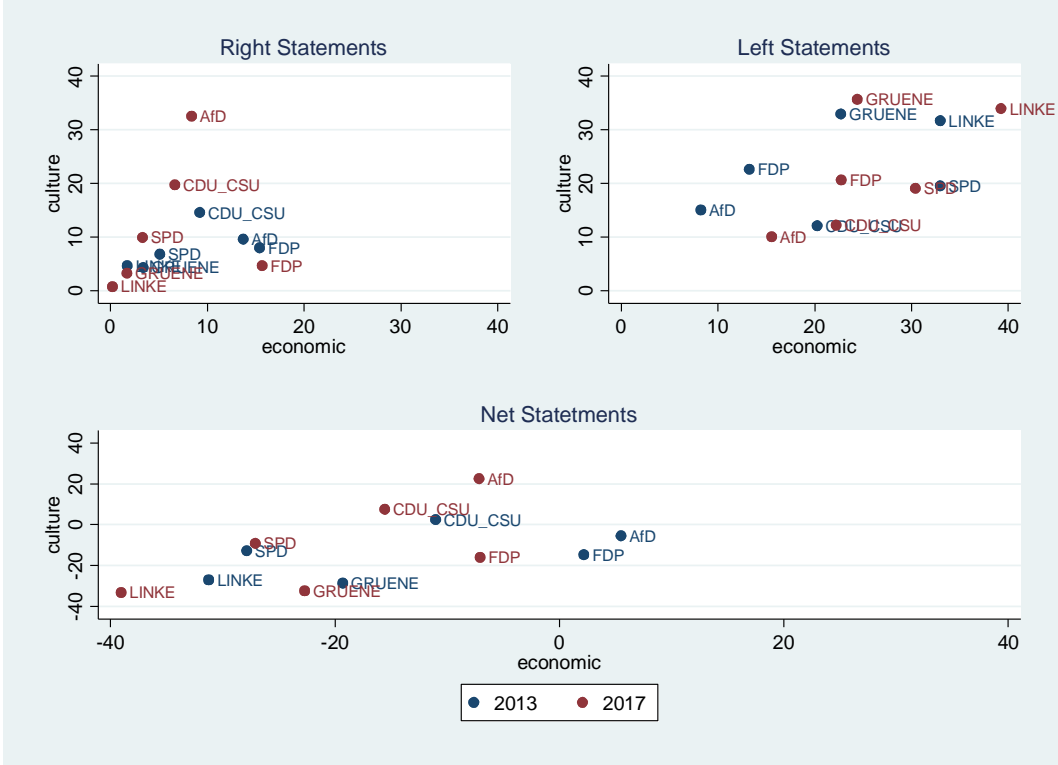
Structurally, the *AfD* abandoned its soft Euroskeptical position for a hard Euroscepticism and right-wing radical populism (Rosenfelder, 2017). While the party's transition to the nativist, populist and authoritarian PRRP party family became "scholarly consensus" (Hansen and Olsen, 2019, p. 3), the role of economic policy for the party has been hardly researched. Recalling Mudde's (1999) analysis of the populist radical right, these parties depended on the immigration topic as a catalyst for their agenda, however, their success was usually built on several pillars. The same seemed to hold for the *AfD* that – also at a later state – capitalized on its original economic platforms.

On a strategical note, the foundation as a 'single issue anti-*Euro*' party in 2013 represented the infamous *necessary condition* for the rise of a PRRP in Germany (Bornschiefer, 2012). In the words of Gauland, the party's elitist professorial past was as much "a gift" (Gauland quoted in Spiegel Online, 2015) for the party as the rising refugee migration. The *AfD* circumvented an early 'cordon sanitaire' death, because during its founding years its development into a full-fledged populist radical right party was a mere pie in the sky – for politicians and voters alike (Arzheimer, 2015; Berbuir et al., 2015; Arzheimer and Berning, 2019). Where radical right parties in Germany had stifled at birth, the *AfD* secured at least two significant advantages: First, it recruited from renowned conservative and scholarly ranks. Second, it built its electoral base around an 'innocent' topic (Arzheimer, 2015; Grimm, 2015). It does not come as a surprise that despite all rhetorical polarization, a leitmotif of *AfD* strategy papers remained the (public) dissociation with radicalism and extremism (Alternative für Deutschland, 2016a, 2019). One of the largest fears of long-time party leader Meuthen to be officially observed by the German intelligence service was suspended in March 2021 only due to a hanging lawsuit (ZEIT Online, 2021). Again, this contradiction reveals how difficult it became to steer the *AfD* through the German electoral landscape.

On a programmatic note, the *AfD* stayed true to its ordoliberal roots. Although the privatization of major social security programs was soon off the table (Niedermayer and Hofrichter, 2016), the second subchapter in its political program from 2016 headlines read "slim state for free people" (own translation, Alternative für Deutschland, 2016b, p. 9) – a phrase that still reminds party members of their market liberal origins. In contrast to the PRRPs' popular turn to the left after the turn of the millennium (Lefkofridi and Michel, 2017; Afonso and Renwald, 2018), a simple quantitative analysis of

the *AfD* election manifestos reveals no programmatical shift to left-wing economics (see Figure 3).²⁵ Whereas the *AfD* programmatically jumps to the right on the cultural axis between 2013 and 2017, the changes in the amount of economic statements are moderate. Throughout both the founding and the radicalization period, the *AfD*'s manifesto based net economic statements are comparable to that of the liberal party *FDP* or the conservative parties *CDU/CSU*.

Figure 3: The German parties' cultural and economic manifesto statements



Source: own calculation based on Comparative Manifesto Project (Volkens et al., 2018)

Nevertheless, particularly the Eastern German *AfD* factions have argued for moving into the ‘national social’ welfare chauvinist direction and even founded the right-wing union *Alarm* (Schmelcher, 2019) as a lever to address working-class matters properly (Geiges, 2018) – following the pipe dream of ‘New Right’ scholar Kaiser (2019, 2020). One of the few policy propositions those advances have resulted in was unsuccessfully introduced into the long lasting debate around the *AfD*'s proposal for a pension reform. In fact, Björn Höckes, who called the *AfD* “the party of social justice” (own translation, Hank, 2018), proposed a welfare chauvinist nativist pension boost for Germans (*AfD* Fraktion im Thüringer Landtag, 2018), thus opposing Jörg Meuthen who suggested a stark privatization in line with the ‘old’ ‘(ordo-)liberal economic wing’. The clash resulted in a moderate compromise between the two positions (Diermeier, 2020b). What is more, René Springer, socio-political speaker *AfD Bundestag* faction, even proposed a basic income like welfare reform that he calls “*Staatsbürgergeld*”. This

²⁵ The Comparative Manifesto Project allows to proxy the parties' salience in the cultural and economic dimension by the share of mentionings in a manifesto.

welfare chauvinistic policy intends to make every German passport holder eligible for a monthly 500 Euro cash transfer. The access for foreigners is generally denied, however, “integrated immigrants with a permanent residence might become entitled [...] if they have earned taxable income in the country for ten years” (own translation, Springer, 2020, p. 15).

3.2.2 Demand Side: A socio-economic melting pot

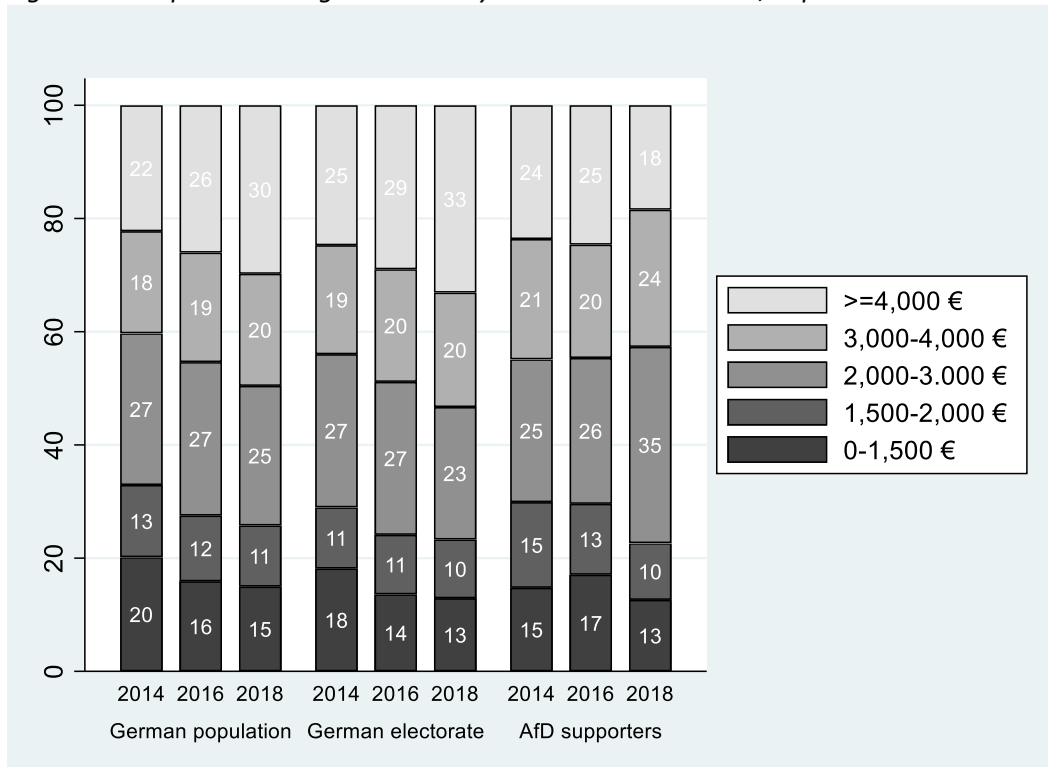
Probably attractive due to its simplicity, as a first reflex, established politicians and media tried to explain the rising support for the *AfD* as a revolt of ‘globalization losers’.²⁶ This framing triggered a burgeoning strand of literature that zoomed in on the socio-demographics of *AfD* supporters. Although a weak empirical basis aggravated thorough analyses during the founding period, soon it turned out that the young *AfD*’s electorate did not resemble the ‘proletarianised’ supporters of other European PRRPs. Rather did *AfD* supporters belong to ample social and economic strata, however, with a bias in the direction of higher income and education levels (Häusler, 2016; Niedermayer and Hofrichter, 2016; Bergmann et al., 2017b; Lengfeld, 2017). Bergmann et al. (2017b) quantify the monthly household weighted average net income of *AfD* supporters in 2014 around 2.500 Euro – ranging significantly above the respective average German income of 2.000 Euro. The subsequent socio-economic convergence to the mean enabled the *AfD* to be characterized as “a party of average income earners” (own translation, Bergmann et al., 2017b, p. 57). Additionally, the group of unemployed among the *AfD*’s support base remained small and in many states insignificant, which allowed ‘New Right’ thought leader Kubitschek to stress his partisan view on the party’s supporters as he concludes the *AfD* was a “recharge basin for working, state-supporting and pragmatic citizens” (own translation, Kubitschek quoted in Kaiser, 2019, p. 35).

In 2016, when the party had already gone through most of its founding fathers, the socio-economics of *AfD* supporters resembled the German population (Bergmann et al., 2018). Given the lower turnout of people with low-income and low-education (Kaeding et al., 2016), compared with the electorates of established parties – except the left-wing *Die Linke* –, *AfD* supporters held slightly lower socio-economic positions (Hambauer and Mays, 2018). The socio-economic shift within the *AfD* electorate triggered exaggerated newspaper headlines such as “from professors’ to proletariats’ party” (own translation, Die Welt Online, 2016) and might have been one of the reasons for a resurgence of the ‘globalization losers’ hypothesis (Lux, 2018; Tutić and Hermanni, 2018). Nevertheless, around the 2017 federal election, the socio-demographics of the *AfD* voter base turned out to be extremely heterogeneous with no outstanding characteristics or ‘proletarianisation’ (Hansen and Olsen, 2019). Figure 4 reproduces the discussed developments and reveals a stark overrepresentation of the medium household income group and an underrepresentation of the high and low incomes among

²⁶ See Lengfeld (2017) for an overview of respective statements.

AfD supporters in 2018.²⁷ By all means, *AfD* supporters seem to resemble typical PRRP voters who are “rather secure but objectively can still lose something” (Minkenberg, 2000, p. 187).

Figure 4: Comparative weighted monthly net household income, in percent



Source: own calculations based on ALLBUS - Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften (2020) and Bergmann et al. (2018)

Although the *AfD* attracted the rather affluent strata of the working class, the workers’ turn towards the German populist radical right, and thus resembling the development within other European PRRPs (Arzheimer, 2013) is explained through economic anxieties – primarily caused by digitalization and globalization (Sauer et al., 2018; Dörre, 2020). The union funded Hans-Böckler Foundation concludes: “Insecurity and feelings of impotence in the face of the future of the working environment increase the probability to vote *AfD*” (own translation, Hilmer et al., 2017, p. 47). In the same vein, and in line with the discussed typical pattern of PRRP supporters (Bornschiefer, 2018), Bettina Kohlrausch (2018) identifies a significant gap between objective socio-economic characteristics and subjective anxieties.

Such a finding links the debate on *AfD* supporters’ socio-economic background with their attitudinal characteristics. In contrast to *AfD* supporters having been only slightly above average worried about their economic situation (in line with their actual economic situation), they were pessimists to the core when it came to their (and Germany’s) future economic state (Bergmann et al., 2018). Bergmann et al. (2017a) reveal the impressive anxieties and discontent of *AfD* supporters regarding systemic questions

²⁷ See Bergmann and Diermeier (2017) for a discussion of the potential bias in survey data on *AfD* supporters due to social desirability.

– politically as well as economically. Already in the founding years before 2015, a general disenchantment has been identified as one of the drivers of *AfD* vote choice (Schwarzbözl and Fatke, 2016). After Petry's hostile takeover these sentiments intensified as a rising discontent with the German democracy in general and with Angela Merkel in particular was tracked within the party's electorate (Hambauer and Mays, 2018). This disenchantment fostered the interpretation of the *AfD* as an "anti-party party" (Bieber et al., 2018, p. 434) that profited from protest in the form of a 'cultural backlash' against the establishment (Rippl and Seipel, 2018). What is more, a populist and anti-pluralistic conception of democracy increased the probability of supporting the *AfD* beyond issue salience and positioning (Steiner and Landwehr, 2018).

Having said that, the *AfD*'s issue positioning in the electoral marketplace clearly mattered. First and foremost, anti-immigration sentiment that was prevailing subcutaneously among *AfD* supporters already during the party's founding years (Schmitt-Beck, 2017) gained in importance due to the developments within the *AfD* and along the changes in the German migration regime: The refugee migration from 2015 on clearly tapped into the demand for anti-immigration policies and significantly enlarged the electoral potential for the new German PRRP (Marx and Naumann, 2018). With the ideological turn into a PRRP, Felix Decker (2015) even claims the *AfD* became an "anti-immigration party" (2015, p. 29). Although such a mono-dimensional description appears overly simplistic, it has been convincingly shown that anti-immigration sentiment turned into the single most important attitudinal factor to explain the party's electoral success (Dilling, 2018; Arzheimer and Berning, 2019; Hansen and Olsen, 2019). With regards to redistribution, highly redistributive welfare states such as the German one generally tend to trigger welfare chauvinist attitudes (see Arzheimer (2009a) and the discussion in Chapter 2.4). Especially, the equal eligibility of immigrants to welfare benefits is interpreted to have caused discontent among people in Germany who had contributed to the system for many years and ended up with the same social welfare after having received the higher unemployment benefits for only one year (Manow, 2018).

Finally, and comparable to the uncertainty regarding the *AfD*'s economic positioning, the party supporters' economic demands and the prevailing Euroscepticism have been researched much less conclusively. During the founding phase, scepticism around European integration has been a homogeneous sentiment among *AfD* supporters (Schwarzbözl and Fatke, 2016). Particularly, the fear of economic repercussions for Germany, that resulted from a too loose 'management' of the Euro crisis and that was present predominantly among people with a market liberal economic policy demand, has played a significant role (Schmitt-Beck, 2017). Although not dominating the vote choice, anti-EU-sentiment persisted on the *AfD* demand side at least until the 2017 federal election (Hansen and Olsen, 2019). Finally, in the discussion on Euroscepticism it needs to be noted that the *AfD* attracted a specific

nativist opposition to European solidarity typical for PRRPs in rich Western economies (Arzheimer 2018).

What is more, no distinctive welfare state preferences or views on inequality among *AfD* voters were identified. The fact that a significant share of *Die Linke* supporters migrated to the new PRRP competitor, which has been noted earlier (Klein et al., 2018), lets Hansen and Olsen (2019) boldly conclude that at least in Eastern Germany “the *AfD* and Left Party were now populist, welfare-state friendly, anti-establishment competitors” (p. 15). In contrast, Eisnecker et al. (2018) find distinctive support for merit in contrast to need based redistribution preferences among *AfD* supporters – typical for PRRP electorate’s “welfare proceduralism” (Abts et al., 2021, p. 21). Also, Goerres et al.’s (2018) most specific study on *AfD* supporters’ welfare state preferences clearly disagrees with both the insignificance of economic preferences among *AfD* supporters and the presence of a left-wing economic policy demand. Even after the party’s split in 2015 they find the *AfD* electorate to have maintained their market liberalism. More specifically, *AfD* supporters reproduced the European welfare deservingness hierarchy: They showed a taste for welfare chauvinism and were strongly critical of class-based redistribution such as unemployment benefits, but less so regarding life-cycle risk related programs such as health care and pensions. The study concludes that besides the many aspects where the *AfD* electorate resembled its European peers, the persisting “importance of right-wing economic policy preferences [...] stand out and distinguish the *AfD* [electorate] from other Western European PRRPs.” (Goerres et al., 2018, p. 2).

3.2.3 Context: ‘A complex melange’²⁸

Despite the Economic and Financial Crisis as well as the subsequent European Sovereign Debt Crisis, the German economy went through an unprecedented period of economic prosperity. In contrast to most industrialized economies whose manufacturing sectors suffered from intensified globalization, the German labour market profited significantly from new markets in Eastern Germany and China (Dauth et al., 2014). Especially since 2005 the labour market boomed, the unemployment rate dropped by 50 percent to an historical low of around six percent, and the labour market participation of people aged 25 to 64 old skyrocketed to above 80 percent. In only the 15 years since 2005 the German economy rose from “the sick man of Europe” (The Economist, 1999) to the role model of a successful export driven industry-based economy. During the same period, due to a highly redistributive welfare state macroeconomic measures of income inequality such as the Gini coefficient remained stable. Hütther and Diermeier (2019) summarize these developments and conclude that (macro-)economic shocks and putatively rising inequality failed to explain the rise of the *AfD*. In contrast to *actual* economic deprivation, the authors point to *perceived* economic distress as well as to the importance

²⁸ Own translation from Bergmann et al. (2018, p. 243).

of regional differences within Germany. In fact, despite Germany having prospered macroeconomically, globalization induced trade competition hit regionally clustered industries (Südekum et al., 2016) and highly specialized but low-skilled manufacturing workers with few exit options (Dauth et al., 2021).

In this sense, it might seem conclusive that in a newspaper article Jens Südekum (2017) infers that trade shocks triggered a turn to the *AfD* in specific regions. However, in-depth analyses that include the developments over time and space reveal a more ambiguous picture that proves once again the *AfD*'s chameleonic character. In the 2013 federal election and the 2014 European parliament election, county-level measures of economic deprivation showed no correlation with *AfD* election results, whereas first indications of such a relationship were already traced in Eastern Germany (Schwander and Manow, 2018).²⁹ The regionally divergent picture persisted at least until the 2017 federal election. Namely, a county-level cluster analysis run by Bergmann et al. (2018) shows ample heterogeneity between *AfD* heartlands and describes four economically distinct types of regions where the party was highly successful. First, the *AfD* won high shares in prosperous Southern German industry hubs such as Ingolstadt and Heilbronn. Second, the party was successful in rural Bavaria with sound labour markets that generated average incomes. Third, rural Eastern German regions formed a cluster with relatively high, however, strongly decreasing unemployment rates and regionally average incomes. Finally, the radical populist right performed relatively well in several structurally weak Ruhrgebiet cities. Based on these empirical findings the authors point to the difficulties to identify *the* 'breeding ground' for radical right populism in Germany.

Regression models, applying a broader set of county-level variables corroborate the regionally mixed results (Franz, Fratzscher, Kritikos 2018). In Western Germany, the regional correlation of *AfD* election results with lower household incomes and a higher share of (high-paid) manufacturing employment left a contradictory picture. In Eastern Germany, the correlation between an unfavourable demographic situation and strong *AfD* electoral performance stood out. As a German wide similarity, the authors stress the vulnerability of economically weak rural areas for the populist appeal; a finding that is seconded by Sebastian Kurtenbach (2019). Also, Dorn et al. (2020) find that in the 2017 federal election, on average, relative regional variation in economic deprivation causally gave rise to the *AfD*'s electoral success.

One of the few comprehensive studies that take the municipal-level perspective applies a sophisticated definition of rural areas and finds that also in 2017 – only in Eastern Germany – the *AfD* won disproportional vote shares in rural regions (Deppisch et al., 2019). Manès Weisskircher (2020) echoes

²⁹ See also Weisskircher (2020) for the argument that economic distress in Eastern Germany has increasingly triggered the *AfD*'s electoral success.

the debate on 'left-behind' places by stressing the "feelings of a lack of recognition" (p. 620) in Eastern Germany. Also, Manow (2018), running small-area regressions, shows that rather than present labour market characteristics high unemployment rates in the past mattered for *AfD* election results of 2017. The study concludes that regional *AfD* support stemmed from 'insider' rather than 'outsider' protest. The robust correlation between the regional share of (well-paid) manufacturing employment and *AfD* electoral success points in the same direction (Bergmann et al., 2018; Manow, 2018). Hence, comparable to the findings on the individual-level, also small-area studies raise the question whether favourable 'breeding grounds' for the *AfD* might swell where people still have something to lose.

Compared with the international discussion on the 'ballot box revolt' in "places that don't matter" (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018, p. 189), the German situation seems more complex. On the one hand, also on the regional-level, *AfD* support could to a certain degree be explained through a general disenchantment with politics. The *AfD* was successful in areas with low, but increasing turnout (Haußner and Leininger, 2018), confirming the assumption that voters who had been driven out of the political arena ('exit') now found political representation in the newly established PRRP ('voice') (Pickel, 2019). On the other hand, as an explanation for the absence of broad radical rural protests, The Economist (2019) invokes that the successful decentralized *Mittelstand*-based economic business model stabilized remote regions economically – even in times of radical structural change.

Although somewhat inconclusive, the empirical findings launched a political debate on rural economic deprivation. Prominent politicians such as the German federal minister for food and agriculture Christian Schmitt echoes "where people in the countryside feel left-behind, populism diffuses" (own translation, Schmitt quoted in Ehrenstein, 2016). Also, qualitative interview-based research in areas with outstanding *AfD* support confirms that feelings of being abandoned went along with support for the populist radical right (Hilje, 2018). Whereas this research design remains silent on the direction of causality, Rösel and Sonnenburg (2016) show how an increasing "political distance" (own translation, p. 7), defined as the inverse share of voters in a municipality of all voters in a county, *caused* a higher *AfD* election result in a state election.

Motivated by different dimensions of being 'left-behind', Larissa Deppisch (2020) conducts a media discourse analysis on rural regions and the rise of the *AfD* and shows how the public debate has engrained the discourse on those regions. More specifically, an infrastructural, an economic, and a cultural dimension of being 'left-behind' was identified and discussed. However, the jury is still out on the empirical importance of these very specific dimensions on the spatial distribution of *AfD* support.

Finally, and similarly to the difficulties in identifying *the AfD* supporter economically (see chapter 3.2.2), the identification of *the* economic ‘breeding ground’ remains inconclusive.³⁰

3.3 What we learned and what we didn’t learn: Research gaps

The literature is clear on the definition of the populist radical right and what holds the party family together. Recalling Mudde’s (2007) broadly shared conceptualization, PRRPs are built around an inherently *nativist* core ideology in combination with *populist* policies to protect the ‘pure people’. Hence, PRRPs are in desperate need for an undeserving out-group to be socio-culturally distinguished from the ‘pure’ and ‘hard-working’ ‘common people’. What is more, an *authoritarian* conviction demands extreme submission under the in-group’s will, resulting in a taste for ‘law and order’ policies. Characteristic of PRRPs, this in-group/out-group distinction does not entail a superiority of their own people, culture, or nation: *Ethnopluralism* – equality of every culture as long as it remains pure – distinguishes the ‘New Right’ from “traditional” (Ignazi, 1997, p. 57) neo-fascist parties. Thus, the mainstreaming of a pluralist multiculturalism through the “silent revolution” (Inglehart, 1977), implying a cultural openness and willingness to integrate ‘the other’ as well as the successful advances of integrationist aspirations within the EU, are identified as the last straw that PRRP supporters could no longer tolerate. Consequently, PRRPs constituted themselves as opponents to ‘New Left’ movements and rallied around a coherent set of extremely conservative (or ‘authoritarian’) cultural attitudes including a strict anti-immigration platform.

Having said that, the fierce discussions on the role of socio-economic cleavages (‘economic modernization losers’ or ‘globalisation losers’) in the literature fails to provide unequivocal patterns in either the supply of or the demand for the populist radical right’s economic policies. PRRPs started off with neoliberal economic policies that significantly shaped their appearance until the beginning of the 1990s (Betz, 1993a, 1994; Kitschelt and McGann, 1995). More recently some – but not all – party family members have endorsed more pro-welfare stances spiced up with a stark emphasis on welfare chauvinism (Lefkofridi and Michel, 2017; Afonso and Renwald, 2018; Abts et al., 2021). Discriminating immigrants in their access to welfare turned out particularly popular due to their low positioning in the deservingness hierarchy (van Oorschot, 2006).

Also on the demand side, the socio-economic heterogeneity – already remarked by Mudde (2007) – remained between and within PRRP electorates, triggering an ongoing but inconclusive hunt for *the* PRRP voter. Socio-economically, typical PRRP supporters seemed to be neither rich nor poor but rather mediocre (Bornschieer, 2018), leaving open their taste for redistribution. Since the hypothesis of the

³⁰ What is more, there is an intriguing spatial correlation between *AfD* election results and the electoral performance of the *NPD*, *DVU*, *Republikaner* during the last decades (Kurtenbach, 2019; Schwander and Manow, 2018), and of the *NSDAP* in 1933 (Cantoni et al., 2019). Schwander and Manow (2018) even speak of a “tradition of radical right voting” (p. 14), pointing rather to long run attitudinal traits than to short run economic developments.

working class' turn to neoliberalism has been rejected (Arzheimer, 2008) it became apparent that the populist radical right sits on the fence between a culturally aligned, but economically divided, 'petty bourgeoisie' and working class (Ivarsflaten, 2005). Lately, the latter economically rather left leaning group gained in importance and pressured a shift in the economic policy supply (Arzheimer, 2013; Oesch and Rennwald, 2018). Welfare chauvinism, as well as de-emphasizing or blurring the economic dimension altogether, turned out to be a viable way how PRRPs prevented getting torn apart by incompatible economic policy demands (Rovny, 2012, 2013).

Only the discussion on the regional 'context' that provides favourable 'breeding grounds' for PRRPs to plant their seed seems to have found a somewhat conclusive narrative. In fact, "places that don't matter" (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018, p. 189) that experienced economic distress due to globalization induced competition consistently showed better electoral results for the populist radical right (Rodrik, 2020). The 'left-behind' economic paradigm, however, is strongly intertwined with the cultural dimension. Following Goodhart's (2017) popular explanation of a salient societal cleavage during the onset of Brexit immobile and culturally conservative 'somewheres' resided in places of economic insignificance and revolted against 'the elite' due to regional economic distress, a value divide, and a lack of political representation.

The literature review on the populist radical right's economic policies, their electorate's socio-economic characteristics, and demand for welfare state policies, as well as their favourable contextual environments leaves many open questions for the discussion on its most recent successful German offshoot. Atypical for European PRRPs, but extremely effective in Germany, the *Alternative für Deutschland* was originally founded by an elitist group of (ordo-)liberal professors, mainly as a platform to politicize their critique of the German establishment's economic EU and Euro policies (Grimm, 2015). In their first overall positioning, the party revived Kitschelt and McGann's (1995) old 'winning formula' and occupied a long-time vacant 'representational gap' (Korte, 2008) – only with a stronger emphasis on economic liberalism and less on cultural authoritarianism. After a short founding period that brought important but unstable electoral success, the party took its turn into the direction of the PRRP party family and de-emphasized its economic positioning (Hansen and Olsen, 2019). The advancing refugee migration to Europe and Germany spurred this development and the '(ordo-)liberal economic wing' lost significantly in importance (Art, 2018). On the demand side, the party's electorate experienced the PRRP typical mild 'proletarianisation' and quickly converged into "a party of average income earners" (own translation, Bergmann et al., 2017b, p. 57). Still, during the 2017 federal election the *AfD* attracted a heterogeneous group ranging from 'petty bourgeoisie' to the 'common man' and thereby resembling the general German electorate (Hansen and Olsen, 2019). In an internal strategy paper during the run-up for the 2017 federal election, the party itself identified the typical PRRP set-

up of issue ownership over the cross-cutting cultural dimension – namely its anti-immigration platform – and the cleaving potential of its economic policies (Alternative für Deutschland, 2016a).

1. This specific starting point motivates a deeper analysis of the party's strategic inroads that the literature remains largely silent on. Clearly, the role of the economic issue for the *AfD*'s electoral successes deserves a research focus. Whereas the party started off advocating market liberalism and abstained from significant programmatic innovations the economic dimension seems to have become 'secondary' at least (Franzmann, 2016b). Economically left-leaning advances from Eastern German factions spread further confusion on the positioning. Decreasing socio-economic positions of *AfD* supporters raised the question if market liberalism contributed to a successful electoral mobilization. Finally, the *AfD* electorate's turn made it resemble the typical conflicting "unusual structure" (Ivarsflaten, 2005, p. 466) of European PRRPs and thus putting the spotlight on whether the German radical populist right turned to the common strategic answer: *economic strategy blurring* (Rovny, 2012, 2013). More generally, the literature misses out on an analysis that combines the economic supply and demand side and that poses the question, *how the Alternative für Deutschland's economic policy addresses its electorate's challenging socio-economic structure*.

Similarly, the discussion on favourable 'breeding grounds' for the *AfD* remains inconclusive. First, the German populist radical right succeeded in heterogeneous regional clusters ranging from deindustrialized regions along the Ruhr Valley to booming Southern German industry hubs, and wide areas of rural Eastern Germany (Bergmann et al., 2018). Second, evidence points into the direction of the 'revolt' in 'left-behind' places hypothesis, however, qualifying that – typical for European PRRPs – in these places not so 'left-behind' people must have endorsed the German populist radical right: "One possible explanation is that the extent of economic deprivation in a region does not only strengthen the *AfD*'s popularity among the economically deprived, but also among voters from other income groups" (Dorn et al., 2020, p. 25). Following up on the route of "places that don't matter" (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018, 189), qualitative studies point to the multi-dimensional characteristics of 'left-behind' regions (Deppisch, 2020).

2. One of the most promising discussed traits of regions being 'left-behind' in the context of the populist radical right in Germany and other European countries is the retreat of the state in terms of supply with basic infrastructure. Amongst others, missing train stations, schools, and hospitals are putatively interpreted by the rural population as if established politicians abandoned the respective areas (Altwegg, 2018; Hall, 2020). For Germany, such explanations might come as a surprise as the decentralized business model still includes highly successful small and medium-sized manufacturing companies with headquarters and production sites in

rural areas (The Economist, 2019). Despite the dispersion of those ‘hidden champions’ across the country there are also plenty of German regions without such tax generating cash-cows. Regional governments increasingly get in trouble to supply an attractive set of public infrastructures and thus provide a motivation to the following research question: *Does a less intense public good supply in rural Germany go along with an alienation of the population with established parties, finally triggering a turn to the AfD?*

Clearly, there is need for studies describing more precisely the role of economic policy supply and demand as well as the economics of favourable ‘breeding grounds’ for the *Alternative für Deutschland*. In order to understand the appeal of the populist radical right economic policy, however, a stronger focus on the evolution of the sole economic policy commonality – welfare chauvinism – and the deservingness hierarchy is inevitable. Not only a better understanding of the populist radical rights’ most dangerous economic weapons seems desirable, also a deeper analysis of the channels through which welfare chauvinism disperses into the society could shed light on PRRPs’ favourable political opportunity structures.

3. The presence of the welfare deservingness hierarchy as described by van Oorschot (2006) is a well-established empirical finding with severe implications. Placing *the* immigrant at the bottom of people’s perceived welfare deservingness establishes a large potential support for welfare state chauvinist policies (Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990); placing *the* unemployed second to last on the hierarchy, establishes a large potential support for “welfare populist” (Koster et al., 2013, p. 3) policies exploiting the deservingness of the ‘hard working’ ‘common’ people against the ‘lazy’ unemployed. Both, *welfare chauvinism* and *welfare populism* were picked up by the *Alternative für Deutschland* and constituted a widely shared sentiment among their supporters (Goerres et al., 2018). However, despite the efficacy and dispersion of the respective narratives and the finding that “collective images of welfare recipients” (Roosma et al., 2016, p. 181) mattered few empirical insights are discussed as to how the deservingness hierarchy evolved and how it was reinforced. Prominently, Martin Gilens’ (1999) study on ignominious media coverage of undeserving Afro-Americans is an influential exception to this rule that initiated as an important discussion on the responsibility of the media in the US. Comparable studies for Germany that address the narrative evolution of welfare chauvinism and welfare populism are still absent as of this publication and thereby prevent a complete assessment of the German media’s responsibility. This potentially paves the way for the populist radical right’s economic policy agenda: *Does the German media coverage reproduce the widely shared deservingness hierarchy displaying immigrants and unemployed as undeserving?*

The role of narratives reiterated by mass media is also interesting because preferences for a native in-group in most European welfare states, it seems, exceed the rather small group of PRRP supporters. Particularly left-wing parties have come under pressure as they face a “New Liberal Dilemma” (Newton, 2007) lacking support for a combined pro-immigration and inclusive pro-welfare platform. More ethnic heterogeneity, following this argument, comes at the cost of general welfare support. Increasing immigration numbers surrounding universal European welfare states have raised similar questions in Europe after formerly being traced in the US (Spies, 2018).

4. The strong potential support for welfare chauvinism, as revealed in peoples widely shared support for the deservingness hierarchy and its exploitation by the European populist radical right, points into a different direction. In contrast to the welfare state itself having been under attack it seemed rather that the inclusive welfare state with equal access for everyone comes under pressure. Whereas solidarity run high within a deserving in-group the exclusion of immigrants from equal access has been clearly supported not only by the ‘usual suspects’ but also among left-leaning electorates. Particularly, the “welfare magnet” (Borjas, 1999, p. 607) hypothesis – namely, that people are anxious about their welfare state being overburdened by immigrants’ claims – needs further discussion in this context. The working class’ alignment with PRRPs has illustrated the potential implications of shifts in welfare support and revealed the importance to understand these ‘attitudinal breeding grounds’ for PRRPs: *Why do even people who favour a highly redistributive welfare state support conditions on immigrants’ welfare access?*

Not only the attraction of PRRPs’ socio-cultural and economic policy platforms beyond the ‘usual (radical) suspect’ raised awareness of the recent advances by PRRPs. In fact, the rise of the German *AfD* was only one in a row of victories that the populist radical right gained. Brexit, as well as the entrance into several Western-European and Eastern European governments, fuelled the fear of a united block of the European right to shape European policies in the future. Ultimately, the populist radical right was built on a common understanding of *nativism*, *authoritarianism* and *populism* (Mudde, 2007) and stood united in their opposition to European integration (Vasilopoulou, 2018). Large shares of the population have signalled to support welfare chauvinism, one of the few economic common grounds of European PRRPs. The looming combined force of populist radical right parties in governments, opposition, and the European Parliament could put established parties under pressure and further prepossess European policy platforms (Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2016).

5. The painted dire picture, however, hardly withstands a reality check. First, PRRPs potential for policy congruence has been understood to be naturally limited. Nationalist egoisms and effective ‘cordon sanitaires’ worked their way to limit cooperation (Fieschi, 2000; McDonnell

and Werner, 2018). Second, PRRPs common, but “thin-centred-ideology” (Mudde, 2004, p. 544), is inherently opposed by country-specific entirely different economic interests – exemplary revealed in the European economic and financial crisis between ‘creditor’ and ‘debtor’ countries (Kriesi and Grande, 2016; Hutter and Kriesi, 2019). Particularly on the European-level, when it comes to the distribution of EU funds, the EU Budget, or monetary and financial policies the PRRP party family’s congruence is highly questionable. Bound by economic nativism, PRRPs are rather expected to fight than to cooperate along the party family line. Thus, despite their electoral successes, the European radical right’s joint force needs to be deconstructed once it comes to economic questions: *Does European PRRPs’ economic nativism limit the party family in unfolding their joint political muscles?*

Building on these five pressing research questions deducted from the evolution of the field the remainder of this synopsis turns to the contributions that intend to fill the previously discussed gaps in the literature. The following Part III focuses on the German *AfD*’s economic policy approach, its electorate, and contextual characteristics (first contribution and second contribution). Part IV zooms in on the European populist radical right common ‘attitudinal breeding ground’ in the economic dimension: welfare chauvinism (third contribution and fourth contribution). Part V carves out the deep divide within the party family that stems from nativist egoisms (fifth contribution). Part VI summarizes and concludes.

PART III: Welcome to the party family – the *AfD*'s economic policy supply, demand, and context

4. First contribution: “The *AfD*'s winning formula – no need for economic strategy blurring in Germany”

Ideologically, successful European populist radical right parties based their political advance on a clear anti-immigration and cultural ‘authoritarian’ position (Mudde, 2007). In 1996, former FN *délégué général* Bruno Mégret argued for exploring new shores by stating: “Today we are recognized as competent in the area of insecurity or immigration: tomorrow we must conquer a third important domain, the economic and social” (Mégret quoted in Bastow, 1998, p. 63). On the one hand, PRRPs’ success in economically distressed (‘left-behind’) places and its electorates’ mild ‘proletarianisation’ presumably catalysed the salience of the economic dimension for the party family. On the other hand, the “unusual structure of the populist right electorate” (Ivarsflaten, 2005, p. 466), realigning groups with opposing economic and welfare state preference, put into question how “a schizophrenic socio-economic agenda” (Mudde, 2007, p. 135) could take centre stage without affronting an important share of supporters. Whereas it has been argued that PRRPs often “continue to promise the world to all groups” (Mudde, 2007, p. 135) from their oppositional backbenches, these openly conflicting economic promises can constitute looming electoral costs. Especially important for the evaluation of the German *AfD*, Bornschieer (2010) concludes: “To assess the dynamics of success of the populist right, it is therefore essential to move beyond one-dimensional left-right conceptions of political space and to distinguish clearly between the party positions on both dimensions [culture and economics] that are found to underlie party oppositions in Western Europe” (p. 6).

4.1 The empirical puzzle

In contrast to PRRPs that traditionally understand the economic dimension as a “secondary” (Mudde, 2007, p. 119) issue, the *AfD* was born by professors of economics, protesting against the whitewashing of (ordo-)liberal economics in Germany – particularly, but not exclusively with regards to Germany’s role in the European sovereign debt crisis (Grimm, 2015). During the founding period, the party clearly attracted a rather affluent electorate that matched the (ordo-)liberal economic agenda with their preferences (Bergmann et al., 2017b). After its turn into a full-fledged populist radical right party, this relationship became less obvious. Subsequently, the *AfD* supporter base experienced the typical mild ‘proletarianisation’ and lost a significant share of voters, who held favourable socio-economic positions. In the run-up to the federal election *AfD* supporters’ income structure strongly resembled that of the German population (Bergmann et al., 2018). Strategically, the *AfD* faced the typical PRRP economic policy dilemma, as revealed in its internal strategy paper for the federal election in 2017:

With regard to so far non-decisive topics (this holds especially for economic and welfare policy) it has to be paid particular attention that the AfD's electorate is not divided. Whereas parts of the bourgeoisie with a liberal-conservative mindset on the one hand and the working-class and the unemployed on the other hand hold similar views on topics such as Euro/Europe, security, migration/Islam, democracy, national identity or genderism, differences can come up on questions such as tax equity, the pension level, health security contributions, rent control or unemployment security. [...] For the success in 2017, it is primarily important to leave any differences in the background as far as possible, as has been the case in the past, and to emphasize what the AfD electorate has in common. If this is not possible, cross references between core topics and presumably dividing topics have to be drawn.

(own translation, Alternative für Deutschland, 2016a, p. 8)

In fact, the AfD's chameleonic character makes it difficult to evaluate the role economic policy has played for the culturally radicalized party. Programmatically, the AfD has not deviated from its (ordo-)liberal roots (see Figure 3) – pointing to a possible revival of the old 'winning formula' (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995) of 'liberal' economic policy and an 'authoritarian' cultural stance – as observed for PRRPs in Austria, Norway, and Switzerland. Also, the AfD supporters' taste for a merit-based principle of justice aligned them with the liberal FDP electorate (Eisnecker et al., 2018). However, the advances by the AfD faction from Thuringia to demand a "citizens pension" (own translation, AfD Fraktion im Thüringer Landtag, 2018) or the "*Staatsbürgergeld*" (Springer, 2020), boosting claims for the native in-group, represents an openly welfare chauvinist policy – following the route of many European PRRPs (Otjes et al., 2018). Furthermore, fishing for voters on the economic left by founding a partisan union and calling the AfD "the party of social justice" (Hank, 2018) gives the impression that the party actually heads to the left – as role-modelled by several PRRPs (Lefkofridi and Michel, 2017; Afonso and Renwald, 2018). Finally, the deliberate beclouding of the economic dimension, in order to 'address' heterogeneous economic preferences – labelled "strategy blurring" by Jan Rovny (2013, p. 1) – has been carved out as a reasonable economic policy strategy. The fact that "the AfD electorate [...] is rather incoherent with regard to economic conflicts" (Schwarzbözl and Fatke, 2016, p. 289) as well as the socio-economic heterogeneity of its strongholds (Bergmann et al., 2018) echoes the AfD strategy paper and points to the potential of blurring the economic position. For the AfD, Franzmann (2016a) is the first to discover "a kind of blurring of its populist position" (Franzmann, 2016a, p. 474) but misses a final empirical proof.

The aim of this contribution is to bring together the AfD's economic policy supply and demand. First, the implications of the mild 'proletarianisation' on the demand side are traced for changes in the aggregated economic policy preferences. Second, the party's economic strategy is unfolded on the

supply side. Finally, the relative importance of the economic dimension in comparison with the cultural dimension as well as its anti-system appeal is evaluated among *AfD* supporters.

4.2 Method and data

Data on issue positioning in the economic³¹ and cultural³² dimension of the German political system is extracted from the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) and 2017 Chapel Hill Expert FLASH Survey (Polk et al., 2017). The advantage of the CHES over pure manifesto based positionings is the more holistic evaluation of an expert survey. Large parts of the literature have employed the issue related standard deviations of expert judgements as a simple proxy for strategy blurring (Rovny, 2012, 2013; Afonso and Renwald, 2018; Palier and Manow, 2018; Han, 2020). Whereas the experts' discord on issue positionings reveal without question an important ambiguity on respective topics, a solely expert ruling-based operationalization of strategy blurring appears overly simplistic. Therefore, this contribution analyses the role of strategy blurring by considering supporters' perception of party positioning and their deviation from expert judgements.

Demand side data on the German electorate's economic and cultural policy preferences, perceived issue positioning, as well as respondents' socio-economic characteristics, are extracted from the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) representative Longterm-Online-Tracking as well as the GLES Pre- and Post-Election 2017 waves.³³ A Democracy Dissatisfaction Index and an Angela Merkel Sympathy Index are constructed from the same data source. Divided by the party's radicalization, the selected waves provide survey data of 4.123 respondents before and 7.483 respondents after June 2015 – the date of the infamous Essen party convention. *AfD* supporters amount to 226 in the founding period and to 581 in the radicalization period.

The combination of supply and demand side allows one to test how well the *AfD*'s economic agenda matches its supporters' preferences. Successful economic strategy blurring would be detected if all groups of *AfD* supporters *perceive* their economic preferences were matched, although *objectively* – as measured by CHES expert positioning – this was only the case for some groups and not for others. The compiled dataset allows one to run logistic regression models with binary support for the *AfD* as the dependent variable and to plot the respective predictive margins. The models test the relative importance of economic against cultural preferences as well as in comparison to general disenchantment with democracy or Angela Merkel.

³¹ The economic dimension is operationalized between parties' preferences for the "government to play an active role in the economy" to "a reduced economic role for government" (CHES – Chapel Hill Expert Survey, 2018).

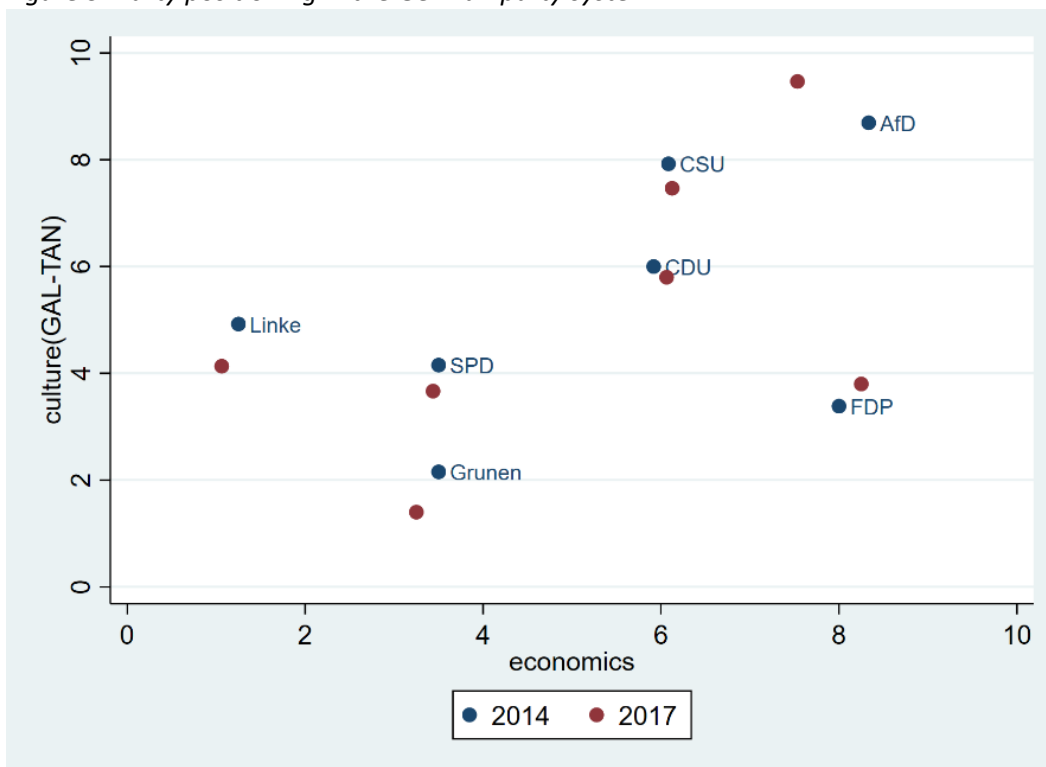
³² The cultural dimension (*GAL-TAN*) is operationalized between: "libertarian" or "postmaterialist" parties and "traditional" or "authoritarian" parties (CHES – Chapel Hill Expert Survey, 2018).

³³ See Rattinger et al. (2015b, 2015a); Roßteutscher et al. (2016b, 2016a); Roßteutscher et al. (2017b); Roßteutscher et al. (2017a); Rattinger et al. (2018); Roßteutscher et al. (2018).

4.3 Results

The supply side analysis of CHES expert judgements reveals the *AfD*'s well-known cultural radicalization between 2013 and 2017 in combination with a de-emphasised economic positioning. Interestingly, experts unambiguously confirm the *AfD*'s market liberal economic position that even in 2017 ranges somewhere in between the liberal *FDP* and the conservative *CDU/CSU* (see Figure 5). In contrast to other European PRRPs who becloud their positionings, at least in the perception of experts, the *AfD* takes a different route.

Figure 5: Party positioning in the German party system



Source: own calculations based on CHES—Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2017 and FLASH survey 2014 (Polk et al., 2017)

On the demand side, the GLES data highlights that *AfD* supporters fiercely oppose redistribution. Their preferences for stronger state interventions are dramatically (and statistically significant) lower than those of other party supporters (see Table 2). Even the least affluent *AfD* supporters have lower redistribution preferences than the most affluent non-*AfD* supporters (see Table 2). Given the *AfD* support of socio strata, holding lower socio-economic positions, this means that economic policies are supported against economic interests but in line with redistribution preferences.

Combining data of supply and demand, the logistic regression models confirm Goerres et al. (2018) and show that *AfD* supporters' anti-statist preferences match the party's positioning well – with no qualitative differences between Western and Eastern Germany. Despite the massively increasing importance of the unique authoritarian cultural positioning and the strong anti-system appeal,

opposition to redistribution matters for *AfD* supporters as much as economic preferences matter for other party supporters. The *AfD*'s 'winning formula' can be pinned down as an emphasized cultural right positioning and an opposition to the political establishment in combination with a less emphasized anti-redistribution positioning.

Table 2: Economic policy preferences (right-left) based on subjective class indication (t-test: $H_a: mean_{AfD} \neq mean_{non\ AfD}$)

Phase 1 (2013-2015)							
class	<i>AfD</i> supporter			Non- <i>AfD</i> supporter			t-test
	N	Share	Mean	N	Share	Mean	Diff
lower	7	3.2	6.1	110	3.0	7.1	
working	45	20.8	4.2	562	15.5	5.6	***
lower middle	58	26.9	4.7	881	24.3	5.9	***
middle	89	41.2	4.9	1644	45.3	5.8	***
upper middle	16	7.4	4.8	413	11.4	5.7	
upper	1	0.5	2.0	17	0.5	4.5	---
<i>total</i>	<i>216</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>4.8</i>	<i>3627</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>5.8</i>	***

Phase 2 (2016-2017)							
class	<i>AfD</i> supporter			Non- <i>AfD</i> supporter			t-test
	N	Share	Mean	N	Share	Mean	N
lower	18	3.3	5.8	119	1.8	7.1	**
working	122	22.5	4.9	920	14.2	5.8	***
lower middle	138	25.5	4.9	1386	21.4	6.2	***
middle	217	40.0	4.6	3118	48.2	6.0	***
upper middle	46	8.5	4.5	891	13.8	6.0	***
upper	1	0.2	6.0	39	0.6	6.1	---
<i>total</i>	<i>542</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>4.8</i>	<i>6473</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>6.0</i>	***

Source: own calculations based on selected GLES waves

Hence, at least until the federal election in 2017 – and despite its own concerns – the *AfD* was neither tempted to apply strategy blurring, nor move to the economic left. Although, also PRRPs in Switzerland, Norway, and Austria were found to have revived the old 'winning formula', the radicalized *AfD* is unique in the European party family in the sense that it no longer attracts a mainly affluent electorate, but still proposes an (ordo-)liberal economic agenda. Electorates that consciously endorse the radical right in line with their preferences but against their economic interests have rather been attributed to the US (Frank, 2004; Cramer, 2016; Hochschild, 2016).

5. Second contribution: “The more the better? Political implications of the diverging supply of public services in Germany”

The first contribution mirrors the inconclusive hunt of *who* representative PRRP voters are in Germany and motivates the turn to an analysis on *where* they reside. Ultimately, “studies in small(ish) areas are currently one of the most promising avenues of research into the radical right vote” (Arzheimer, 2018, p. 160).³⁴ The general downside that contextual analyses face is that they remain silent on the specific people who pick the radical right at the ballot in PRRPs’ ‘breeding grounds’. It is therefore important to move forward from the very broad macro-level comparisons and ringfence small and meaningful spatial units.

Furthermore, the catchy debate on the “revenge of the places that don’t matter” (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018, p. 189) has fuelled the interest in the relationship between the socio-economics and the rise of PRRPs in ‘left-behind’ regions. The infrastructural issue in rural areas added up on the notion that regionally rooted and culturally ‘authoritarian’ ‘somewheres’ felt a political misrepresentation by ‘cosmopolitan’ ‘anywheres’ who favoured their home turf, the cities (Le Bras, 2015; Guilluy, 2018). With globalization providing more favourable conditions for agglomerations in comparison with formerly industrialized areas, many regional authorities lacked the budgetary room to manoeuvre to maintain or extend public service supply (Dauth et al., 2018). As an example, the importance of accessible train stations outside of large cities has been stressed for the fall of established parties and the rise of the *Front National* in France (The Economist, 2017a; Altwegg, 2018). The assumed relationship between an unattractive supply with public infrastructure and the alienation of people residing in the respective areas from established parties has become a frequently-shared view:

In East Germany for instance, in the North of Britain, in parts of the US a lot of the complaint has to do with the declining quality of public services. [...] The fact that the train station closed, the fact that now I have to go 50 miles to the hospital rather than 10 miles [...]. Those lead to feelings of being left-behind and feelings of resentment. [...] You get a very vicious circle. It may be possible to cut into such a vicious circle by thinking about [...] the regional distribution of the resources that people see as crucial for their lives.

(Hall, 2020, 41:30 Min)

It remains highly questionable that the populist radical right would be able to address the complex globalization driven difficulties of ‘left-behind’ places. Nevertheless, criticizing the government from their oppositional backbenches or supporting local initiatives “signals to potential supporters that the

³⁴ Contextual studies have the general advantage of not relying on potentially biased self-reported survey data (Schwander and Manow, 2018).

radical right is taking over responsibilities that the state—due to its allegedly failed elites—no longer does” (Rydgren, 2018a, p. 10). Such a setting provides a strong motivation to finally zoom in on the different layers of a region being ‘left-behind’ empirically.

5.1 The empirical puzzle

In Germany, the constitution demands governments to provide countrywide “balanced living conditions” (own translation, GG § 72). Correspondingly, broad measurements of regional inequality remained stable or even decreased over the last decades (Fuest and Immel, 2019) and the *AfD* turned out to be also successful not only in the rural hinterlands but equally in the prosperous German manufacturing hubs. Hence, the discussion on Germany’s ‘left-behind’ places would profit from turning to more fine-grained mechanisms such as the (lacking) supply with public infrastructures, potentially triggering discontent. Again, the legal perspective is clear cut and egalitarian: “The provision of public services and infrastructures, in particular the accessibility of facilities and offers of basic services for all population groups, must be ensured in an appropriate manner to constitute equality of opportunity in the sub-areas; this also applies in sparsely populated regions” (own translation, ROG § 2). The ‘appropriate manner’ remains undefined however, as in other European countries and large regions of Germany, the important municipal budgets have not been balanced for years (Beznoska and Kauder, 2019). Especially in rural regions a vicious circle of a difficult demographic situation, low competitiveness, few attractive jobs, and low tax incomes reduced municipalities’ chances to maintain up-to-date infrastructures (Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt und Raumforschung, 2017).

On the one hand, low tax revenues for municipal treasuries restrained the local supply of public services, motivating the radical demand for a purely efficiency-based approach on regional infrastructure: Regional policy would then target urban cores exclusively and leave rural areas aside (Leibniz Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung Halle, 2019). The striking statement by Federal Research Minister Anja Karliczek that “5G is not necessary at every milk jug” (own translation, Karliczek quoted in Grasnack, 2018) could be interpreted in a similar vein. And, the criticism of hospitals’ overcapacity or lacking specialization paid into the trade-off between efficient care versus health services being widely accessible (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2019).

On the other hand, the German media debate on ‘left-behind’ places entailed a stark criticism of infrastructural deficits (Deppisch, 2020). In line with the according evidence from other European countries, Andreas Reckwitz (2019) foreshadows: “The province [is on the verge of] becoming the *flyover* land of the spatially left-behind” (italics in original, p. 100). In contrast to the legally earmarked ‘balanced’ supply of public services, which is evidence from qualitative interviews in *AfD* strongholds, revealed a perceived “gap in the supply of public services” (own translation, Hilje, 2018, p. 15) – social

and transport infrastructure was primarily named. What is more, the Covid-19 pandemic gave the discussion on medical overcapacities a new twist (ZEIT Online, 2020). In addition to that, the *AfD* passed a respective motion on its party convention in November 2020: “For cost reasons, more and more hospitals in rural areas are being closed [...]. We demand the preservation of nationwide care also according to objective need and not only according to cost-benefit aspects” (own translation, Alternative für Deutschland, 2020, p. 19).

The concern that the *AfD* might profit from discontent in ‘left-behind’ regions is mirrored by developments such as the stabilisation of the secularly decreasing turnout in the 2017 federal election through populist radical right mobilization in socio-economically distressed constituencies (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2017). Hence, the apparent solution for established parties to win disappointed non-voters (‘exit’) as well as *AfD* supporters (‘voice’) in rural ‘left-behind’ places and overcome the “geography of discontent” (Dijkstra et al., 2019) is to strengthen the supply with public services (Franz et al., 2019; Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2019). This contribution intends to provide the missing empirical link between weak rural public service supply and a turn to the German populist radical right in a small-area study.

5.2 Method and data

In the past, most spatial analyses on contextual factors of *AfD* election results were run at the county-level (Franz, Fratzscher, Kritikos 2018; Bergmann et al., 2017b, 2018; Franz et al., 2019). In contrast to these broad regional units, this contribution follows Deppisch et al. (2019) and analyses the much smaller municipal-level. As a proxy of disenchantment in the 11,049 municipalities, the share of non-voters and *AfD*-voters is calculated for the 2017 federal election and the 2019 European Parliament election.³⁵

Since this contribution intends to address a broad definition of public services – medical, transport, digital, and educational infrastructure – the dataset is compiled from different sources. In line with the legally established importance of accessibility (§ 2 ROG), a specific focus lies on the average distance to and accessibility of the infrastructure within the respective municipality. *Medical infrastructure* is covered by the share of households living within one kilometre of a pharmacy from the INKAR database, as well as the accessibility of hospitals in car driving minutes provided by the GKV clinic simulator.³⁶ *Transport infrastructure* is covered by autobahn accessibility in car driving minutes and public transport departures per capita from the INKAR database. The geographic distance to the

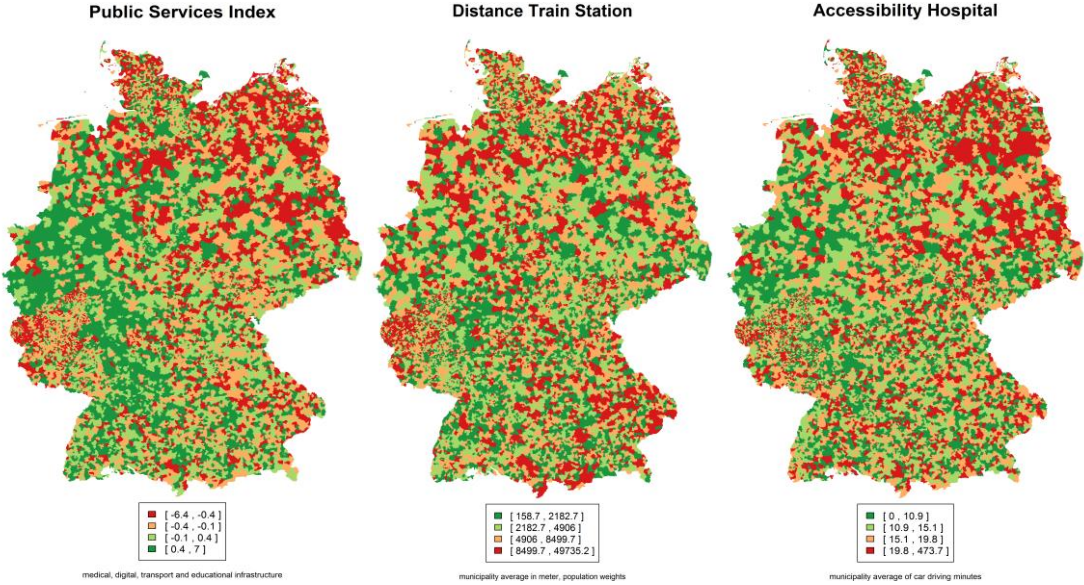
³⁵ This data is drawn from the Federal Returning Officer: <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/>.

Missing variables are first imputed by county averages and second by multiple imputation. The votes of joint postal voting districts are distributed according to the proportion of the respective ballot vote cast to the entire ballot vote cast in the associated electoral district.

³⁶ The average hospital accessibility is calculated from: <https://www.gkv-kliniksimulator.de/>.

nearest train station is calculated from an unstructured list of all 5,500 Deutsche Bahn train stations as an average population-weighted distance.³⁷ *Digital infrastructure* is covered by the share of households within a municipality that have a 100Mbit broadband access from the INKAR database. *Educational infrastructure* is covered by the share of students in general education schools of the population aged between six and 18 years from the INKAR database. The public services variables are standardized and equally weighted to indices of medical, digital, transport, and educational infrastructure, and then aggregated to an overall index. Figure 6 shows the spatial characteristics of the overall index and the distance to the nearest train station as well as the accessibility of the nearest hospital.

Figure 6: Geographical distribution of public service supply in Germany



Source: own calculations based on INKAR, Deutsche Bahn, GKV-Kliniksimulator

Additionally, data on municipal debt levels is extracted from the *Federal Statistical Offices of the Federation and the Länder*.³⁸ Demographic statistics are exploited from the INKAR database. Due to data scarcity at the municipal-level, socio-economic control variables are exclusively supplied by the Federal Employment Agency (BA) and thus only cover labour market characteristics.³⁹ Finally, the German Economic Institute’s (IW) patent database (Koppel and Röben 2019) is employed, including geo-referencing of all patent applications filed by German applicants at the German Patent and Trademark Office (DPMA) by applicant location. Patent activity, in contrast to sheer employment

³⁷ The average train station distance is calculated from the following geo-referenced list of train stations: <https://data.deutschebahn.com/dataset/data-stationsdaten>.

³⁸ Data can be accessed from: <https://www.regionalstatistik.de/>.

³⁹ Data can be accessed from: <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Navigation/Statistik/Statistik-nach-Themen/Beschaefigung/Beschaefigung-Nav.html>.

shares in manufacturing, provides a proxy for the innovative strength and future viability of local economies.

The *AfD* election results on the municipal-level serve as the dependent variable in population weighted OLS regression models. The main variables of interest are the different measures of public service supply. Due to missing historical data the models lack to account for changes in the supply of public infrastructure over time and can only be interpreted as a first correlation analysis.⁴⁰ In order to zoom in on rural areas, subsample regression models are run for municipalities with less than 20,000 inhabitants and less than 5,000 inhabitants as well as for medium-sized towns.

5.3 Results

The contribution aims at opening the empirical debate of the spatial relationship between disparate public services and political alienation between voters and established parties in rural Germany. As expected, the regression analysis for the 2017 *Bundestag* election and the 2019 European election uncovers a spatial correlation between *AfD* electoral success and poor public services, low political participation, a difficult labour market situation, and emigration. In principle, spatial variables offer a significant explanatory contribution to the large differences in *AfD* election results across German municipalities.

Regarding public services in rural areas, however, the analysis does not yield the expected outcomes by all accounts. Although, the provision of public services clearly decreases with municipality size, and it offers little explanatory power for different *AfD* election results between smaller municipalities. In contrast, particularly strong effects can be observed among the very heterogeneous medium-sized towns. These finding could be explained with various expectations in differently sized municipalities. People in very rural areas perhaps do not expect their local authorities to provide infrastructures such as train stations or hospitals. In medium-sized towns, where larger projects are generally possible and not uncommon, voters rather pay special attention to what established politicians offer.

The fact that single intensely discussed infrastructures such as train stations are uncorrelated with *AfD* election results points to the danger of over-interpreting catchy narratives and simplifying explanatory patterns as to the decline of established parties. All in all, the analysis of public service supply does not reveal the silver bullet that explains the German PRRP's success in 'left-behind' places. The empirical picture remains complex: A low-level of municipal debt is not shown to have a pacifying effect, nor do comparatively high incomes from the manufacturing sector limit the *AfD*'s popularity – quite the opposite is true. Nevertheless, an innovative and forward-looking economy – as proxied by a vivid

⁴⁰ Maximum likelihood spatial simultaneous autoregressive error models have reproduced the OLS regression results qualitatively.

patent activity – as well as sound labour markets have the potential to mitigate support for right-wing populism. In Germany, rather than in other European economies, these innovative clusters ('hidden champions') can be found outside the successful agglomerations (The Economist, 2019), possibly limiting the "density divide" (Wilkinson, 2019) and the success of the populist radical right.

It can be shown that the *AfD*'s successes in rural *and* urban areas are geographically associated with economic distress. The lack of distinctive characteristics of *AfD* strongholds in scarcely populated regions reveals a demand for more in-depth and even smaller-area analyses. Especially, the complex understanding of causal impact assessments and the exploration of options for political action need to be put on the agenda. Therefore, more specific qualitative data on public services is necessary over a longer time horizon. Future analyses need to combine the spatial dimension with survey data to examine the extent to which voters in endangered regions are actually affected by economic difficulties and weak public services or whether it is precisely those who are inclined toward the *AfD* who observe corresponding problems in their environment but have not (yet) been troubled themselves.

PART IV: Paving the way – welfare chauvinist roots in the European and German society

6. Third contribution: “Bild-Online’s inequality headlines – a mouthpiece of the deservingness hierarchy?”

The first and second contribution provide empirical evidence on economic supply and demand as well as contextual characteristics correlated with the *AfD*’s (regional) success. Part IV turns to an in-depth analysis of the prevailing ‘attitudinal breeding grounds’, the deep roots and long-lasting developments of welfare chauvinist attitudes in the society. As a first step, this contribution intends to unfold the evolution of un-deservingness of immigrants (“welfare state chauvinism”; Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990, p. 212) and the unemployed (“welfare populism”; Koster et al., 2013, p. 3) in Germany.

Until the pioneering work by van Oorschot (2006), the welfare deservingness discussion was largely decoupled between Europe and the US. Welfare chauvinism was rather understood as a non-European phenomenon: “Americans tend to think that blacks are more lazy and less responsible than whites, and that therefore welfare is taken up mostly by black people. [...] European studies have concentrated more on the public image of unemployed people” (van Oorschot, 2006, p. 25). Van Oorschot’s seminal contribution made clear, however, that also in Europe not the unemployed but the immigrants reside at the very bottom of the public image when it comes to welfare deservingness.

Despite this wake-up call, little effort was made to uncover the mechanisms behind the European deservingness structure. Whereas Gilens (1999) prominently carves out the overly negative depiction of ethnic minorities in the US media as a major reason for low welfare support among white Americans, little comparative evidence has been brought forward for the European case. In this context, the role of the German media seems to be an especially promising inroad to analyse the success of an (ordo-) liberal PRRP. First, mirroring the deservingness hierarchy, little taste for solidarity with immigrants but neither with the unemployed has been found among *AfD* supporters who favour redistribution towards the elderly (Goerres et al., 2018). Second and more generally, the country’s public inequality tolerance depended strongly on individuals perceived merit, favouring the working over the non-working population (Eisnecker et al., 2018).⁴¹ And welfare preferences among Germans generally entailed a pronounced notion of nativism (Appelbaum, 2002; Vester, 2017). What is more, during the recent years of intense refugee migration, welfare chauvinist attitudes were activated, far beyond the group of *AfD* voters (Marx and Naumann, 2018). Manow (2018) describes the large influx of refugees to have fostered welfare state related feelings of injustice and mobilized for Germany’s populist radical

⁴¹ See also European Social Survey, Round 8, 2016: <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>.

right: “Now it was clear that in the event of unemployment after only one year, one would in effect be equal to refugees in terms of one's social security coverage, and this would be completely independent of one's level of education, previous earnings (and thus the amount of contributions), and the previous contribution period” (own translation, p. 88).

This contribution intends to fill the apparent research gap on the emergence and reiteration of distinctive welfare state preferences in Germany. A focus is laid on the narrations behind specific groups being portrayed in the media as deserving or undeserving, potentially laying the groundwork for the *AfD*'s welfare state policies.

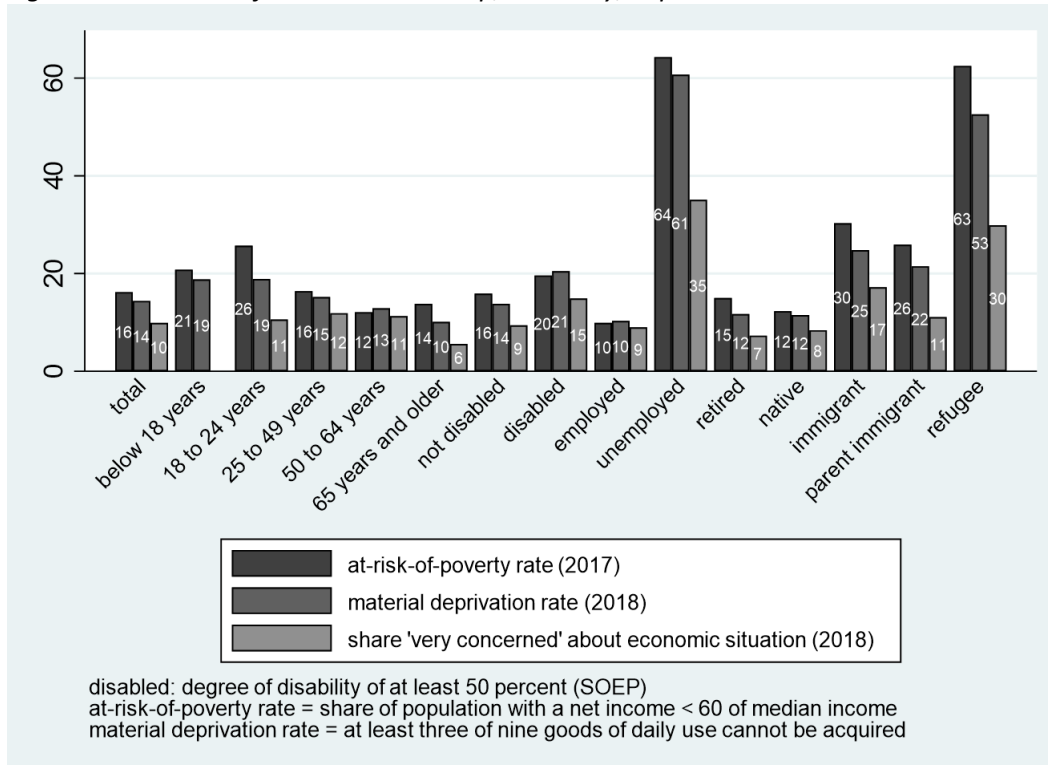
6.1 The empirical puzzle

On the one hand, Germans' preferences for welfare programs follow the described typical deservingness hierarchy. On the other hand, a broad majority of the German population criticised inequality as generally too high (Heinrich et al., 2016) and demanded policies to reduce income differences (Engelhardt and Wagener, 2018) by redistribution toward “the common people” (ALLBUS - Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften, 2020) or the “socially deprived” (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 2017).

Figure 7 shows the contradiction of the described preference combination as it provides an overview over different measures of economic hardship. Independent of whether the income-based at-risk-of-poverty rate, the broader material deprivation rate, or the self-reported share of people who are “very concerned about the economic situation”⁴² is consulted, clearly the unemployed are the most economically distressed group in Germany. The second most deprived group is represented by the immigrants and their children; the subgroup of refugees holds particularly unfavourable socio-economic positions. Hence, inequality in Germany could effectively be reduced through welfare programs targeted at unemployed and immigrants. Finally, turning the welfare deservingness hierarchy entirely upside down, people aged more than 65 years as well as retired people hold most favourable economic positions. Thus, the comparison between program specific welfare state preferences and actual deprivation leaves a puzzling picture: Germans generally express the wish to help the deprived through redistribution but bring forward the lowest preferences for the most distressed groups – the unemployed and the immigrants – and the greatest solidarity with the best-off group – the elderly. Interestingly, Germans are much more hostile against ‘economic immigrants’ than against refugees although they realize that the latter group puts a strain on the welfare state (ALLBUS - Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften, 2020).

⁴² See SOEP – Sozio-oekonomisches Panel (2020): https://www.diw.de/en/diw_01.c.703950.en/soep.v35.html.

Figure 7: Measures of economic hardship, Germany, in percent



Sources: own calculations based on SOEP – Sozio-oekonomisches Panel (2020)

Furthermore, the hunt for an explanation of these welfare state preferences in the political-economic realm has turned to the role of *narratives* (Koschorke, 2013; Shiller, 2019). Especially for understanding the influential depiction of immigrants by the radical right, *deep stories* – widely shared and emotionally rooted narrations – have been identified to be seminal (Hochschild, 2016; Dörre, 2020). Also in Germany, *AfD* communication frames have been carved out, targeting the allegedly low socio-economic positions of immigrants and their putative intentions to exploit the German welfare state (Stahl, 2019).

The repeated one-sided depiction of specific vulnerable groups in the public discourse has been criticised to trigger *single stories*, negative images that shape a flawed public picture within an entire society (Ngozi Adichie, 2009). Although the *AfD*'s communication strategy might be convincing and echoed in larger parts of the society and not just among its supporters, it is unlikely that the party is responsible for the evolution of the deeply rooted welfare state preferences. The influential role of German media, in contrast, has been found to heat up the inequality debate and to trigger economic concerns through increasing inequality coverage during a period of rather stagnating actual inequality (Diermeier et al., 2017). Following Gilens (1999), this contribution turns back to the role of the German media and zooms in on a mass communication medium that might function as a 'mouthpiece' of the deservingness hierarchy and paving the way for a populist right party that exploits the low perceived deservingness of immigrants and the unemployed.

6.2 Method and data

A recent study on the link between inequality media coverage and political action to strengthen redistribution has accused the German media of “trivializing” (Smith Ochoa, 2019, p. 319) inequality by focusing on disputes over facts and thereby missing out on emotional narrations of those actually deprived: “Rarely are citizens’ everyday experiences with poverty, precarity, and rent affordability discussed” (Smith Ochoa, 2019, p. 333). However, the empirical puzzle lined out above describes how little influential ‘facts’ seem to be for shaping voters’ preferences on welfare in Germany. What is more, the scholarly debate ignored the self-declared “seismograph of German sensitivities” (BILDblog, 2008) that putatively “turns facts into feelings” (Mediaimpact, 2019): Germany’s most visited news portal, the tabloid medium Bild-Online (Mediaimpact, 2020). The BILD newspaper, famous for maligning unemployed and for its negative coverage on immigration, was even accused to be a “run-up organization of the AfD” (own translation, Salmen, 2018) by a former editor in chief.

Since its foundation in 2006, over 1.6 million articles have been published on Bild-Online. Nearly 80.000 publicly available articles contain references to the welfare state and poverty in its headlines and could be of interest for the present analysis. Filtering this body of text for coverage on the deservingness hierarchy groups results in 255 articles on the elderly, 48 articles on the sick, 315 articles on the unemployed and 220 articles on immigrants between January 2006 and October 2019.

As a first analytic step, a sentiment text analysis is run on the four different groups, taking full advantage of the commonly used “SentiWS_v2.0” dictionary.⁴³ The dictionary allocates every word a code in the interval between -1 (negative connotation) and +1 (positive connotation), enabling the calculation of weighted group sums for very simple between group deservingness comparisons of media coverage. Since such a sentiment analysis fails to trace the narrative structure employed by Bild-Online, in a second step, the sentiment scores are fleshed out through an in-depth narrative analysis of all 838 relevant articles.

6.3 Results

The sentiment analysis reveals that throughout the entire observation period Bild-Online does reflect the widely shared deservingness hierarchy for the unemployed (sentiment score -46.4), the sick (sentiment score -18.1), and the elderly (sentiment score -6.3). Surprisingly, the articles on immigrants in the welfare state, which mainly cover stories on refugees, are intoned much more positively (sentiment score 4.7). Although the immigrants’ sentiment score turns negative (-8.5) after 2017 and for the subgroup of non-refugee immigrants throughout the entire observation period (sentiment score -2), the extremely positive coverage of refugee immigration (sentiment score 6.6), their

⁴³ The dictionary is supplied by the University of Leipzig: <https://wortschatz.uni-leipzig.de/de/download>.

displayed socio-economic characteristics, and welfare state eligibility causes doubts on the accusation that the BILD-Zeitung constituted a “run-up organization of the AfD” (Salmen, 2018).

A subsequent qualitative text analysis shows that following BILD’s seismographic role for German attitudes welfare state articles almost universally mirror the popular support for meritocracy. Those who work hard (should) have "more" than those who allegedly shirk – the latter are quickly dismissed disparagingly as "cheeky" "social parasites". Articles covering the old are intonated 8.8 times more often positive than negative (see Table 3). Old-age poverty is depicted in detail as dreadful and unjust, particularly when those affected have worked "hard" for many years. When not addressing refugees, the ratio of negative to positive articles ranges around five to one. Non-refugee immigrants are portrayed negatively as "poverty migrants" who come to Germany to "exploit" welfare state benefits. Between 2006 and 2019, negative reports of this kind focused on immigrants from Bulgaria and Romania. In contrast, the many individual case descriptions of "honest" or "highly motivated" refugees are twice as often positive than negative in tone. The opposite is the case for the depiction of the unemployed, where Bild-Online follows up on the famous campaigns against "Florida-Rolf" in 2003 and “Karibik-Klaus” in 2006.⁴⁴ Neither the implementation of the ‘Agenda’ labour reforms in 2005, tightening the rules for recipients of welfare benefits, nor the historical reduction in unemployment have changed the pejorative narrations on the unemployed: Bild remains true to its "welfare populist" (Koster et al., 2013, p. 3) narrative regarding the supposedly self-inflicted unemployed.

Table 3: Overview article tonality after qualitative assessment

	Old	Sick	Unemployed	Immigrants	thereoff refugees	thereoff non-refugees
Total	255	48	315	220	191	29
thereoff "positive"	167	15	44	60	55	5
thereoff "neutral"	69	26	168	108	105	3
thereoff "negative"	19	7	103	52	30	22
Share						
"positiv"/"negativ"	8.79	2.14	0.43	1.15	1.83	0.23

The qualitative text analysis shows that the Bild-Zeitung clearly neglects its claim to “turn facts into feelings” (Mediaimpact, 2019). The Bild articles emotionally mirror how people perceive different groups in the welfare state – entirely unrelated to the actual degree of economic deprivation. Hence, Bild-Online dispels the accusation that German media coverage on poverty and precarity lacks emotional depiction on individual case examples (Smith Ochoa, 2019). It is beyond this contribution to get to the bottom in how far the tabloid press is actually responsible for shaping the deservingness

⁴⁴ For years, the Bild-Zeitung portrayed the two unemployed as ‘welfare scroungers’ who putatively enjoyed their lives living off welfare benefits.

hierarchy in Germany; or if the highly emotional and case-by-case portrayals trigger the empirically observed substantial overestimations of (immigrants') unemployment (Diermeier and Niehues, 2019) as well as misperceptions of poverty risks over the life cycle (Adriaans et al., 2020). Anyways, the way the newspaper picks up (mis-)judgements and wraps them into powerful narratives clearly heats up the already highly politicized German welfare state debate.

On the one hand, the positively intonated articles on "hard-working" refugees before 2017 cannot hide stigmatizing depictions of Eastern European immigrants' 'overusing' welfare and the potential for an *AfD* like welfare chauvinism. On the other hand, the pro-meritocracy narratives in combination with the depiction of the old as particularly needy entail a strong "welfare populism" (Koster et al., 2013, p. 3). The political promise that "those who work hard should have more" comes at the risk of splitting off an "industrious" working in-group from a "lazy" out-group, exposing the latter to even greater stigmatization. Finally, and with the important exception of the group of refugees, the welfare state coverage of the *Bild-Zeitung* has the potential to limit the implementation of inequality reducing policies that target the most economically deprived – the unemployed and the immigrants.

7. Fourth contribution: "Contradictory welfare conditioning – differing welfare support for natives versus immigrants"

The third contribution reveals the deeply rooted narratives that convey negative perceptions of socio-economic characteristics, work attitudes, or welfare state dependencies of groups such as the unemployed or the Eastern European immigrants to Germany. This contribution evolves around the implications of the finding that *the* 'attitudinal breeding ground' for PRRPs – welfare chauvinism – prevails in much larger shares of the society than simply among PRRP supporters.

Therefore, once again, a debate stimulated in the US is picked up and reflected in the European context. The "New Liberal Dilemma" (Newton, 2007) describes the putative incompatibility of 'liberal's' two most vital political projects: the welfare state and free migration. Goodhart (2004) stresses the immigrants' potential negative impact on welfare support when he suggests: "sharing and solidarity can conflict with diversity". In fact, the finding that a lower support for a redistributive welfare state is found in ethnically diverse US states, startled European scholars and policy makers (Spies, 2018). Alesina and Glaesner (2004) famously ask whether increasing immigration to Europe would "eventually push the continent toward more American levels of redistribution" (p. 175). The negative perception of immigrants as 'welfare scroungers' who migrate to universal welfare states to live off benefits has been fleshed out in the "welfare magnet" hypothesis (Borjas, 1999, p. 607). More diversity could simply result in lower overall redistribution preferences – it seems. The political left has long

since reacted to PRRPs' economic threat by repositioning on the cultural axis, in order to prevent a downsizing of the welfare state: "Social Democratic parties in many countries [...] have taken consistently tougher stands on issues of migration and national identity over the years" (Arzheimer, 2013, p. 85).

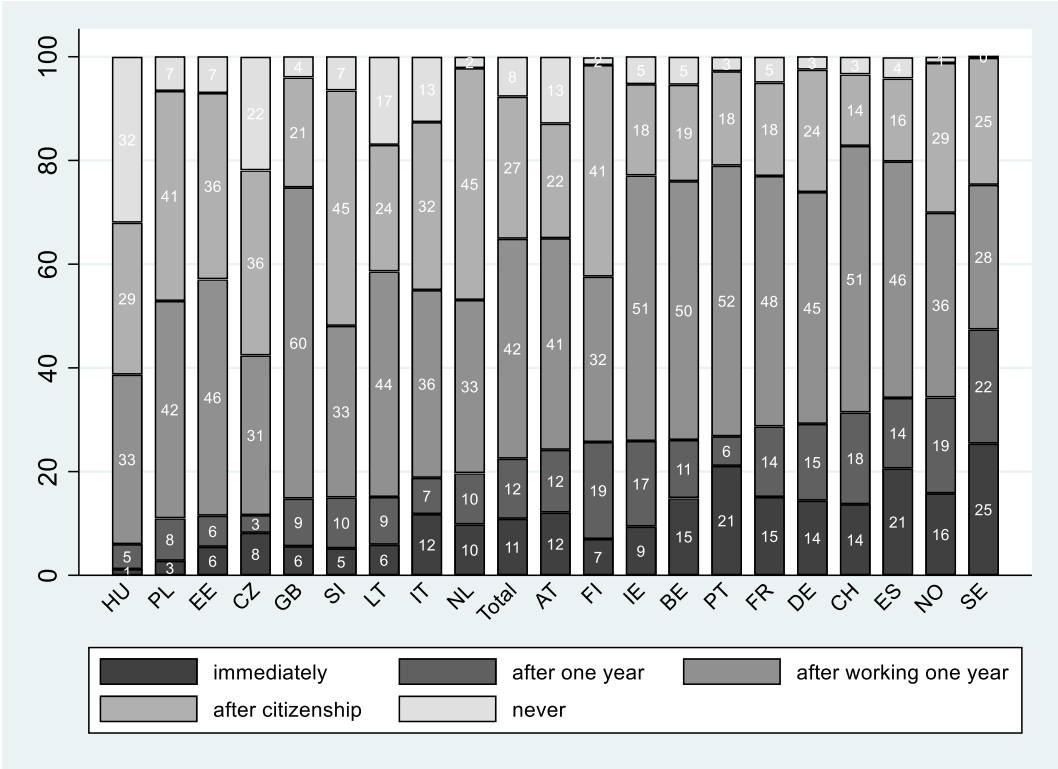
The vivid debate on welfare chauvinism, however, opens another potential route for future welfare schemes to take. Possibly, it is not the welfare state per se that is losing support in times of high immigration numbers but rather an inclusive, universal welfare state that treats natives and immigrants equally. An institutionalization of welfare chauvinism represents the pipe dream of many PRRPs and New Right scholars including slashing programs that target immigrants and building up a two-tier system as it happened in Denmark (Careja et al., 2016). Another example that played out in several European countries is the accommodation of PRRPs' welfare chauvinist positions by mainstream parties (Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2016). The demand for "solidarity patriotism" (own translation, Kaiser, 2020) and a critique of the political left for lacking a welfare state agenda in the face of increased immigration has recently become fashionable among the economically left political right (Kaiser, 2019).

The literature discusses the strategical economic policy answers of mainstream or social democratic parties to PRRPs' threat (Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2016; Häusermann, 2021), reconstructs the working class' turn from the left to the right (Ivarsflaten, 2005), and identifies welfare chauvinism as the most important economic commonality among populist radical right electorates (Abts et al., 2021). Until today, however, the literature has failed to provide studies on how welfare chauvinism shapes policy preferences among voters on the traditional political left.

7.1 The empirical puzzle

This contribution turns to the demand side of European PRRPs' 'attitudinal breeding grounds'. In several European countries anti-immigration sentiment has been detected far beyond the small group of "xenophobes or racists" and among much larger "immigration sceptic" population shares (Rydgren, 2008b, p. 737). It is still an open question, however, how widespread immigration scepticism translates into the 'New Liberal Dilemma'. On the one hand, it seems possible that support for welfare in general decreases. On the other hand, support for redistributive welfare programs could remain high but only as long as immigrants are excluded. Focussing on the latter assumption, the focus is laid on supporters of a generous welfare state who favour limited eligibility of immigrants – an attitude that this contribution dubs *contradictory conditioning*.

Figure 8: Contradictory conditioning among UBI supporters, in percent, 2016
 Share of UBI supporters who agree that immigrants should have access to welfare benefit



Source: own calculations based on European Social Survey, Round 8 (Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata, 2016)

As an example of a profoundly universal reform of the welfare state *Universal Basic Income* has been selected. UBI is generally popular among people with egalitarian redistribution preferences (Vlandas, 2019) and therefore qualifies for an analysis of the ‘New Liberal Dilemma’. Its overall support ranges from 33 percent in Norway to 38 percent in Germany and to even 80 percent in Latvia.⁴⁵ Despite UBI eligibility being explicitly defined as “regardless of whether they [the recipients] are working or not” (Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata, 2016), Figure 8 shows that on average among the 20 European countries, 42.4 percent of UBI supporters want to grant immigrants the same entitlements to social benefits only "after they have worked and paid taxes for at least one year" (Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata, 2016). In Germany, this share turns out to be even larger. Given that independence from employment history is a key criterion in the basic income debate, this preference combination seems highly contradictory. Only immigrants who have contributed to the welfare state through work and tax payments would ‘earn’ their access to the benefits that would be universally available to the native population. Another group of 27.4 percent of respondents advocates even more restrictive access conditions and would allow immigrants’ access to the welfare state only after they have become naturalized citizens; another 7.7 percent of the supporters of an egalitarian UBI would never grant immigrants the same rights to social benefits. The puzzle is also reflected in a macro-level cross-country

⁴⁵ See Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata (2016), European Social Survey, Round 8: <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>.

comparison. In countries with high aggregate support for universal basic income the strictest restrictions for immigrants' eligibility to welfare benefits are favoured.

Thus, even among UBI supporters who are generally considered just the opposite of a PRRP electorate and especially within countries with high UBI support welfare chauvinist preferences prevail. This contribution takes the contradictory preferences among UBI supporters as a starting point and traces the different motivational drivers behind the different layers of welfare chauvinism among UBI supporters.

7.2 Method and data

The empirical analysis is based on European Social Survey wave 8 (Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata, 2016), offering valid responses of 27. 509 respondents from 20 European countries in 2016. Its unique set of variables on welfare state preferences outweighs the limitations that come with the purely cross-sectional character of the dataset. First and foremost, the ESS8 contains the following question on UBI support:

- “The government pays everyone a monthly income to cover essential living costs.
- It replaces many other social benefits.
- The purpose is to guarantee everyone a minimum standard of living.
- Everyone receives the same amount regardless of whether they are working or not.
- People also keep the money they earn from work or other sources.
- This scheme is paid for by taxes” (Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata, 2016).

The 14.210 respondents who state to “favour” or to “strongly favour” the introduction of such an unconditional universal income scheme represent the main object of research for further explorations. A nuanced analysis of welfare chauvinism among this group is enabled in combination with the following question on welfare access preferences for immigrants: “When should immigrants obtain rights to social benefits/services”. As depicted in Figure 8, respondents chose between the following answer categories: “immediately” (1), “after a year, whether or not have worked” (2), “after worked and paid taxes at least a year” (3), “once they have become a citizen” (4), “they should never get the same rights” (5). These two variables allow the identification of a *contradictory* set of attitudes. Namely, support for UBI and at the same time conditioning welfare for immigrants' access to welfare through reciprocity (3), citizenship (4), or exclusion (5). An ordinal scaled Welfare Chauvinism Index is constructed and employed as the main dependent variable.

The disaggregated Welfare Chauvinism Index allows one to run individual-level multi-nominal logistic regression models with country fixed effects among UBI supporters. Socio-demographic variables, subjective justice preferences, attitudes towards immigrants, and perceptions of socio-economic

status are extracted as individual-level controls. ESS poststratification weights are applied to reduce sampling and non-response errors. Standard errors are clustered on the country-level. As a first robustness check for the individual-level regressions and to test the ‘welfare magnet’ hypothesis, in a multi-level random effect environment, macroeconomic variables are added such as the share of tax revenues financed by social security contributions,⁴⁶ social spending as percentage of GDP, GDP per capita, the share of foreign-born population⁴⁷, and communist heritage.

7.3 Results

As a starting point, the empirical analysis confirms that UBI supporters are just the opposite of a typical PRRP electorate: They hold rather egalitarian justice preferences, oppose meritocracy, and appreciate immigration for economic and cultural reasons. As expected, these characteristics constitute traits of traditional voters of left parties. Among this group, however, welfare state conditioning for immigrants is explained by perceived socio-economic deprivation, economic and cultural concerns about immigration, support for meritocracy, and opposition to egalitarianism – characteristics and attitudes that rather resonate among PRRP electorates. In this sense, the looming threat from the populist radical right of snatching this core-left electorate is real.

In line with Rydgren’s (2008b) distinction between “xenophobes or racists” and “immigration sceptics”, the analysis of disaggregated welfare chauvinism uncovers two distinct varieties of chauvinism: First, a small and radical group of *extreme welfare chauvinists* is identified among universal basic income supporters. Dominated by economic and cultural prejudices against immigrants, this group shares an exclusive nativist mindset. In the eyes of these nativists, immigrants should not have access to the welfare state at all and the generous social benefits they favour should be available exclusively and irrevocably to themselves. Second, among the strongly egalitarian basic income advocates who want to restrict immigrants’ access to social benefits a large group of *reciprocity chauvinists* is traced. This group supports meritocracy and demands reciprocity from immigrants in order to access welfare benefits. Accordingly, in this second group’s understanding immigrants must ‘earn’ access to social benefits through a kind of positive signalling (work and taxes) that reduces the risks of welfare ‘overusing’. It is important to note that these meritocracy-minded basic income advocates do not share the nativist prejudices of *extreme welfare chauvinists*. In fact, they are more likely to expect economic and cultural benefits from immigration but are probably concerned with the sustainability of a generous welfare state and the compliance with its formal and informal rules.

A final multi-level regression model examines the ‘welfare magnet’ hypothesis in a macro-level environment. Interestingly, citizens of richer countries with larger welfare states are less supportive of

⁴⁶ See the OECD database: <https://data.oecd.org/>.

⁴⁷ See the Eurostat database: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>.

UBI and hold more favourable views on immigrants' welfare access. On the macro-level the 'welfare magnet' seems to bear little explanatory power.

The contribution concludes that 'New Liberal Dilemma' analyses need to take a new angle. Rather than the shrinking support for the welfare state, the threat for the European political left comes from overwhelming support for welfare chauvinism – even among their core-electorates that support policies such as universal basic income. Support for restricted eligibility bears the risk of a slippery slope, leading to a two-tier welfare divide between immigrants and natives. On the one hand, a small group of xenophobe *extreme welfare chauvinists* appears irrevocable in their attitudes and will be very difficult to be convinced of the advantages of immigration. On the other hand, there is potential ways to address welfare chauvinism within the larger group of *reciprocity chauvinists*. First, the prevailing misinformation about immigrant's socio-economic characteristics and labour market performance need to be opposed. Battling negative narratives that circulate in the media would be a promising avenue to start. Second, the welfare state's reciprocal character would need to be strengthened. For Germany, the results point to an untapped but still distant electoral potential for the *AfD* that would need to abandon its economic (ordo-)liberalism for a pro-welfare welfare chauvinist economic agenda such as advanced by Björn Höcke (Hank, 2018). In the end, despite lacking nativism among large shares of the left core-electorates the overwhelming majority of these societal groups endorses welfare but wants to see it limited to natives.

PART V: Divided they stand – cooperation and division among European PRRPs

8. Fifth contribution: “One for one and none for all – the radical right in the European Parliament”⁴⁸

The former contributions have shown that – apart from welfare chauvinism – *the* economic policy agenda of European PRRPs does not exist. Different parties in different countries and at different points in time have attracted different electoral groups with positionings ranging from “neo-liberal” (Betz, 1993b, p. 679), over “welfare state chauvinism” (Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990, p. 212), to “champions of the welfare state” (Lefkofridi and Michel, 2017, p. 234), or have even applied economic ‘strategy blurring’ (Rovny, 2012, 2013). Whereas neoliberal policies seem to have been attractive in the past and still are for several members of the party family, welfare chauvinism opens the path to openly pro-welfare positionings. The *AfD* has provided an example of how fast a chameleonic party can change its face and go through figureheads who are clearly linked with a certain economic agenda. The early ‘professors’ party’ had economic liberalism deeply engrained in its DNA. It would have been difficult to imagine a strategical change – even a de-emphasis of the economic issue – under the lead of the same officials. Only fierce internal battles allowed for a minor softening of its strict (ordo-)liberal economic stance (Diermeier, 2020b). The same holds for the *Front National* that needed to overcome the leadership of the self-declared ‘French Ronald Reagan’ Jean-Marie Le Pen to abandon neoliberalism for pro-welfare policies (Ivaldi, 2013).

For PRRPs, economic policy is not as trivial as the label “secondary” (Mudde, 2007, p. 119) might imply. Internal conflicts prevail over positionings and re-positionings. Whereas little mental effort is needed for PRRP strategists to position their party in the cultural dimension, long and elaborate strategy papers are written over the implications, potentials, or downfalls of economic policy agendas. For the trans-national-level, this finding seems even more striking. The European party family is clearly united in its prime issue, their opposition to immigration and held together by its common *nativist* core ideology, in combination with a strong taste for *authoritarian* ‘law and order’, and a *populist* understanding of politics (Mudde, 2007). Hence, after the implementation of the *Maastricht Treaty* that intended to put European nations on track to an ‘ever closer union’, in a nativist backlash European PRRPs closed their ranks against an integrationist European Union (Harmsen and Spiering, 2004). The idea of a cosmopolitan, pluralist, and universalist European federation touched fundamentally on the populist right’s nativist core ideology and triggered parties whose “very raison

⁴⁸ This contribution aims at analysing the potential of the entire radical right. Therefore Chapter 8 uses the term *radical right* that covers a larger group of parties but includes the subgroup of *populist radical right parties* as defined by Mudde (2007).

d'être is opposition to the EU" (Taggart, 1998, p. 368). In contrast, in a cross-country comparison parties' economic agendas differed significantly (Fenger, 2018). Whereas it is well understood that time, context, electoral support, and political opportunity structure determine PRRPs' economic inroads the role of nativism for cross-country cooperation in economic matters has been ignored.

Thus, the final contribution turns back to the supply side of the European populist radical right in the economic dimension. By taking a trans-national perspective, it is analysed whether despite all nativist similarities, the economic dimension limits the party family's potential to unite its political muscles.

8.1 The empirical puzzle

The European populist radical right seems to have been on an unprecedented rise in key countries (Mudde, 2013). The successful Brexit campaign delivered a putative role model how countries could win their sovereignty back from the European Union. Marine Le Pen slipped into the final round of the 2017 French presidential election, losing only to Emmanuel Macron. The *Lega Norte* (today *Lega*) managed to enter the Italian government by putting the immigration issue on the daily political and media agenda. The PRRP governments in Hungary and Poland held their countries in a firm grip, proclaiming the "illiberal democracy" (Sata and Karolewski, 2020, p. 206). And finally, PRRPs' ranks were even joined by a successful populist radical right party from Germany. The end of a liberal Europe was on everyone's lips when PRRPs campaigned jointly in the run-up to the 2019 European elections (Politico, 2019). Also, PRRP party leaders such as Matteo Salvini, Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders, and other right-wingers from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Estonia, Czech Republic, and Bulgaria clearly tapped into the new 'illiberal' appeal, gathering in Milan 2019 and announcing the foundation of an EP 'super-faction' (dpa International, 2019). Finally, it would seem that the radical right becomes the "driving force in the politization of Europe in the electoral arena" (Dolezal and Hellström, 2016).

Nevertheless, the electoral success of the radical right all over Europe cannot hide the fact that the party family keeps struggling to form formal alliances. Whereas all established party families join their forces in joint factions in the European Parliament the radical right is still scattered into different groups with changing constellations (McDonnell and Werner, 2018). Despite nativism providing the party family's important "shared ideological conviction" (Startin, 2010, p. 436), the populist "thin-centred ideology" (Mudde, 2004, p. 544) bears an inherent spirit of discord. First and foremost, if PRRPs hold up to their promise of exclusively serving the nativist 'common man', the economic issue has the power to divide parties along their "primacy of nationalism" (Fieschi, 2000, p. 518). The striking differences that were already visible between the Western and Eastern wing of a party such as the *AfD* (Hansen and Olsen, 2019; Weisskircher, 2020) emerged even stronger on the trans-European-level. In general, Western European PRRPs represent countries which fund the European Union; their Eastern

European counterparts understand the EU as a “cash cows to be milked” (Haughton and Rybar, 2009, p. 550). The geographic dividing line that prevents cross-regional cooperation in economic issues – not to speak of policy congruence in the European Parliament – is looming.

Interestingly, also the relationship between PRRPs and authoritarian regimes bears a potential for divisions. On the one hand, PRRPs are generally expected to support foreign authoritarian powers as they share a common opposition to the liberal EU. Russia’s and China’s newest interest in ‘cooperation’ is reflected in a massive “authoritarian advance” (Benner et al., 2018) that tries to form European PRRPs into their ‘Trojan horse’. On the other hand, nativism could prohibit cooperation once it is felt to touch on the countries’ sovereignty or economic interest. Eastern European PRRPs for example are rather expected to endorse a tough stance on Russia for political nativism but welcome cooperation with and investments from China. In contrast, Western European PRRPs are rather expected to cooperate with Russia for economic reasons and oppose China friendly (trade) policy as they allegedly represent the ‘globalization losers’ that lost their jobs due to increased competition with Far East.

This contribution takes an empirical inroad on European PRRPs’ economic dividing lines. More specifically, it analyses how nativism splits up the party family geographically on specific (economic) topics in the European Parliament.

8.2 Method and data

The final contribution turns to parliamentarians’ voting behaviour in the common site of European trans-national party politics, the European Parliament. Since 2014, roll call votes are obligatory for all final votes in the parliament thus allowing for a thorough breakdown of party specific voting records of Members of the European Parliament. For an analysis of the legislative term between 2014 and 2019, data on final votes, separate votes on amendments, paragraphs, and reports are extracted from *VoteWatch Europe* (2019).⁴⁹

Since the analysis intends to illuminate the role of nativist dividing lines, different potentially controversial topics are identified. First and foremost, the highly disputed votes on the distribution of the general budget and budgetary control (77 votes) are included as well as all votes on the funding of (regional) development (85 votes), and employment and social affairs (70 votes). More specifically, 14 votes touch on questions of monetary and financial policy and 23 votes revolve around international trade deals. Finally, in the analysed legislative period 13 votes involve Russia and eleven centre on China resulting in 293 votes in total.

⁴⁹ *VoteWatch Europe* is a commercial supplier of data concerning votes in the EP: <https://www.votewatch.eu/>.

In order to compare the potential of a unified radical right established factions in the European Parliament are compared to the joint population of radical right MEPs. The latter's organizational difficulties are revealed by their lack of formal joint organization. Even MEPs from a single party such as the *AfD* are divided in several parliamentary factions. This contribution, therefore, calculates the potential of the radical right, consisting of all MEPs that joined the factions *Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy* (EFDD) – including temporary *AfD* MEP Marcus Pretzell – as well as *Europe of Nations and Freedom* (ENF) founded only in 2015 – including *AfD* MEPs Beatrix von Storch and later Jörg Meuthen. Additionally, all MEPs of PRRPs classified by Sara Hobolt (2015) are added, resulting in the inclusion of MEPs from 13 further parties – including all temporary *AfD* MEPs that left the party after 2015 from the faction *European Conservatives and Reformists* (ECR). All in all, this classification results in 130 radical right MEPs starting off in 2014.

The organizational confusion of the radical right in the European Parliament is well-known and reported (McDonnell and Werner, 2018). This contribution explores the parties' as well as geography specific dividing lines while looking beyond the missing formal organizational structure. Therefore, division and cohesion in the respective votes is employed as a proxy for policy congruence. A policy Congruence Index is calculated for all votes included and takes the highest share of MEPs of a political group that voted either for *or* against a certain resolution of all MEPs of that group who voted for *and* against. An unweighted average provides the overall as well as topic specifically aggregated index that ranges between total dissent (= 0.5) and total congruence (= 1).

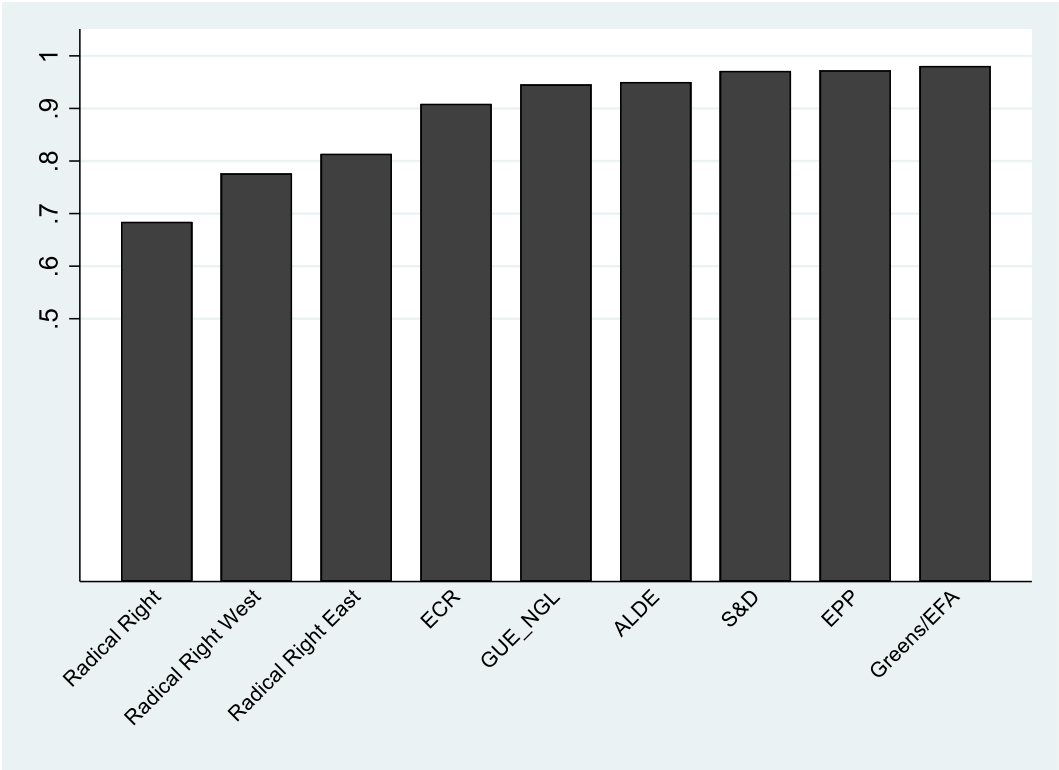
8.3 Results

The analysis confirms the expected dividing lines within the European radical right. The overall 0.69 Congruence Index score shows that the 130 radical right MEPs' voting behaviour in the 293 votes covered between 2014 and 2019 comes closer to complete division than to perfect policy congruence (See Figure 9). The radical right's division is reduced significantly once considered separately between Eastern (0.81) and Western European (0.78) MEPs, pointing to the fact that not only the different country-specific preferences for economic policies hinder cohesion but rather the geographic context. Nevertheless, even splitting the radical right up between East and West, policy congruence gets nowhere near the congruence levels of the remaining parliamentary factions, ranging from 0.91 (*ECR* excluding *PiS* and *AfD*) to even 0.98 (*Greens / EFA*).

A following topic-specific analysis stresses the importance of *economic nativism* as a main obstacle for trans-regional cooperation. The common regional economic interest of the Eastern European radical right allows the respective MEPs to achieve significant cohesion in questions of development and regional development funding, of employment and social affairs, as well as of international trade. Those categories include votes on funding programs such as the Structural Reform Support Programme

(SRSP), the investments for jobs and growth, the acceleration of cohesion policy implementation, or the European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF). In contrast, the Western European radical right rallies around their opposition to strengthened cooperation (and stricter surveillance) in economic and monetary affairs – such as the Banking Union (BU), the Capital Markets Union (CMU), the European Single Supervisory Mechanism (ESSM), or the European Central Bank.

Figure 9: Policy Congruence Index, European Parliament, 2014-2019



Source: own calculations based on VoteWatch Europe (2019)

Finally, the paper turns to the common *authoritarian grounds* that the radical right shares with foreign powers such as China and Russia. In their “authoritarian advance” (Benner et al., 2018), these countries have targeted the European radical right as a ‘natural’ ally. Despite these putatively favourable ‘ideological breeding grounds’ for cooperation this contribution argues for a more nuanced and nativism-based interpretation. First, Western European PRRPs expose their critical view on economic cooperation with China. Whereas the Eastern European radical right rather expects to profit from flourishing foreign direct investments and cooperation their Western counterparts actually behave as the defenders of the ‘globalization loser’ group and show a specific form of *economic nativism*. Second, and independent of its economic consequences, the Eastern European radical right MEPs oppose economic rapprochement with Russia. The historically grown fear of Russia’s strength triggers a *political nativism* that binds together radical right MEPs from most formerly communist EU member states – despite the economic cost.

The European radical right is not only divided within the respective parties, but also within the party family. Despite all common ideological grounds and strategical considerations, they have been unable to form a common European parliamentary faction or achieve policy congruence in economic matters. The reason for their failure goes far beyond a differing general economic or welfare state agenda that would also divide the radical right in topic specific votes and within the Eastern or Western European subgroup. For scholars of the radical right, the geographical pattern of only very topic-specific policy congruence might have been expected: The radical right's political agenda is ultimately dominated by nativism – in national and trans-national matters. Nativism, however, can take an economic as well as a purely political inroad. In economic questions and regarding the authoritarian powers Russia and China, not a single category can be traced where *economic* and *political nativism* points into the same direction for all MEPs and therefore fosters the radical right's policy congruence. Hence, beyond its cultural agenda the party family misses projects of common interest and also in the future, a potentially increasing group of radical right MEPs will struggle to overcome its strong dividing lines.

PART VI: Concluding remarks

9. The fall after the rise? How to battle PRRPs in the economic dimension

The present synopsis unfolds the role of the populist radical right's "secondary" (Mudde, 2007, p. 119) dimension: economic policy. Focussing on the recent evolution of the *Alternative für Deutschland*, the majority of the contributions puts the German PRRP into the context of its European peers and identifies commonalities and differences. The dimensions under analysis range from socio-economic characteristics as well as welfare state preferences on the demand side to economic policy agendas as well as strategical approaches on the supply side and include the economic 'breeding grounds' from a contextual perspective. The methods applied contain a wide variety of different regression models, exploiting self-compiled data sets, generated through scraping and geo-referencing, as well as publicly available survey data. Also, text-mining sentiment analysis strategies have been employed in a media analysis.

The final chapter presents a summary of the key findings carved out in the discussed five contributions. Lessons to be drawn from the contributions are discussed for a better understanding of trends within the *AfD* electorate, appropriate policy reactions by established parties, and future successes of European and German PRRPs. Finally, the outlook includes a discussion of the most pressing topic during the years to come and its implication for PRRPs' economic policy: the Covid-19 pandemic.

9.1 Summary of contributions

Being built upon an innovative mix of up-to-date econometrics, the five contributions reveal a variety of interesting empirical pieces of a puzzle that taken together enable to compare the AfD and its economic policy critically with its European party family peers. The AfD's socio-economically diverse electorate does not force the party into blurring its economic agenda. For now, its (ordo-)liberal economic policy complements a radical anti-immigration platform, an anti-establishment appeal, and succeeds in regions of economic distress. More and more, the AfD starts to ride on the wave of welfare chauvinism, an attitude that long-evolved media reiterations have developed into a powerful narrative, shared across large layers of the society. All over Europe, defaming foreigners and their welfare undeservingness has become key for the populist radical right, opening inroads into economically left-leaning electorates. In Germany, particularly immigrant-specific reciprocity obligations could top up the AfD's 'winning strategy' in the future. Finally, the advantage of a "secondary" (Mudde, 2007, p. 119) dimension that leaves PRRPs all possible freedoms to adapt to nation-specific peculiarities hinders European wide cooperation. The AfD would only be too pleased to spend every Euro that is sent to Brussels in Germany.

On the supply side, the *Alternative für Deutschland* presents a special case in its European party family. Founded as a “single-issue Eurosceptic party” (Taggart, 1998, p. 368), the main programmatic pillar was constituted by (ordo-)liberal economic policy. Clearly, the economic dimension represented the primary and not a “secondary” (Mudde, 2007, p. 119) dimension to the German shooting star. Despite the party’s swift radicalization in the cultural dimension and its transformation into a full-fledged PRRP within only two years after its foundation, liberal economics seem to be deeper rooted than some *AfD* politicians from the emerging ‘national conservative’ wing would prefer. The *first contribution* reveals that in the economic dimension *AfD* manifestos, expert judgements, and the party’s electorate place the German PRRP in the realm of the traditional liberal party *FDP*.

On the demand side, the ‘professors’ party’ started off with a typical (ordo-)liberal electorate dominated by high income earners. During the cultural radicalization period many high-income supporters shied away from openly supporting the party which resulted in a mild ‘proletarianisation’ of the electorate. Average incomes of *AfD* supporters descended to lower realms than those of other established parties’ supporters (except supporters of *Die Linke*). Finally, the party’s electorate resembled the German income distribution. Interestingly, the significant shift within the electorate did not alter *AfD* supporters’ overall market liberal attitudes that they see consistently reinforced by the party of their choice. In comparison with its European peers, the combination of market liberal views and socio-economic comparably weak positions distinguishes *AfD* supporters. Although, after 2015 the *AfD* is clearly picked for its anti-immigration platforms and anti-establishment appeal, the party’s economic positioning matches supporters’ preferences just as well as the party-voter nexus discloses for other parties.

Combining demand and supply side reveals that despite mobilizing the typical “unusual structure of the populist right electorate” (Ivarsflaten, 2005, p. 466) and the doubts about its own economic positioning within the *AfD* (*Alternative für Deutschland*, 2016a), for now the party has no need to blur its economic positioning. After all, a distaste for state interventions in the German economy remains a winning issue for the new populist radical right competitor. Despite the socio-economic absence of *the AfD* supporter, in its redistribution preferences the party’s electorate stands united. Hence, the *AfD*’s comprehensive ‘winning formula’ consists of an emphasized cultural right anti-immigration positioning and an opposition to the political establishment in combination with a less emphasized anti-redistribution positioning.

Also, in the contextual dimension, the socio-demographic heterogeneity of its strongholds seemed to be a key characteristic of *AfD* electoral success (Bergmann et al., 2018), aggravating the identification of *the* ‘breeding grounds’ of the German populist radical right. An in-depth analysis on the very fine-grained municipality-level in the *second contribution*, however, reveals qualified support for the ‘left-

behind places hypothesis'. The party performs particularly well in areas with distressed labour markets and low political participation. Seconding Dorn et al. (2020) and in the light of the demand side findings, this does not mean that in 'left-behind' places it is necessarily 'left-behind' people who support the *AfD*. Interestingly, the German populist radical right is also more successful, the higher the share of (usually well-paid) manufacturing employment in a region. Common explanations for working class support for the populist radical right such as status anxieties (Gidron and Hall, 2017) as well as fears of globalization and digitalization could be the drivers behind this correlation (Sauer et al., 2018; Dörre, 2020). Digging deeper in this vein, sound labour markets and a vivid patent activity go along with lower municipal *AfD* election results. Possibly, an innovative economy has the power to exude confidence not simply among the small share of employees involved, but rather into an entire municipality. A resilient economy might function as a shield against anxieties, usually picked up by the populist radical right. The many 'hidden champions' in Germany's rural regions most probably play a crucial role in this regard and cushion the "density divide" (Wilkinson, 2019), explaining the comparatively low success of the German populist right in these regions – in contrast to other European economies.

What is more, the second contribution follows up on the popular hunch conveyed in the German media that an actual retreat of the state in 'left-behind' places fosters the *AfD*'s success (Deppisch, 2020). A compiled Public Services Index reveals that the supply with public infrastructures in Germany is strongly related to municipality size and an overall attractive supply with public services indeed goes along with lower local *AfD* support. Already with regards to differently sized municipalities, however, there are different patterns that question the unqualified nature of this relationship. Whereas in general a lower supply of overall public services goes along with stronger *AfD* election results, this correlation is largely driven by medium-sized towns and delivers insignificant results for topical indicators such as the distance to the nearest train station. Also, municipality debt as a proxy for local politicians' capacity to supply an attractive set of infrastructures does not show the expected relationship with election results. After all, the supply of public services and infrastructures is highly unlikely to be the oftentimes propagated silver bullet for established parties to win back 'left-behind' places. It is needless to say that such a spatial approach remains silent on the perception of *AfD* supporters who might be concerned about missing infrastructures (Hilje, 2018), however, the very simple public service like mechanism behind an *AfD* election, resulting in rural 'left-behind' places as claimed by the German media discussion, has to be rejected.

The media also plays an important role in reinforcing views on welfare state participants and their deservingness. The *third contribution* tries to uncover the role of the tabloid press, triggering a gap between perceived deservingness and actual economic hardship. Germans express high support for

increased redistribution towards the ‘neediest’ and to reduce inequality – despite their equally strong support for meritocracy –, however, when asked for program specific welfare state preferences, they follow the common deservingness hierarchy and favour the old as well as the sick over the unemployed in addition to the immigrants (van Oorschot, 2006). Consulting different measures of economic hardship reveals that the most deserving group – the old – range very low in the measures of economic hardship and the least deserving groups – the immigrants and the unemployed – experience significant economic distress: Over 60 percent of the unemployed face ‘material deprivation’ and earn incomes below the at-risk-of-poverty rate. The respective numbers are comparable for refugees but five to six times lower for people aged over 65 years (see Figure 7).

In its coverage on the welfare state and inequality, Germany’s most consulted news portal, Bild-Online, constitutes a ‘mouthpiece’ of large parts of the welfare deservingness hierarchy. As disclosed by a sentiment analysis, the news portal portrays the old and the sick significantly more positive than the unemployed and thus fosters support for “welfare populism” (Koster et al., 2013, p. 3): a sentiment commonly addressed by the populist radical right that also prevails among *AfD* supporters (Goerres et al., 2018). In contrast to the low perceived deservingness of immigrants, the many articles portraying refugees in the welfare state are intoned extremely positive, on first sight rejecting the hypothesised “welfare state chauvinism” (Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990, p. 212) against this group.

A narrative analysis of all articles on the four groups reveals the meritocracy based narrative structure perpetuated by Bild-Online. The unemployed are consistently described as ‘welfare scroungers’ who live off benefits. Articles on the old describe people who have worked ‘hard’ for many years and portray them as ultimately deserving. In contrast to the ‘lazy’ unemployed, who allegedly spend their time wasting state money, the elderly’s economic hardship is described in great detail. Interestingly, there is a gap between extremely positive coverage on ‘honest’ and ‘highly motivated’ refugees and maligning portrayals of immigrants from Eastern Europe who putatively exploit the welfare state and pursue criminal activities. Given that *AfD* politicians have been down on the latter group of immigrants already during the run-up for the 2014 elections to the European parliament (Fedders, 2016), the accusation that Bild-Online sowed the seeds of welfare chauvinist discord that later provides the ‘attitudinal breeding grounds’ for Germany’s PRRP motivates further analyses in this regard.

In general, welfare chauvinism constitutes the single most important common ‘attitudinal breeding ground’ for PRRPs in Germany and most other European economies. Whereas the ‘New Liberal Dilemma’ suggests that increasing immigration and heterogeneity would challenge traditionally left leaning parties through a loss of general welfare support, the *fourth contribution* shows that support for a radical universalist reform of the welfare state, the introduction of universal basic income, reaches realms of support that most European left parties can only dream off. Nevertheless, among

UBI supporters, who constitute a traditional left leaning electorate, a huge majority favours specific guardrails for the presumably universalist welfare state. This restricted welfare access of immigrants is dubbed *contradictory welfare conditioning*. The group of reciprocity chauvinists, which can be found all over Europe, are particularly prevalent in the meritocracy-oriented Germany. This group favours UBI but demands from immigrants to ‘earn’ welfare state eligibility by having “worked and paid taxes at least a year” (Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata, 2016). It is important to understand that despite these restrictive views on immigrants’ welfare access, *reciprocity chauvinists* hold generally immigration friendly attitudes but are concerned about the sustainability of the welfare state (that they appreciate). In stark contrast, a smaller group of *extreme welfare chauvinists* despises immigration for cultural and economic reasons and would exclude immigrants from welfare for good. Group members seem to represent a modern form of the widely discussed group of economic left and culturally right, comparable to the one identified by Seymour Lipset (1959) in the mid-1900s half a century ago.

In the light of the first contribution, supporters of a universal basic income are expected to be misrepresented by the German *AfD* that holds on to its market liberal origins. Support for meritocracy – or even “welfare proceduralism” (Abts et al., 2021, p. 21) – and strong welfare chauvinism, however, represent pronounced and prevailing attitudes within the *AfD* electorate (Goerres et al., 2018), opening up potential future avenues for the German PRRP to pursue. Other PRRPs, such as the French *Front National* or the *Danish People’s Party*, have demonstrated that welfare chauvinism can bridge the gaps within a multilayered electorate by endorsing a strong but exclusive welfare state in their economic policy agenda. The *AfD* has revealed its chameleonic character in the past, it might well unlock new electoral potential in the future.

The very stylized cross-country PRRP economic policy comparison between *AfD*, *Front National* and *Danish People’s Party* allows a glimpse of the party family’s heterogeneity in this important dimension. Country specific political opportunity structures, historically grown preference patterns, or crisis specific regional necessities determine how PRRPs interpret their economic room to manoeuvre. The *fifth contribution* sheds light on these blatant differences in economic questions that constitute shaky common ground in cross-country cooperation. Furthermore, the nativist core ideology that binds PRRPs together develops the power to achieve policy congruence in questions of immigration and welfare chauvinism, however, it also entails a treacherous notion of country specific self-interest in the economic realm.

Voting behaviour in the European Parliament seconds these theoretical reflections. In economic questions and regarding votes on China and Russia, radical right MEPs are light-years away from the cohesive voting that established factions manage to achieve and end up closer to complete division

than to perfect congruence even for narrowly defined categories. Only upon a closer look, policy congruence arises in a few topics and once the radical right is divided into its Western and Eastern offshoots. In line with their *economic nativism*, Eastern European PRRPs share a common taste for most (regional) development funds and a closer cooperation with China. In Western Europe, *economic nativism* partly unites the radical right in questions revolving around their opposition to increased financial and monetary cooperation as well as in their Russia affinity. Hence, PRRPs are not only divided by their different economic policy approaches, ranging from “neo-liberal” (Betz, 1993b, p. 679) to “left authoritarianism” (Lefkofridi and Michel, 2017, p. 234), but their economic dividing lines are deeply engrained in their nativist DNA. Since only in very few topics *economic nativism* conveys shared interests for PRRPs from all European countries, economic policies will remain a major obstacle for future cooperation within the party family and for the increasing number of parties to develop a trans-national strategical agenda.

9.2 Lessons to draw

The empirical analyses lined out in this synopsis fills many gaps in the literature on economic policy of the German and European populist radical right. Even more important, the discussed findings allow one to draw significant lessons for a better understanding of economic policy in party competition with a populist radical right competitor. The contributions’ focus on demand, supply, and context enables a discussion of appropriate and doomed-to-fail policy reactions by established parties as well as a hunch for future ‘winning formulas’ of European and German PRRPs.

More welfare will not help – the AfD’s electorate stays true to its (ordo-)liberal roots

First and foremost, combining supply and demand side reveals that the AfD electorate’s demands mirror the party’s policy supply in the two fundamental cleavages of German party competition – culture and economics. Although issue positioning is only one of many factors explaining a party’s electoral support a consideration of issue positioning in combination with anti-establishment protest allows to conclude that *AfD* supporters chose the ‘right’ party and are well represented in their choice by issue positioning. Ironically, and corroborating the differences between the *AfD* and its established competitors, for no other party’s electorate has their vote choice become as strongly without alternative as for supporters of the *Alternative für Deutschland* – once founded in protest to Angela Merkel’s ‘without-any-alternative policy approach’ (Neu, 2021). Having said that, the demand-supply match does not mean established parties should be generally discouraged from attracting *AfD* supporters, but rather clarifies that what these parties offer, as of this publications, fails to fill the former ‘representational gap’, let alone to realign *AfD* supporters with them. What is more, the analysis gives the debate on comparatively low socio-economic positions of a significant group – the putative ‘economic globalization losers’ – of *AfD* supporters a new angle: In the economic dimension,

also these people are not tricked into *AfD* support but are rather well represented by the party's prevailing market liberalism. As long as this setting stays put, more redistributive economic policy platforms or pronounced universalist pro-welfare policies by established parties will hardly be convincing strategies to snatch even the socio-economically deprived *AfD* supporters. What is more, renewed shifts within the *AfD* electorate have pointed to a reinvigoration of the middle class (see Figure 4), challenging the importance of the 'globalization loser' hypothesis for *AfD* support altogether.

Silver bullet for rural areas – place-based policies instead of headless public service advances

Second, place-based regional policies that supply an attractive overall package of public services, foster sustainable economic developments, and limit concerns about the future of rural areas as a globally competitive manufacturing site are probably the most promising routes to address PRRP success in 'left-behind' German areas. In the end, politics need to prevent that people feel disadvantaged and unrightly stunted in 'their' region. Even if *AfD* supporters oppose (welfare) state interventions, they apparently care for regional economic prosperity, specific public services, and infrastructures being supplied at their doorstep. A recent work that builds on the second contribution identifies that particularly in Germany's 'left-behind' regions attractive public services have the power to cushion the *AfD*'s blow (Bayerlein, 2020). More nuanced, the second contribution shows that voters do not ask politicians to promise them the world. In contrast to building cathedrals in the desert, politicians should have an eye on which public services voters expect in their constituency and which infrastructures are supplied in role model towns of comparable size. Unrealistic white elephant infrastructure projects in remote regions either cause unrealistic expectations or plunge municipalities into unsustainable debt levels. Progressively, local politicians need to have their finger on the people's pulse to understand demands and communicate their decisions why certain hospitals, train stations, schools, and broadband networks are being built, not built, or closed. Simple as that: Regional infrastructure policies need to be place-based and evaluated in their overall suitability to demands. It cannot be ruled out, however, that at least among a certain share of the *AfD* electorate, disappointments prevail around a lack of public services that will persist despite any changes in the actual supply; it is not without reason that perception and reality in economic questions have been found to be particularly decoupled for supporters of the *AfD* (Hüther and Diermeier, 2019). Also, politicians of the German populist radical right will realize, should they make it into a (regional) government one day, that not all their supporters' expectations can be measured up to.

In desperate need of a powerful narrative – the battle against *welfare chauvinism* and *welfare populism*

Third, the demand for more emotional and case-based media coverage of welfare topics (Smith Ochoa, 2019) will not help groups affected by economic hardship. On the contrary, if discriminating narratives

are reemployed and strengthened, such media articles might even help to erode solidarity with the 'neediest'. Regarding recent German welfare policies, the overly dramatic depiction of the elderly as economically deprived and deserving bolsters the overwhelming support for the several generous pension reforms passed during the later Merkel-legislatures and therefore diverts welfare further away from the 'undeserving poor'. The dispersion of both "welfare populism" (Koster et al., 2013, p. 3) and "welfare state chauvinism" (Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990, p. 212), especially among PRRP supporters but also within broader shares of the society, could be driven by 'deep stories' or 'single stories' that PRRPs' economic agendas are based on. In fact, media coverage and also politicians' communication is key to strengthen a more realistic, unbiased, and unprejudiced depiction of the welfare state and its different recipient groups. The native 'hard-working' in-group narrative is certainly divorced from the world and services a very exclusive version of reality. On the downside, negative misperception of immigrants' socio-economic characteristics and labour market performance provide favourable 'attitudinal breeding grounds' for the populist radical right (Alesina et al., 2018; Diermeier and Niehues, 2019). Novel research on politicians' communication behaviour shows that narrations about Uğur Şahin and Özlem Türeci, founders of BioNTech – one of the first companies to develop a vaccine against Covid-19 – have the potential to provide positive role models of immigrants (and their descendants) and their valuable contributions to the German economy and society (Diermeier, 2021).

Reciprocity against welfare chauvinism – the last straw of an inclusive welfare state

Fourth, and in contrast to the 'New Liberal Dilemma' hunch, the threat to pro-redistribution parties does not come from a general loss of confidence in welfare. The fact that an overwhelming majority of even universal basic income supporters tends to favour a welfare chauvinist design of redistribution platforms points to the political risks for parties endorsing strong universalist welfare positioning for everyone. On the one hand, for European PRRPs this is excellent news, since welfare chauvinism comes without any 'ideological cost', the highlighted setting opens up potential future avenues to attract new electoral groups. Within its party family the *AfD* is expected to be one of the last to embrace such a strategy. Its prevailing market liberal roots and the merit-based German society still aggravate the according strategical turn. As a future chameleonic shift, however, it would not come as a surprise if the *AfD* tolerated a party wing that promoted a less emphasised pro-redistribution and more emphasised welfare chauvinist platform. On the other hand, for the political left, the prevailing welfare chauvinism within its key electorate bears the risk to tear them apart entirely. In general, an economic dimension that is emotionally charged with a salient anti-immigration debate represents a potential death trap for social democrats: "the likely cost of appealing to them [potential PRRP voters] through Left National-Conservatism seems high [...]. Hence, Left National-Conservatism seems to be a losing

strategy in most countries” (Häusermann, 2021, p. 3). Accordingly, the German left movement *Aufstehen*, that intended to kick off a discussion on the sustainability of the German welfare state (also but not exclusively with regards to immigrants), was applauded by the economic-left and cultural-right (Kaiser, 2019, 2020), but pointedly rebuffed by large parts of the German *Die Linke* before finally hitting back at the key initiator Sarah Wagenknecht (Träger, 2020). Hence, the political left’s way out of this dilemma seems difficult and rocky. The simplest solution would be to revive the consensus with conservatives and “defuse” (Bale et al., 2010, p. 413) the cultural dimension for fierce quarrels over salient purely economic and welfare state questions (Arzheimer, 2013) – the fruitful collusion of the past (Bornschiefer, 2012). In times of constant migratory pressure on the EU external borders, however, this route seems blocked with a vivid populist radical right party having intruded the German party system and unresolved questions around the European immigration mechanisms staying put. A more realistic policy that the fourth contribution points to could be constituted by strengthening the reciprocal character of welfare. Once immigrants ‘earn’ their welfare access through contributing to the state budget through taxes they pass an invisible but real ‘membership condition’ (Banting et al., 2020) and qualify for welfare access – in the eyes of the many *reciprocity chauvinists*. In the same vein, the introduction of a “compulsory civil service” (van Parijs, 2013, p. 180) could increase support for immigrants’ universal welfare access in highly redistributive European welfare states such as Germany. Again, also any communication advances that break down prejudices against immigrants’ putatively weak socio-economic positions and work ethics is expected to hedge concerns about the compatibility of immigration and welfare.

The price of freedom – economic nativism as a lever to crack PRRPs collective shield

Finally, the comparison between the German *AfD*’s economic policy and the approaches of its European counterparts uncover few consistent similarities beyond welfare chauvinism. In fact, the “secondary” (Mudde, 2007, p. 119) dimension enables the populist radical right to design nation specific strategies that range – depending on party competition, electoral peculiarities, and contextual environments – from neoliberal to decidedly pro-welfare. On the downside of this flexibility, the different approaches represent significant obstacles for trans-national cooperation in any sort of economic questions. What is vital on the national-level represents a fundamental dividing line for the trans-national-level. What is more, the nativist core ideology hampers trans-European cooperation significantly. On the economic end, *economic nativism* divides parties along national interests and hardly allows for European wide radical right policy congruence in any economic topic. Again, the contextual environment has been carved out to be crucial thereby splitting the European radical right geographically between the East and the West. In contrast to ideological commonalities and tactical aspirations, in the end, nativism corrupts attempts for long-lasting cooperation and EP-factional

compromise building that established trans-national political groups are built upon. For the European radical right this means that despite electoral success their actual influence in pursuing, but also in obstructing political projects, will be limited. For their political competitors this means that they own a recipe how to rub salt into PRRP's open flank. For their electorate, this means that they will know exactly what they get. For the good and the bad, hardly any decision will be compromised by compromises and any significant formal or informal cooperation beyond the cultural agenda seems highly unlikely.

9.3 Outlook

European PRRPs came to stay. Since in many countries they achieved ownership over the cultural dimension and, more specifically, the immigration issue, it is virtually impossible for established parties to get rid of their most recent competitor (Backlund and Jungar, 2019). What is more, the present thesis has shown that PRRPs' economic policy agendas constitute an important flank guard for their primary dimension. Unfortunately, for the populist radical right – and the *AfD* is no exception to this rule –, in the economic issue, however, they are just one of the many competitors. The fact that beyond welfare chauvinism PRRPs' economic positionings are already represented by established parties makes party competition with PRRPs a vivid struggle for different electoral groups. The simple conclusion is that understanding PRRP success is tantamount to understanding that “political competition does not occur merely *along* issue dimensions, but also *over* their content” (italics in original, Rovny and Edwards, 2012, p. 57). If party competition is dominated by the immigration issue the populist radical right gains momentum and can even get away with blurred economic positionings to amplify their electoral base. On the contrary, if party competition is dominated by the economic dimension, PRRPs become ‘normal’ parties without ownership over the core issue the party system is organised around (Spies and Franzmann, 2011; Spies, 2013). Inconsistencies within and between supply, demand, and context come to light much faster and become politically virulent much stronger. Especially during severe economic recessions, a shift from cultural to economic overall salience becomes probable. In normal times, the populist radical right might take hold of ‘left-behind’ regions and act as the defendant of the hard-working ‘common man’ against the ‘corrupt elite’ or the undeserving immigrants. In times of economic crisis, however, they lose grounds to parties that are trusted to improve the economic situation (Spies, 2013) – such as the populist left in Southern Europe during the recent economic turmoil (Hobolt, 2015; Algan et al., 2017). Also, the *AfD* that was once born as a party of economic competence might struggle to convincingly signal to voters that it has more to offer than just fundamental opposition. Meanwhile, the looming threat of being officially monitored by the German intelligence has already driven ‘old’ members from the ‘liberal economic’ wing out of the German ‘New Right’ competitor, potentially weakening the party's economic competences (Deutschlandfunk Nova, 2020; Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 2021).

In this context, the Covid-19 pandemic related economic crisis that will dominate European politics for the years to come provides a difficult environment for PRRPs. Whereas viral pictures of refugees intending to cross the Greek-Turkish border in Spring 2020 revived memories of the large refugee migration numbers of 2015 and 2016, as the pandemic lingers into its second year, the Covid-19 pandemic outshined any other issue and buried the populist radical right aspirations of a new cultural salience boost: During the pandemic, closed and highly monitored European borders resulted in the immigration issue losing significantly in importance. Hence, as a first reflex of flight to security European voters rallied around their governments and triggered a drop in the polls for oppositional PRRPs (Diermeier, 2020a). As it turned out that the pandemic policies resulted in nationwide lockdowns, which lasted for months at a time and costed European states unprecedented amounts of money to stabilize labour market, welfare state, and 'left-behind' regions, the economic dimension advanced quickly on the political agenda. The half-hearted attempt of internally divided parties such as the *AfD* to attack governments for restrictions and lockdowns of all kinds was of little avail to activate a broad protest potential.⁵⁰ Even after months of a nationwide lockdown a broad majority of Germans accepted the government enforced restrictions and stimulus packages to battle the pandemic and its economic consequences (Reinemann et al., 2021).

In order to get hold of the situation, in 2020 in the middle of the worldwide pandemic, the *AfD* contended successfully that it was allowed to host its long-awaited 'Social and Pension Party Convention'. Disappointingly, the convention was not particularly indicative and failed to become the advertised signpost for the party's future economic positions. For several major party grandees the convention rather (again) served as an opportunity to wage internal conflicts. Neither did the party convention result in an affirmation of its economic (ordo-)liberal roots, nor did it commit to a turn towards a pronounced pro-welfare position. Even the demand for adequate hospital capacities in 'left-behind' rural areas (Alternative für Deutschland, 2020), reflects more common sense in the German party system than a unique selling point to attract a certain electorate. In addition, the 2021 party convention in Dresden proved just as little conclusive in the matter. On the one hand, the main (economic) programmatic motion proposed an economically liberal "Blue Deal" consisting of the headlines "economic and innovation policy for Germany", "relieve the burden on the middle class", "suspend politically induced burdens" and "social market economy instead of socialist industrial policy" (own translation, Alternative für Deutschland, 2021, p.2). Still in 2021, the final 'Blue Deal' section includes a paragraph that could stem from a classical (ordo-)liberal manifesto:

⁵⁰ First survey results from the radical *Querdenker* anti-Covid-19 restrictions manifestations reveal that of the protestors 15 percent had voted for the *AfD* in former elections and 27 percent stated to choose the party in the future (Nachtwey et al., 2020) While this shows a certain anti-government protest potential for the *AfD*, it needs to be noted that neither could the party attract the majority of the angry protestors, nor did they represent a significant share of the German electorate.

We reject the fact that the federal government is increasingly acting in an entrepreneurial role. It exerts direct influence on companies and innovations and tries to steer the economy through specifications and subsidies. This kind of state economy regularly leads to economic decline. We want to revive Ludwig Erhard's social market economy and create prosperity for all.
(own translation, Alternative für Deutschland, 2021, p. 17)

On the other hand, welfare chauvinist proposals were widely applauded “in order to reduce incentives [for immigration] and maintain social justice” (Alternative für Deutschland, 2021, p. 36). Also, the 2021 convention was coined by the rising tensions between the opposing wing, with the ‘national-conservatives’ strongly dominating in the final votes.

Despite the very general programmatic anchors during the pandemic the party fails to provide a comprehensive set of policies to address the pandemic and its economic implications: “Radicalization in the party spectrum seems reserved for the *AfD* that has little to contribute to solution-oriented Corona policies” (own translation, Korte, 2021, p. 7). It remains highly questionable if agitation against established parties and the aspirations to activate disenchantment in combination with a fading economic positioning constitutes a winning strategy in times of a distressed economy. It seems more probable that the economic crisis, resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, triggers an increase in the salience of the economic dimension and thus seconding the interpretation that also for PRRPs economic positionings bear an inherent risk of failing to exhaust its electoral potential.

Contrary, the pandemic accelerated the well-known nexus between misinformation, media coverage, and politicians’ communication (Flynn et al., 2017). Even before its first radicalization in 2015 the *AfD* started off with a populist communication strategy (Franzmann, 2016a) and in the run-up for the federal election campaign, finally, seven of the ten mostly circulated ‘fake news’ stemmed from the German populist radical right party (Sängerlaub et al., 2018). The fact that its supporters envision the state of nation unfavourably, but more particularly the state of the economy overly negative (Diermeier and Niehues, 2019) in addition to the fact that the party fuels these sentiments suggests that “the *AfD* lives on the decay of certainty” (own translation, Knuth and Mayr, 2020). More specifically, the *AfD* and many other PRRPs take advantage of fundamental changes in increasing digital media consumption that allow to circumvent the gatekeepers of traditional media outlets. Clearly, the pandemic reinforces these shifts as it triggers a stark demand for fast information. In Germany, this trend led to an increase in news consumption through all media types, but particularly for news consumption through “the internet” (die medienanstalten, 2020, p.10). Whereas support for traditional media remained high, during the pandemic a quarter of the German society believed that “media was in cahoots with politics” (own translation, Schüler et al., 2021, p. 13), tilting critical news in their favour. It does not come as a surprise that people who doubt the traditional media turn to

social media for their information procurement (Schüler et al., 2021). What is more, social media news consumption goes along with stronger disenchantment, as well as an overly negative perception of key figures concerning the economy and the welfare state. Finally, this pessimistic misassessment is strongly correlated with support for the *AfD* (Niehues et al., 2021). Additionally, the misinformed and pessimistic demand side is mirrored by the *AfD*'s communication on the supply side: In answers to citizens' inquiries during the Covid-19 pandemic *AfD* politicians tolerated significant negative 'fake news' much more frequently than politicians of all established parties – not exclusively but also in economic questions (Diermeier, 2021).

As a reaction to the shift in salience from the immigration to the economic issue, the *AfD* applied all available communication channels to construct an economic bust scenario. Thereby the party taps into a certain potential within its likeminded electorate where the negative perception of the economy intensified during the pandemic. However, very much in contrast to other German oppositional parties, the *AfD* has shied away from proposing an (economic) strategy to battle the crisis. Similar anti-system approaches have failed for other PRRPs in the European sovereign debt crisis: In an historical economic crisis, PRRPs are not particularly voter's first choice – if they are missing convincing strategies to battle the respective crisis (Hobolt, 2015; Mols and Jetten, 2016). In the end, polarization for the sake of polarization as such might not be a viable political business model for extending its voter base during the coming years, however, it seems to be positively received by its core electorate. Even without a clear economic signpost the *AfD* is unlikely to perish in the choppy waters the Covid-19 pandemic washes around the European populist radical right.

More fundamentally, future research will have to depict the impact that one and a half years of "distance democracy" (own translation, Korte, 2021) have left on communicational strategies on the supply side and the consumption of political content on the demand side. Clearly, PRRPs in general, and the *AfD* in particular master digital communication and were able to play this card for further political agitation during the pandemic. The question is unresolved, however, if digital radicalization will still succeed on the same level in post-Covid-19 elections and if the populist radical right's respective experiences will continue to pay off. Even within PRRPs, future strategies are going to provide food for a controversial debate. In Germany, the jury is still out on how far the Covid-19 pandemic has left irreconcilable divisions between the radical Eastern 'national conservative' wing and the Western '(ordo-)liberal economic' wing. Today, it seems improbable that a political project having lived off the prospect of a fundamental system change can survive as a successful long-lasting regional (Eastern German) party. On the one hand, the cards are stacked against the 'ordo-liberal economic' wing: Austerity preaching politicians will hardly be favoured once the state retracted its immense cushioning stimulus programs – especially in the *AfD* strongholds in economic distress. A tempting

strategy for the *AfD* seems rather to campaign against those who took the responsibility for economic lockdowns in the first place – the establishment. On the other hand, beyond their core electorate it seems difficult to imagine that voters follow the ‘national conservative’ wing’s anti-establishment dog whistle without offering a halfway decent (economic) (post-)pandemic-policy itself. The economic wing’s degradation and discharge, however, could block the way back to meaty and solution-oriented policy proposal. Anyways, future analyses will reveal if the party that pocketed the ‘politically homeless’ voters by filling a ‘representational gap’ with clear issue positionings in the economic and the cultural dimension has hollowed out its former political DNA entirely. A self-enforcing vicious radicalization circle might still hold the *AfD*’s core-electorate together, but seems indisposed to shape federal German issue politics on a broad scale in the future.

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Appendix 1

Contribution 1

The AfD's winning formula – no need for economic strategy blurring in Germany

Matthias Diermeier⁵¹

Western European Populist Radical Right Parties (PRRPs) have addressed the dispersed socio-economic status of their electorate by blurring the economic positioning. This contribution analyses the rise of the German PRRP Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) between 2013 and 2017 and the role of its economic policy platform. In contrast to its European peers, the AfD shows few signs of economic strategy blurring. The party offers clear anti-redistribution policies that are matched by AfD followers' preferences: Even the least affluent AfD supporters have preferences for lower redistribution than the most affluent non-AfD supporters. For AfD supporters with lower socio-economic positions this means that they support economic policies against their economic interests. Extreme authoritarian cultural policies spiced up with critique of the establishment and combined with a general opposition to redistribution can be identified as the AfD's winning formula. Within the Western European PRRP party family this winning formula directed at supporters with lower socio-economic positions constitutes an exception.

⁵¹ The following article is the accepted manuscript of: Diermeier, M., The AfD's winning formula – no need for economic strategy blurring in Germany. *Intereconomics Review of European Economic Policy* 55(1), 43-52. This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Western European party family of Populist Radical Right Parties (PRRPs) has gone through a vivid transformation (Mudde, 2007). Particularly, PRRPs' economic positionings have become an object of study as they shift away from neo-liberal economic policy platforms and as the parties increasingly attract an electorate with lower socio-economic positions (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Afonso and Renwald, 2018). Today, the Western European political landscape holds a variety of strategies for a PRRP's potential economic policy. These range from the French Front National role model of endorsing pro-welfare policies to the Swiss Peoples Party's well-known 'winning formula' of 'right' cultural positions and a neoliberal economic policy. Applying more nuanced strategies, PRRPs persuade their supporters by subsuming the economic dimension under their cultural core position or by blurring its economic policy (Rovny, 2013; Elias et al., 2015). In this regard, the German newcomer party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) appears to be a prime object of study as it goes through a similar transformation, albeit in fast-forward between 2013 and 2017 (Arzheimer and Berning, 2019).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 PRRPs in a multidimensional context

In contrast to the belief that party competition is mostly carried out on a unidimensional conflict line along the economic dimension, scholars following Riker's (1986) heresthetics rather stress the importance of different dimensions including non-economic issues as well as party competition over dimensional salience. Rovny and Edwards (2012) note that "political competition is primarily a struggle over dimensionality, it does not merely occur *along* issue dimensions but also *over* their content" (italics in original, p.56) – with special incentives for niche parties to introduce secondary, non-economic issues. Norris and Inglehart (2019) find a predominance of the cultural dimension and baptize the rise of PRRPs in Western democracies a *cultural backlash*: an uprising against the diffusion of progressive values and the approval of migration, channelled through nativist, authoritarian and populist radical right parties (Mudde, 2007).

Regarding the welfare policy platforms of PRRPs, Kitschelt and McGann (1995) sketch the 'winning formula' to be a neo-liberal economic agenda and an authoritarian profile in the cultural and political dimension. This 'winning formula' has become highly controversial as the heterogeneity of Western European PRRPs is carved out in bits and pieces.⁵² First, PRRPs are to a certain degree considered Anti-Party Parties (APPs) that discredit the political system as such (Pogunke and Scarrow, 1996). If PRRPs

⁵² See Rooduijn (2018) and Otjes et al. (2018) for current empirical evidence of the diversity of Western European PRRPs' economic agenda.

were to opportunistically endorsed whichever goal appeals to their electorate, they would attract more protest voters than issue voters resulting in a generally lower importance of actual issue positioning (Deschouwer, 1996). Second, some PRRPs – e.g. the Front National under Marine Le Pen – meet lower socio-economic positions of their electorates programmatically with a shift to pro-welfare positions (Lefkofridi and Michel, 2017; Afonso and Renwald, 2018). Third, a centrist convergence of PRRPs in the economic policy dimension during the 1990s and 2000s can be observed – e.g. in Belgium and the Netherlands (Lange, 2007) – with PRRPs proposing a schizophrenic socio-economic agenda of economic liberalism and welfare state (Mudde, 2007). In this context, Mudde (2007) and Ivarsflaten (2005) stress the welfare chauvinist character of PRRPs' economic policy platforms and find that PRRPs subsume their economic policy under a cultural core issue, in order to address dispersed redistribution preferences – e.g. in Denmark and France.⁵³ Fourth, Rovny (2013) claims that radical 'right' parties deliberately becloud their positionings in the economic dimension as they focus on cultural issues allowing them to attract an electorate with heterogeneous redistribution and homogeneous cultural preferences (Sommer-Topcu, 2015; Afonso and Renwald, 2018). Finally, the old winning formula of anti-migration and anti-redistribution attitudes seems to be a driver of PRRP support in Switzerland and to a lesser degree in Norway (Rooduijn, 2018). However, in contrast to most Western European PRRPs, the Swiss People's Party and the Norwegian Progress Party still attract a rather affluent electorate.

Following Elias et al. (2015) theoretical elaboration of the outlined bi-dimensional setting, parties can either choose to reveal a position in both dimensions (*bi-dimensionality*) or entirely ignore one dimension (*uni-dimensionality*). Also, parties may deliberately blur one dimension (*blurring*) or subsume it under the other dimension (*subsuming*). Depending on the characteristics of the respective party system and dimensional salience relation, this theoretical framing describes the possible strategy space for PRRPs.

2.2 Shaking up the party system: AfD

The German party system can be considered a prime example of the described theoretical strategy setting. It can be outlined through a socio-economic cleavage over market freedom and state interventionism and a cultural cleavage between a libertarian and an authoritarian extreme (Niedermayer, 2010). Also, polarization between political parties increased significantly during the 2013 to 2017 election period (Korte et al., 2018). Characterised as a two-party-dominated political system, the decade-long decay of the election share of the social democratic SPD and the conservative CDU/CSU is mirrored by a shift to the left of the entire party system (Niedermayer, 2010). Traditionally

⁵³ Note popular definition of PRRPs' 'thin ideology' by Mudde misses a clear definition of the economic agenda.

leaving little room to manoeuvre for potential PRRPs (Bornschieer, 2010), the CDU/CSU has gradually converged to 'centre-right' positions since the 1990s, leaving a 'representational gap' on the far 'right' of the cultural party competition dimension (Art, 2018; Korte et al., 2018).

Today, this far-right void is successively absorbed by the AfD. Established in 2013, the party's founding father, professor of economics Bernd Lucke, initially designed a single-issue Eurosceptic party (Schmitt-Beck, 2017) dominated by its liberal (Schärdel, 2017), ordoliberal (Franzmann, 2016) or neo-liberal (Rosenfelder, 2017) economic policy platform. During this founding period, the party attracted a particularly affluent and highly educated electorate (Niedermayer and Hofrichter, 2016). On the cultural policy positioning, the party's first manifestos lack clear nativist and populist elements that are typical for PRRPs (Arzheimer, 2015; Niedermayer, 2015).

After a tough factional struggle, the AfD's positioning in the cultural dimension was significantly radicalized by the national conservative wing having sacked Lucke as a spokesperson in July 2015. Scholars describe the post-Lucke programmatic adjustments as a shift to an anti-migration party (Niedermayer and Hofrichter, 2016) or a populist 'right'-wing party (Berbair et al., 2015). During this radicalization period the party's important social media communication focused more and more on the topics of 'migration' and 'islam' (Arzheimer and Berning, 2019). The AfD's gradual development into a nationwide competitive PRRP peaked with its historical success on the federal level in 2017, winning 12.6 percent of the votes and abruptly ending the long-term absence of a German PRRP (Bornschieer, 2012). The party's classification by the public (Bergmann et al., 2017) and the media (Schärdel, 2017) moved to the 'right' accordingly. At the same time, AfD supporters kept their strong homogeneity in the cultural dimension e.g. in their opposition to migration (Schwarzbözl and Fatke, 2016; Lengfeld, 2017).

The programmatic transformation has been accompanied by socio-economic changes within the AfD's support groups. Support from groups with lower socio-economic status especially in Eastern Germany and within the working class increased, while support from high income groups decreased (Brenke and Kritikos, 2017; Bergmann et al., 2018; Bieber et al., 2018). Accordingly, voter migration to the AfD differs with the incumbency on the regional level and comes from the Left party in Eastern Germany, from the CDU in Eastern German mayor cities, from the CSU in Bavaria and the SPD in the Ruhr area (Bergmann et al., 2018; Olsen, 2018; Kurtenbach, 2019). In contrast to former radical 'right' wing parties in Germany, the mobilization of a certain traditional 'left' leaning electorate represents a unique feature of the AfD (Klein et al., 2018). The AfD manages to attract a diverse electorate and mobilizes non-voters as well as voters of several established parties (Hansen and Olsen, 2019). Whereas the anti-establishment and anti-migration platforms clearly appeal to AfD supporters, the

role of economic policies in the second period seems much less clear. The party itself identifies its economic policy as a potential spirit of discord in a strategy paper for the federal election in 2017:

With regard to so far non-decisive topics (this holds especially for economic and welfare policy) particular attention has to be paid to the fact that the AfD's electorate is not divided. Whereas parts of the bourgeoisie with a liberal-conservative mindset on the one hand and the working-class and the unemployed on the other hand hold similar views on topics such as Euro/Europe, security, migration/Islam, democracy, national identity or genderism, differences can come up on questions such as tax equity, the pension level, health security contributions, rent control or unemployment security. [...] If this is not possible, cross references between core topics and presumably dividing topics have to be drawn.

(own translation, Alternative für Deutschland, 2016, p.8)

Anecdotal evidence shows that these strategic considerations are met by proposing welfare chauvinist policies subsuming the economic dimension in line with Ivarsflaten (2005): Mirroring a broad increase of welfare chauvinism in Germany (Marx and Naumann, 2018), the AfD faction from Thuringia demands higher redistribution and a 'citizens pension' – a pension boost eligible for German citizens only (AfD Fraktion im Thüringer Landtag, 2018). However, the party also endorses a pro-welfare positioning comparable to the Front National in France (Afonso and Renwald, 2018): Far 'right' faction leader Björn Höcke continues to call the AfD 'the party of social justice' (Hank, 2018), demanding a 'patriotism of solidarity' and even supporting the foundation of the 'right'-wing union like organization 'Alarm' (Schmelcher, 2019). On the contrary, scholars in line with the APP theory stress the AfD voters' protest characteristics and neglect the importance of actual issue positioning – particularly regarding economic policy (Bieber et al., 2018; Franzmann, 2018). Schwarzbözl und Fatke (2016) claim "the AfD electorate represents a group of people that is particularly coherent with regard to cultural conflicts, in contrast it is rather incoherent with regard to economic conflicts" (p.289). On the contrary, Hansen and Olsen (2019) find that "AfD voters were in the mainstream [...] in terms of their attitudes towards efforts to reduce inequality and the role of the welfare state" (p.15). Finally, Goerres et al. (2018) provide evidence for the old Kitschelt and McGann (1995) 'winning formula': In their analysis AfD supporters have particularly strong anti-redistribution preferences comparable with the PRRP electorates in Switzerland or Norway. Such a combination of 'right' cultural and economic preferences within the electorate would enable the party to provide a clear bi-dimensional positioning with no need for blurring.

3. DATA AND MEASUREMENT

In order to analyse AfD's comparative positioning, the German party system's supply side in the economic and cultural dimensions for the legislative period between 2013 and 2017, the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Surveys and the 2017 Chapel Hill Expert FLASH Survey can be exploited. The CHES provides an operationalization of the economic 'left-right' and cultural libertarian-postmaterialist dimension on an eleven point scale. For Germany, the party positioning is assessed by 13 experts in 2014 and 15 experts in 2017. Scholars have applied the standard deviation of these experts' judgements to proxy the degree of strategy blurring (Rovny, 2012; Afonso and Renwald, 2018; Palier and Manow, 2018).⁵⁴

In order to evaluate the success of the party's strategies, the perceived party positioning by the German electorate needs to be examined under the consideration of the electorate's own dimensional policy preferences and socio-economic control variables. For the legislative period between 2013 and 2017 several waves of the GLES representative Longterm-Online-Tracking as well as the GLES Pre- and Post-Election 2017 waves contain the relevant data including an economic and cultural 'right-left' economics on an eleven point scale. In order to control for APP characteristics and protest election motives in line with Bieber et al. (2018) an unweighted index of satisfaction with the established parties on an eleven point scale, an index on democracy dissatisfaction on an eleven point scale, as well as an 'Angela Merkel sympathy' index on a five point scale is compiled. Grouping the respondents over the two relevant periods that the AfD went through – divided by the sacking of Bernd Lucke in June 2015 – the selected GLES waves provide 4.123 (7.483) respondents in the first (second) period of which 226 (581) state to vote for the AfD. Rovny (2012) applies variance ratio tests of the perceived positional dispersion of different parties' voters to identify strategy blurring of PRRPs. Bartels (1986) simply counts the positional 'don't know' answers. Such analyses might deliver valuable indications, however, they can only be hints for strategy blurring. Especially younger parties' positions might be perceived as ambiguous due to voters' lack of knowledge acquired over a longer period of time.

The GLES dataset allows to test for the perceived party-supporter interrelation in a logit model for all respondents i controlling for the perceived distance, the positioning preference and the salience in both dimensions D – economics and culture. Additionally, APP and socio-economic characteristics are controlled for. The model is run in the founding and radicalization period P .

$$\begin{aligned} Pr (AfD\ support)_{i,P} &= \beta + \beta_{perceived\ distance\ i,P,D} + \beta_{preference\ i,P,D} + \beta_{salience\ i,P,D} \\ &+ \beta_{APP\ characteristics\ i,P} + \beta_{socio-economics\ i,P} + \gamma_{East} + \varepsilon_{i,P} \end{aligned}$$

⁵⁴ See web Appendix of Rovny (2012) for several tests approving the use of CHES based standard deviations as a measurement of strategy blurring.

Merging the CHES expert judgements into the combined GLES waves furthermore enables an analysis of objective party-supporter distance, finally allowing to test for strategy blurring.

$$\begin{aligned}
 Pr(AfD\ support)_{i,P} & \\
 &= \beta + \beta_{objective\ distance\ i,P,D} + \beta_{preference\ i,P,D} + \beta_{salience\ i,P,D} \\
 &+ \beta_{APP\ characteristics\ i,P} + \beta_{socio-economics\ i,P} + \gamma_{East} + \varepsilon_{i,P}
 \end{aligned}$$

The AfD is considered to blur its position in the economic dimension if AfD voters had dispersed welfare state preferences and would individually perceive that these preferences were met by the AfD – whereas objectively (by expert judgements) this distance was larger between other groups of party supporters and their supported party.

4. EMPIRICAL RESULTS

4.1. Supply side: The AfD's de-emphasizing of its 'right' economic positioning

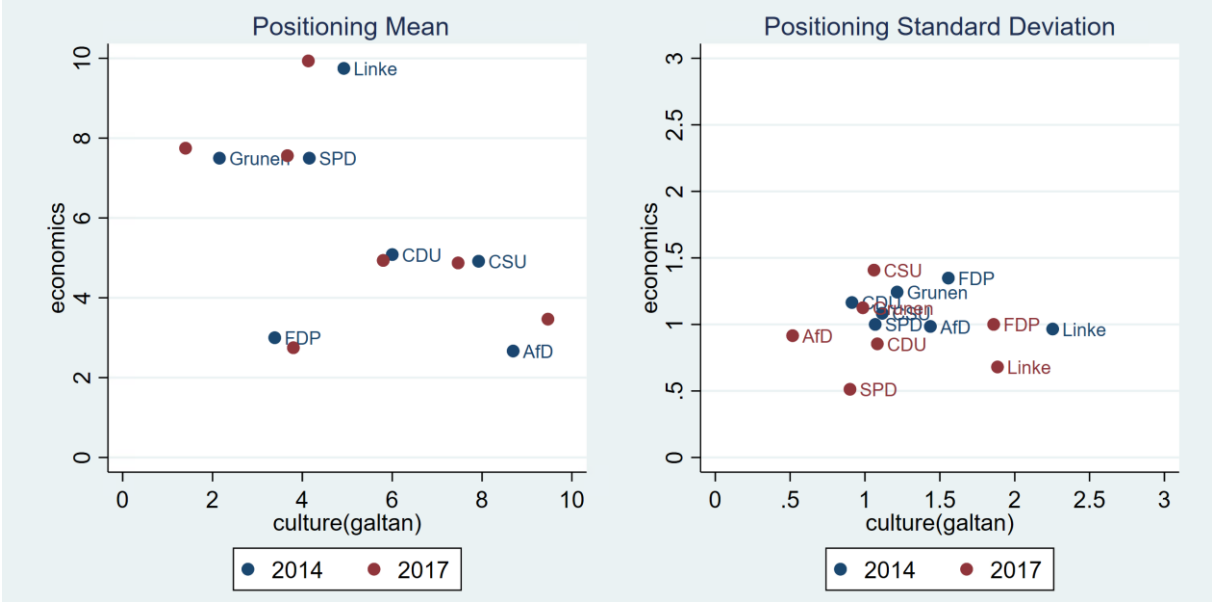
As a first step, the German party system during the legislative period between 2013 and 2017 is mapped over the economic and cultural dimension based on the CHES expert judgements. The left graph of Figure 1.1 plots the arithmetic mean of all expert judgements for both dimensions in 2014 and 2017. On the cultural dimension from libertarian/postmaterialism ('left') to traditional/authoritarian ('right'), the AfD is considered the most extreme party on the 'right' enclosing the German party system together with its cultural antagonist on the 'left', the Green party. The AfD hence increases the range of cultural positioning in Germany and triggers a polarization in the cultural dimension between 2014 and 2017.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, experts become exceptionally concordant in their judgements of the AfD's extreme 'right' cultural positioning (right graph Figure 1.1).

Whereas the perceived economic positioning of parties hardly changes over the observation period, the AfD is assessed as slightly more welfare-friendly in 2017. In 2014 the party's economic policy platform is evaluated as the most anti-welfare of all German parties, and in 2017 it comes second after the liberal party FDP – providing first evidence against an economic shift to the 'left'. In general, experts rather agree on the parties' economic positioning. For the AfD, the standard deviation in the economic dimension even decreases after their cultural radicalization in 2015 and no statistically significant difference in dispersion can be found in comparison to other parties. First evidence against a unidimensional positioning and strategy blurring is provided. No evidence is revealed for a potential

⁵⁵ Scoring a maximum score of 10 from 7 of 15 experts in 2017 the scale is limited in depicting a further radicalization of the AfD.

welfare chauvinist positioning that could be mirrored in a rather left-leaning economic positioning in combination with a higher dispersion of expert judgements.

Figure 1.1: Experts' issue positioning of German parties in the economic and cultural dimension⁵⁶



Source: Own calculations based on CHES

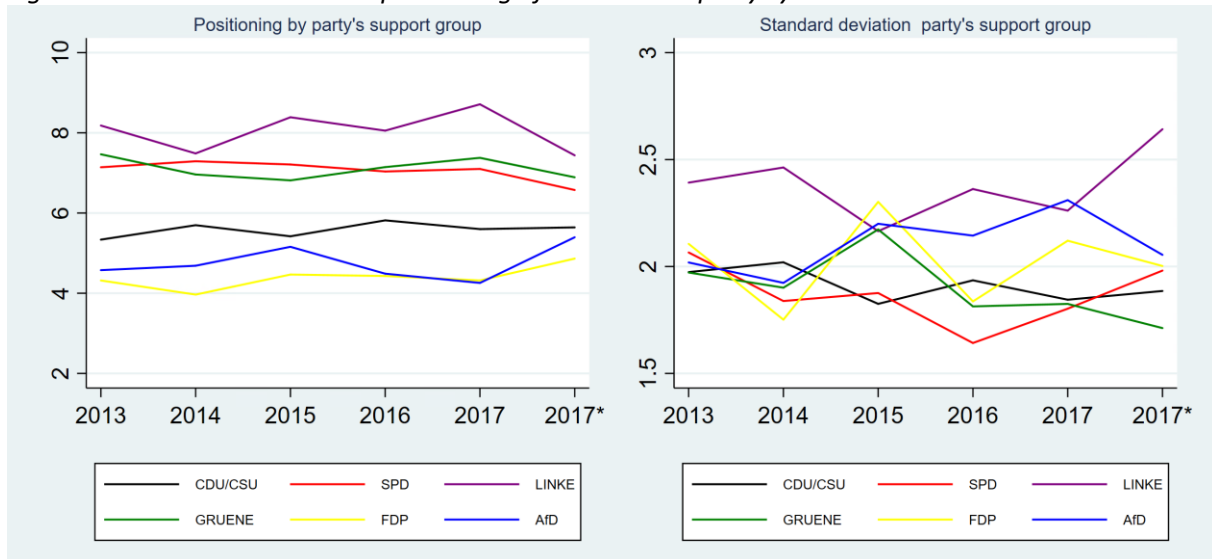
These findings differ significantly from the dispersion in expert judgements which scholars have found in the same data source with regards to several Western European PRRPs in the economic dimension (Rovny, 2012; Afonso and Renwald, 2018; Han, 2020): The AfD supplies a clear ‘right’ economic policy platform. Its entrance into the German party system did not alter competition within the two main dimensions, however, it has shifted political competition away from the economic dimension by polarizing the cultural dimension.

4.2 Demand side: the AfD supporters’ opposition to redistribution

In order to compare the ‘right’ economic and cultural AfD positioning with its supporters’ perception, the demand side is zoomed-in on. Figure 1.2 visualizes the perceived economic German party positioning by the respective party supporters. Between 2013 and 2017 the comparative party assessment shows a high-level of persistence. In line with expert judgements on the economic ‘right’ the party supporters of FDP and AfD keep changing positions. As a proxy for the clearness of positioning, again, the standard deviation is calculated revealing that the AfD’s economic positioning is perceived as just as clear as other parties’ positionings – providing further evidence against a single-issue cultural positioning.

⁵⁶ For an easier graphical representation of Figure 1.1, the economic scale has been reversed in comparison to the original CHES data.

Figure 1.2: Perceived economic positioning of the German party system



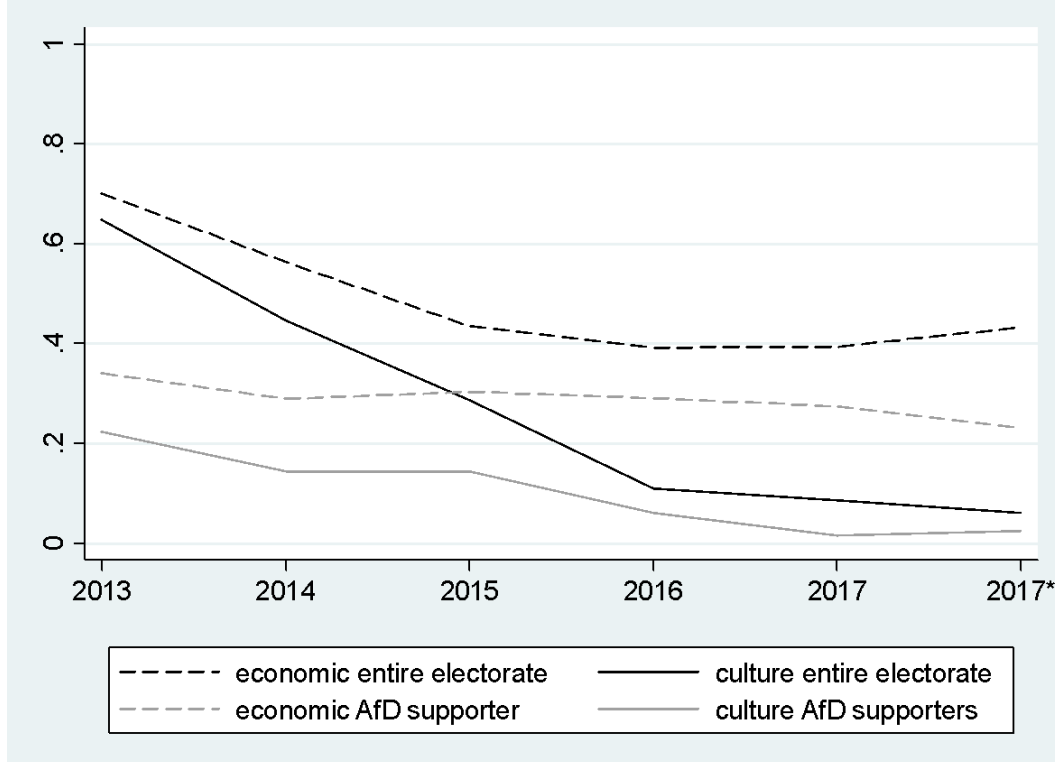
*Pre and post election wave 2017

Source: Own calculations based on CHES

Unfortunately, the perception analysis is based on a limited sample as it ignores respondents lacking the knowledge or confidence to assess the AfD. The share of 'don't know' answers of the electorate and AfD supporters in the two dimensions is plotted in Figure 1.3: Starting off in 2013 around two-thirds of the electorate has refused an assessment in both dimensions. Whereas the share of refusals decreased to only six percent in the cultural dimension, still in 2017 it persisted at around 40 percent in the economic dimension. The same trend is reflected in the AfD supporters' responses: Whereas the 'don't know' share in the cultural dimension dissolved from 22 to around two percent, still in 2017 around one quarter of AfD supporters 'didn't know' the party's economic positioning.

Since 'don't know' responses can indicate strategy blurring (Bartels, 1986) this subgroup of AfD supporters is analysed further: Especially after 2015 AfD supporters who 'don't know' the party's economic positioning are poorer, have lower education and a lower self-classified social class. Their redistribution preferences are indistinguishable from the rest of the AfD supporters and their own economic salience is lower. Hence, in line with Rovny (2012) rather than being outsmarted by a blurred positioning, it is more likely that this group of 25 percent of AfD supporters simply does not care about redistribution. Given their preferences, however, the party is as good of a pick for them as for the rest of the AfD party supporters.

Figure 1.3: Share of 'don't know' answers concerning the AfD's economic and cultural positioning



*Pre and post election wave 2017

Source: Own calculations based on CHES

In order to evaluate the interplay between party supporters' perceived party positioning and their own preferences, party supporters' issue preferences in the dimensions economics and culture have to be taken into account. The author provides an overview of self-ranked class and economic policy preferences. In contrast to the slightly decreasing social class of AfD supporters over time, within the different groups' overall economic policy preferences are not altered. In line with rational choice voting, redistribution preferences decrease between the lower class and the upper middle class. Impressively, however, the lower class AfD supporters oppose redistribution more strongly than non-AfD supporters of the (self-declared) upper middle class and even upper class. The party supporters' preferences are mirror images of the perceived party positioning and match expert judgements which confirms evidence initially brought forward by Goerres et al. (2018): AfD voters do not have particularly heterogeneous economic preferences – leaving little potential for strategy blurring. Given the comparatively low socio-economic positions of the AfD electorate, the anti-redistribution preferences conflict with rational choice voting theory and traditional class-based voting.

In the cultural dimension AfD supporters homogeneously have radical 'right' preferences displaced from the average preferences of all other groups. The co-movement of the cultural radicalization and the strong homogeneity of preferences is reinforced after 2015. Although the AfD polarizes the German party system, this does not automatically lead to a polarization of the electorate. Instead, the

party attracts supporters with radical 'right' cultural and economic preferences who lacked political representation in terms of a representational gap possibly closed by the AfD.

Summing up, the AfD is placed on the 'right' edge of the German party system in the dimensions of economics and culture by experts as well as by its own supporters. Having analysed the supporters' own economic preferences, it was shown that in line with the AfD's positional placement its supporters have significantly more 'right' economic policy preferences than most of the electorate. This also holds for those supporters who 'don't know' the AfD's position in the economic dimension. AfD voters seem to vote against their economic positions, however, in line with their preferences in the economic dimension. Hence, first evidence is brought forward for the old winning formula.

4.3 Supply meets demand: evidence for the old 'winning formula'

In an attempt to shed light on the mechanism behind AfD support, a logit regression isolates the effects of the economic and cultural dimension controlling for various socio-economic variables and measures of protest vote: Table 1.1 columns 1 and 2 quantify the probability to support the AfD given the absolute *perceived* distance between a respondent's position and her or his perception of the supported party's position, respectively for the two periods analysed.

After controlling for two-dimensional preferences, socio-economic controls and measures of protest vote, culturally and economically more 'right' preferences increase the probability of AfD support. In the founding period, AfD supporters were more successful than other party supporters in minimizing the perceived distance to their supported party in both dimensions. In the radicalization period, they became much better in the cultural dimension and as successful as other party supporters in the economic dimension. The effect of 'right' cultural preferences is four times stronger than that of 'right' economic preferences. Nevertheless, 'right' economic preferences matter.

The socio-economic controls show the expected signs: In line with the literature, from the first to the second period support for the AfD increased within households of lower income, among married respondents as well as in Eastern Germany. AfD supporters are less satisfied with the established parties and democracy, and after 2015 view Angela Merkel less sympathetic than other party supporters. Hence, the claim that AfD supporters only care about voicing protest can be rejected. In the radicalization period, of the variation in the dependent variable 50 percent is explained by the dimensional distance, preference variables as well as the included socio-economic and protest vote controls.

Table 1.1: Logit regression AfD voting intentions, perceived distance⁵⁷

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Period 1	Period 2	Period 1	Period 2
Perc. ec. distance to supp. party	-0.167** (0.065)	-0.005 (0.045)		
Per. cult. distance to supp. party	-0.206*** (0.057)	-0.428*** (0.056)		
Ec. dist. to expert judg. of supp. party			0.153** (0.060)	0.035 (0.046)
Cult. dist. to expert judg. of supp party			-0.786*** (0.131)	-1.019*** (0.085)
Own economic position	-0.238*** (0.055)	-0.104*** (0.036)	-0.160*** (0.040)	-0.142*** (0.033)
Own cultural position	0.224*** (0.056)	0.415*** (0.050)	0.483*** (0.105)	0.703*** (0.069)
Own economic salience	0.033 (0.171)	-0.038 (0.109)	0.069 (0.117)	-0.149 (0.092)
Own cultural salience	-0.017* (0.009)	0.006 (0.007)	-0.002 (0.008)	0.005 (0.006)
Party satisfaction index	-0.555*** (0.081)	-0.423*** (0.060)	-0.360*** (0.065)	-0.291*** (0.058)
Democracy dissatisfaction index	0.726*** (0.150)	0.467*** (0.100)	0.690*** (0.125)	0.474*** (0.089)
Merkel sympathy index	-0.049 (0.035)	-0.211*** (0.029)	-0.108*** (0.034)	-0.291*** (0.029)
Male	0.440* (0.238)	0.588*** (0.180)	0.407** (0.188)	0.566*** (0.164)
Age	-0.057 (0.048)	0.009 (0.030)	-0.012 (0.040)	0.014 (0.029)
Age Squared	0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Protestant	-0.542** (0.275)	-0.249 (0.219)	-0.368* (0.222)	-0.064 (0.200)
Catholic	-0.322 (0.280)	-0.231 (0.223)	-0.370* (0.207)	-0.230 (0.203)
Married	-0.181 (0.246)	0.310* (0.185)	-0.043 (0.185)	0.045 (0.161)

⁵⁷ Splitting the sample into East and West Germany and limiting the sample to pre- and post-election study in order to apply sample weights does not qualitatively alter the results. Further regression outputs are provided upon request.

Household equivalence income	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)
Middle school or lower	0.083 (0.282)	-0.100 (0.197)	0.106 (0.215)	0.148 (0.179)
Unemployed	-1.827 (1.179)	-0.293 (0.526)	-0.877 (0.764)	0.515 (0.486)
Union	-0.491* (0.290)	-0.021 (0.236)	-0.263 (0.231)	-0.075 (0.230)
Subjective class: worker	0.036 (0.341)	-0.147 (0.258)	-0.158 (0.239)	-0.301 (0.244)
Subjective class: lower	-0.026 (0.653)	-0.382 (0.598)	-0.565 (0.579)	-1.159*** (0.436)
Subjective class: lower middle	0.328 (0.254)	-0.041 (0.204)	-0.030 (0.208)	-0.101 (0.187)
East Germany	0.235 (0.272)	0.474** (0.199)	0.186 (0.220)	0.484*** (0.183)
Constant	0.229 (1.424)	-1.592 (0.989)	-2.911** (1.305)	-2.436*** (0.944)
Observations	1,959	3,439	2,507	4,055
Adjusted R-squared	0.301	0.489	0.369	0.624

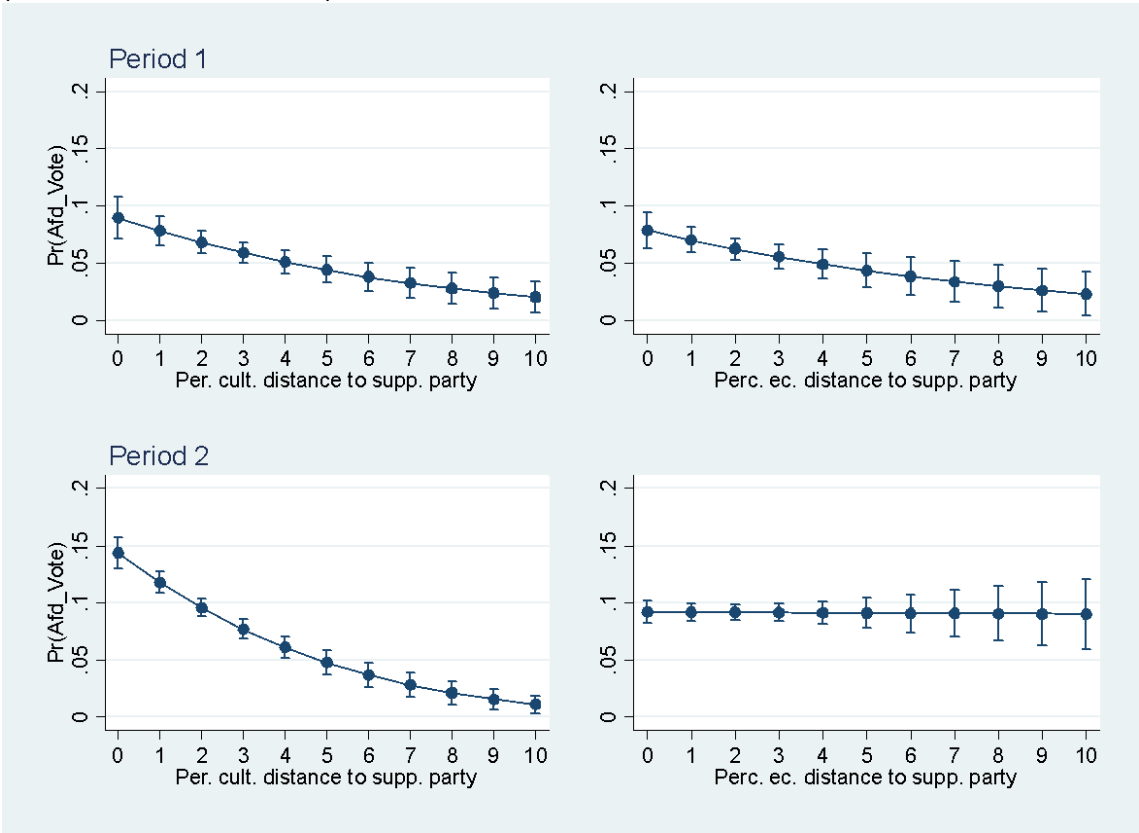
Robust standard errors in parentheses,
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The regression results from Table 1.1 column 1 and 2 are visualized as predictive margins in Figure 1.4. During the founding period, the predictive margins for AfD support decrease over an increasing perceived distance to the supported party. The coefficients' sizes are comparable between perceived cultural and economic distance. Comparing a respondent with a maximum (10) to minimum (0) perceived distance to the supported party *ceteris paribus* increases the probability of supporting the AfD by around 5 percentage points. During the radicalization period, the perceived cultural proximity strongly gained in importance (represented by the steep negatively sloped line), whereas in the economic dimension AfD supporters became indistinguishable over all distances (represented by the flat line). A *ceteris paribus* maximum reduction of perceived cultural distance to the supported party increases the probability of AfD support by close to 15 percentage points.

As a final analysis of potential strategy blurring, Table 1.1 columns 3 and 4 present the logit regression outputs of AfD support including the distance of respondents' dimensional preferences to parties' *objective* expert assessments. Not relying on the respondents' party assessments solves the shortcoming of dropping all positional 'don't know' answers resulting in around 30 percent more

observations before and 20 percent more observations after 2015. The results are comparable with those in columns 1 and 2: Again, there is a higher probability for respondents with more ‘right’ preferences in the economic and cultural dimension to support the AfD – with the latter effect being much stronger than the former. Regarding the distance of AfD supporters’ preferences to positional expert judgements, AfD supporters are characterised by a distinctive cultural proximity to their party. Importantly, the economic objective distance became indistinguishable from other party supporters during the radicalization period. In the second period, the results explain over 60 percent of the variation in the dependent variable.

Figure 1.4: Predictive margins logit regressions, perceived supporter-party distance, with 95% CIs (Table 1.1 Columns 1 and 2)

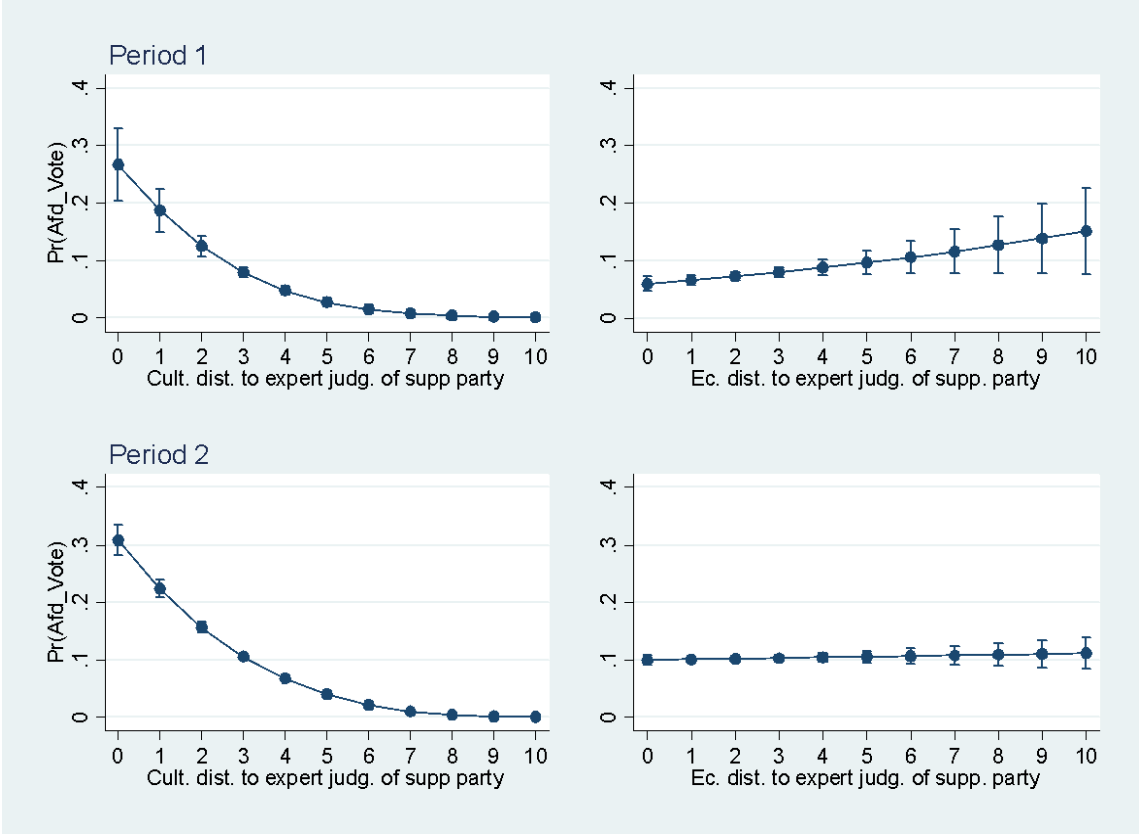


Source: Own calculations based on CHES

Again, Figure 1.5 visualizes the logit regression results reported in Table 1.1 column 3 and 4 as predictive margins. Already in the founding period a higher cultural proximity to expert judgements was a strong indicator of AfD support. From a medium distance (5) to a minimum distance (0) the respective probability increased by around 20 percentage points before and by 25 percentage points after 2015. The proximity of AfD’s expert placements in the cultural dimension and the AfD supporters’ homogeneous cultural preferences are exceptional. On the contrary, the increasing objective distance in the economic dimension in the founding period could be explained by the integration of respondents with little economic interest (‘don’t know’ or ‘don’t care’). As AfD supporters become indistinguishable in their economic party-supporter distance, there is very little interpretational room for a need of

economic strategy blurring – even during the radicalization period: AfD supporters are clearly not tricked into endorsing the party due to a misinterpretation of the party’s economic positioning. Since ‘right’ economic and cultural preferences remain significant after controlling for protest support, the AfD gets support because of and not despite its issue positioning.

Figure 1.5: Predictive margins logit regressions, distance to expert judgements, with 95% CIs (Table 1.1 Column 3 and 4)



Source: Own calculations based on CHES

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The regression analysis reveals that cultural *and* economic ‘right’ preferences indicate higher chances to support the AfD – albeit the cultural dimension has a four times stronger effect. Even after 2015 the perceived and objective economic proximity has mattered just as much for AfD supporters as for supporters of other parties. The results hold for Western and Eastern Germany alike.

In contrast to providing evidence for strategy blurring, this analysis stresses the AfD’s winning formula of a strongly emphasized ‘right’ cultural and a less emphasized ‘right’ economic positioning – while at the same time enabling its supporters to protest. AfD supporters’ systemic discontentment does not reduce them to issue-free party followers. And even AfD supporters who ‘don’t know’ the party’s economic positioning are well-represented. For its political competitors this means clearly that during the 2013 to 2017 legislative period, strong redistribution and social justice economic policy platforms

had little chance to convince AfD supporters. A feasible AfD competitor supporting redistribution and coming along with a credible anti-system appeal or 'right' cultural policies would still struggle to convince AfD supporters. As none of the established parties in Germany can credibly adopt such a positioning and the AfD has left behind its pure protest character, the party is unlikely to be challenged from within the party system.

Nevertheless, there is a chance that the party changes its positioning away from its current winning formula towards a more 'left' economic policy offer. This could particularly happen once 'far-right' faction leader Hoecke finally manages to marginalize the formerly influential liberal economists within the party leadership and to build up a 'party of social justice' (Hank, 2018). Whether such a shift is going to improve the parties' electoral success is questionable given the results from this contribution.

In Western Europe the AfD's winning formula directed at supporters with low income positions remains an exception. However, a similar set of attitudes conflicting with economic interests has been discussed in the 'What's the matter with Kansas' debate (Frank, 2004): A strict refusal of state interventions including the welfare state and climate change regulations can be found among radical supporters of the Republican Party who hold low socio-economic positions in different regions of the USA (Hochschild, 2016).

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Appendix 2

Contribution 2

The more the better?

Political implication of the diverging supply of public services in Germany⁵⁸

Matthias Diermeier⁵⁹

The Covid19 crisis intensifies the lively debate on regional disparities in the supply of public services. Particularly in sparsely populated rural areas, municipalities had a hard time providing competitive medical care, education facilities, public transport, or broadband internet – even before the Covid-19 outbreak. Whereas a further strengthening of urban centres is currently discussed, a feeling of being abandoned is perceived in rural areas. The present analyse kicks off the empirical debate for Germany: Based on a newly compiled dataset, this contribution provides a spatial analysis, in how far a poor supply of public services is related to an alienation from established political parties in the elections to the Bundestag 2017 and the European elections 2019. An index of public services is created combining amongst others the distance to the closest situated train station as well as the accessibility of the nearest hospital on the municipality level. As expected from other Western democracies, also in Germany a less intense supply of public services is related to a stronger election result for the right-wing AfD. Partly however, this result is simply driven by the stark divergence between rural and urban municipalities and disappears when zooming in on smaller rural municipalities. Also, AfD support does neither increase with a longer distance to the closest train station nor with a higher level of municipality debt. Nevertheless, the results point to favourable breeding grounds for right-wing populism in areas of political alienation and economic distress. Robustly, the AfD performs better where turnout is lower, where larger shares of the population emigrated and in the face of a tighter labour market. On the contrary, an innovative local economy has the potential to contain right-wing support.

⁵⁸ References to further material in the manuscript refer to supplemental online appendix here:

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41358-020-00239-y#appendices>

⁵⁹ The following article is the accepted manuscript of: Diermeier, M., Ist mehr besser? Politische Implikationen der disparaten Daseinsvorsorge in Deutschland. *Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft* 30(4), 539–568. This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

1. EINLEITUNG

In East Germany for instance, in the North of Britain, in parts of the US a lot of the complaint has to do with the declining quality of public services. [...] The fact that the train station closed, the fact that now I have to go 50 miles to the hospital rather than 10 miles [...]. Those lead to feelings of being left behind and feelings of resentment. [...] You get a very vicious circle. It may be possible to cut into such a vicious circle by thinking about [...] the regional distribution of the resources that people see as crucial for their lives.

(Hall, 2020, 41:30 Min)

Die Implikationen des Siegeszugs attraktiver Großstädte gegenüber dem ländlichen Raum sind in den vergangenen Jahren auch in Deutschland spürbar geworden und werden vermehrt auch von den Regierungsparteien diskutiert (CDU, 2018; Bundesministerium des Inneren, für Bau und Heimat et al., 2019; Fraktionen der CDU/CSU und SPD, 2019). Während Menschen ländliche Gebiete und Kleinstädte, insbesondere in Ostdeutschland, verlassen, steigt der Migrationsdruck auf die urbanen Agglomerationsgebiete, deren enorme Attraktivität sich aus der Kombination von gut ausgebauter Infrastruktur, attraktivem kulturellen Angebot sowie gut entlohnten Arbeitsplätzen ergibt (Dauth et al., 2018). Aufgrund des zunehmenden Leerstands in den unattraktiven Regionen (Bundesministerium des Inneren, für Bau und Heimat, 2018) wird sogar prophezeit, „die Provinz [drohe] zum *Flyover*-Land räumlich Abgehängter zu werden“ (Hervorheb. im Original, Reckwitz, 2019, S.100).

In der Folge dieses Prozesses stehen die weniger urbanen Gebiete vor der Schwierigkeit, angemessene öffentliche Daseinsvorsorge anzubieten und so die in Artikel 72 des Grundgesetzes verankerten „gleichwertigen Lebensverhältnisse“ zu garantieren. Je dünner besiedelt ein Gebiet ist, desto kostenintensiver wird die entsprechende pro Kopf Versorgung mit öffentlichem Personennahverkehr, Bildungsinfrastruktur, Breitbandinternet, sowie mit medizinischem Angebot. Aus rein effizienzbasierter, ökonomischer Überlegungen wird daher die radikale Forderung vorgebracht, Regionalpolitik sollte sich insbesondere auf die urbanen Kerne beschränken und den ländlichen Raum in besonders betroffenen Gebieten sich selbst überlassen (Leibniz Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung Halle, 2019). In eine ähnliche Richtung wird die plakative Äußerung der Bundesforschungsministerin Karliczek interpretiert, „5G ist nicht an jeder Milchkanne notwendig“ – nicht ohne die reflexartige Erwiderung der Gegenseite, dies nehme den entsprechenden Regionen jegliche Entwicklungschancen (Grasnick, 2018). Und auch die Kritik an Überkapazitäten und mangelnder Spezialisierung beim öffentlichen Angebot von Krankenhausdienstleistungen zahlt auf den Trade-Off zwischen einer effizienten und einer möglichst breit zugänglichen Versorgung ein: Die von der Bertelsmann Stiftung (2019b) vorgebrachte Forderung nach Schließung von ineffizienten Krankenhäusern – insbesondere in ländlichen Regionen – wird nicht zuletzt aufgrund der medizinischen Ausnahmesituation im Zuge von

Covid19 wieder kontrovers diskutiert. Wirtschaftlich verstärkt das Virus zwei entgegenlaufende Trends. Auf der einen Seite wird etwa von Burkhard Jung, dem Präsidenten des Deutschen Städtetags, ein starker lokal verankerter Staat gefordert, der über Daseinsvorsorge Handlungsfähigkeit begründet (Spiegel Online, 2020). Dies gilt insbesondere hinsichtlich eines gut ausgebauten Gesundheitssystems, das seine Bürger zu schützen weiß, aber ebenso für das flächendeckende Angebot mit Breitband-Internet, das regionale Disparitäten während des Lock-Downs für Schüler und Arbeitnehmer nicht regionalspezifisch verschärft. Armin Nassehi hofft sogar, dass nach der Krise „staatliche Garantien für Infrastrukturen und die Daseinsvorsorge mit mehr Reputation [...] versehen [werden]“ (ZEIT Online, 2020). Auf der anderen Seite trifft das Virus einen vulnerablen Akteur besonders hart: die aufgrund der angespannten Finanzlage bereits hoch gefährdeten Kommunen. Der kommunale, Covid19 bedingte, finanzielle Schaden wird vom Deutscher Landkreistag (2020) für das Jahr 2020 auf 16 Milliarden Euro taxiert.

Besondere politische Virulenz erhalten die komplexen regionalpolitischen Fragen zudem, weil sie über die ökonomische Divergenz hinaus eng mit einem entsprechenden Stadt-Land Wertekonflikt verknüpft sind. Eindrücklich beschreiben David Goodhart (2017) und Rodríguez-Pose (2018) die geographische Komponente der Spaltung zwischen Kosmopoliten in den Metropolregionen und Lokalisten in der Peripherie, die sich immer weniger durch „das Establishment“ in den Kapitalen vertreten fühlen. Langfristige ökonomische Vernachlässigung in Kombination mit (gefühlter) mangelnder politischer Repräsentation werden als toxische Mischung identifiziert, die sich in Politikverdrossenheit oder starken Wahlergebnissen radikaler rechter Parteien spiegelt („The Revenge of Places that don't matter“). Aus den USA berichtet Katherine Cramer (2016) vom Gefühl, im ländlichen Wisconsin nicht ausreichend an öffentlichen Ressourcen zu partizipieren, was sie letztlich für die hohe Beliebtheit von Donald Trump mitverantwortlich macht (Guo, 2016). Mit Blick auf den Brexit weisen Essletzbichler et al. (2018) darauf hin, dass die Ablehnung der europäischen Union dort am stärksten ausgeprägt ist, wo der Konflikt um knappe öffentliche Ressourcen am intensivsten geführt wird. Und auch für Frankreich haben der Geograph Christophe Guilluy und der Demograph Hervé Le Bras immer wieder medienwirksam den Abstand zum nächsten Bahnhof ins Verhältnis zum Wahlergebnis für den Rassemblement National (vormals Front National) gesetzt (The Economist, 2017; Altwegg, 2018).

Die Konsequenz einer solchen *Geographie der Unzufriedenheit* liegt vermeintlich auf der Hand und wird prominent von Politik und Verwaltung gefordert: Die Stärkung der Daseinsvorsorge im Ländlichen etwa durch die Förderung kommunaler Infrastruktur oder Ausbildungsinstitutionen, um dort wohnhafte Bürger für etablierte Parteien zurückzugewinnen (Balser and Braun, 2019; Exner, 2019; Franz et al., 2019; Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2019). Doch diese Perspektive bleibt nicht unwidersprochen. So erklärt beispielsweise der The Economist (2019) die Abwesenheit von Gelbwestenprotesten in der

Bundesrepublik mit der dezentralen deutschen Wirtschaftsstruktur, der Innovationskraft – insbesondere der sogenannten “Hidden Champions“ in kleineren Städten – und der Responsivität lokaler Politik auf die Sorgen der Bevölkerung. Die Befunde aus anderen Ländern wären also nicht ohne weiteres auf Deutschland übertragbar.

Eine konsistente empirische Analyse dieser Fragestellungen für Deutschland liegt der Literatur bislang noch nicht vor. Der vorliegende Beitrag hat daher zum Ziel, die Disparitäten der Bereitstellung spezieller öffentlicher Güter zu untersuchen, um den politischen Implikationen des unterschiedlichen Niveaus an Daseinsvorsorge nachzuspüren: Geht eine weniger intensive Versorgung mit öffentlichen Gütern insbesondere im ländlichen deutschen Raum tatsächlich mit einer stärkeren Entfremdung der Bevölkerung von etablierten Parteien einher? Um diese Forschungsfrage empirisch handhabbar zu machen, arbeitet die folgende Analyse die deutschen Spezifika von lokaler Daseinsvorsorge sowie den Zusammenhang zum Aufstieg der rechtspopulistischen Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) heraus und greift auf einen umfangreichen Datensatz auf der kleinstmöglichen räumlichen Ebene, den Gemeinden, zurück.

2. POLITISCHE IMPLIKATIONEN EINER DISPARATEN DASEINSVORSORGE

Worauf es hier ankommt, ist die Einsicht, dass sich die Linke durch die Überpolitisierung der kosmopolitischen Konfliktachse in doppelter Hinsicht von den Interessen der sozial Marginalisierten abgewandt hat: einmal durch die Relativierung der Aufmerksamkeit für soziale Problemlagen und dann noch einmal durch die Gegnerschaft zu den „locals“, die umso mehr zunimmt, je mehr der urbane Globalisierungs- und Modernisierungsgewinner zum Zielpunkt politischer Ansprache wird. Die von der kosmopolitischen Party Ausgeschlossenen reagierten bekanntlich in zwei Schüben: zuerst durch Wahlenthaltung und seit einigen Jahren durch vermehrte Hinwendung zum Rechtspopulismus.

(Höpner, 2018).

Urbane Gewinner und ländliche Verlierer, auch mit Blick auf die Aufmerksamkeit durch das Establishment, so liest sich die Kommentierung des Stadt-Land Konflikts – wirtschaftlich wie politisch. Daseinsvorsorge, der zugerechnet wird, einst in (West-)Europa zu nivellierenden Mittelstandsgesellschaften beigetragen zu haben (van Laak, 2018), wirkt dann als zusätzliche Zentrifugalkraft, wenn sich die „alte Mittelklasse“ als lokal verankertes „*sesshaftes* Milieu“ (Hervorheb. im Original Reckwitz, 2019, S. 98) konstituiert und von ihren demokratisch gewählten Repräsentanten aller politischer Couleur ökonomisch wie politisch im Stich gelassen werden. „Die verwurzelte Existenz der alten Mittelklasse erscheint dann im Verhältnis zur gesellschaftlich geforderten räumlichen

Mobilität defizitär“ (Reckwitz, 2019, S. 100). Als Konsequenz wenden sie sich vom etablierten Politikangebot ab. Die Entscheidung fällt dann lediglich „zwischen Protest- und Nichtwahl“ (Schäfer, 2015, S. 149).

2.1 Gleichwertige Lebensverhältnisse? Daseinsvorsorge in Deutschland

„Daseinsvorsorge mit ihren unterschiedlichen Bereichen gilt in Deutschland als eine wesentliche Grundlage für gleichwertige Lebensverhältnisse“, stellt das Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt und Raumforschung (BBSR) (2017, S. 6) fest. Der jüngste Raumordnungsbericht „Daseinsvorsorge sichern“ benennt explizit die Nahversorgung, medizinische Versorgung sowie die Abdeckung mit Bildungseinrichtungen als besonders bedeutsame Teilbereiche (Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt und Raumforschung, 2017). Erstaunlicherweise sucht man einen konkreten, gesetzlich-verankerten Leistungskatalog vergeblich. Wann der deutsche Staat seiner Verpflichtung zur Daseinsvorsorge nachkommt und wann er sie verfehlt, bleibt demnach notgedrungen „unscharf“ (Dehne, 2019, S. 56).

Festgeschrieben hat der Gesetzgeber den Versorgungsauftrag durch den Staat im Raumordnungsgesetz (ROG) § 2 als „Grundsätze der Raumordnung“. In Abs. 1 heißt es: „Im Gesamttraum der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in seinen Teilräumen sind ausgeglichene soziale, infrastrukturelle, wirtschaftliche, ökologische und kulturelle Verhältnisse anzustreben“. Abs. 3 hält außerdem fest: „Die Versorgung mit Dienstleistungen und Infrastrukturen der Daseinsvorsorge, insbesondere die Erreichbarkeit von Einrichtungen und Angeboten der Grundversorgung für alle Bevölkerungsgruppen, ist zur Sicherung von Chancengerechtigkeit in den Teilräumen in angemessener Weise zu gewährleisten; dies gilt auch in dünn besiedelten Regionen“.

Der zusätzliche Verweis auf die besonders dünn besiedelten Regionen ist als Versicherung des Staates gegenüber all seinen Bürgern und Regionen zu verstehen, diese bei der Bereitstellung eines Mindestmaßes an Grundversorgung gleichermaßen zu bedenken. Die besondere Dringlichkeit des gesetzlich fixierten Versprechens ergibt sich aus der demographischen Entwicklung (Dehne, 2019): teure Infrastruktur zu hohen Fixkosten impliziert in Gebieten mit niedriger Bevölkerungsdichte zwangsläufig höhere pro-Kopf Kosten. Prägnant hält das BBSR die Problematik fest: „Weniger Bevölkerung, weniger Wachstum, weniger Steuern, weniger finanzielle Handlungsmöglichkeiten der öffentlichen Hand“ (Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt und Raumforschung, 2017, S. 6). Rund die Hälfte der deutschen Gemeinden hat heute eine Einwohnerdichte von unter 100 Personen pro Quadratkilometer.⁶⁰ Gleichwohl gilt auch hier die Verpflichtung zu einer mit den Agglomerationsgebieten gleichwertigen Grundversorgung. Die Abwanderung ganzer

⁶⁰ Siehe INKAR-Datenbank des BBSR: <https://www.inkar.de/>

Bevölkerungskohorten stellt in diesem Kontext insbesondere ländliche, ostdeutsche Regionen vor große Herausforderungen (Oberst et al., 2019). Demographische Prognosen lassen für die Zukunft sogar auf eine Verschärfung des Problems schließen (Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt und Raumforschung, 2015). Das in § 2 ROG Abs. 4 festgeschriebene Ziel, „den Raum im Hinblick auf eine langfristig wettbewerbsfähige und räumlich ausgewogene Wirtschaftsstruktur und wirtschaftsnahe Infrastruktur sowie auf ein ausreichendes und vielfältiges Angebot an Arbeits- und Ausbildungsplätzen zu entwickeln“, rückt damit in weite Ferne. Ländliche Regionen, die lange Zeit mit einem stabilen Arbeitsangebot insbesondere in Ausbildungsberufen um Unternehmensansiedlungen werben konnten, verlieren ohne das entsprechende Humankapital im Standortwettbewerb an Wettbewerbsfähigkeit. Die niedrigeren Löhne im Ländlichen bedingen dann eine steigende Einkommensungleichheit zwischen Stadt und Land (Dauth et al., 2018). Eine entsprechend geringere wirtschaftliche Aktivität vor Ort führt zu geringeren Steuereinnahmen und bringt besonders die kommunale Ebene in die Defensive, die nicht nur mit steigenden pro-Kopf Kosten sondern ebenso mit sinkenden Einnahmen zu kämpfen hat (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2017). Die Strahlkraft einer attraktiven Daseinsvorsorge geht damit weit über die individuelle Dimension hinaus und erhält eine regionalpolitische Bedeutung.

Grundsätzlich weist die kommunale Selbstverwaltungsgarantie (§ 28 Abs. 2 Satz 1 GG) den Kommunen das Recht und die Verantwortung zu, der kommunalen Daseinsvorsorge (bspw. mit ÖPNV, medizinischer Versorgung oder Bildungsangeboten) mit dem Ziel gleichwertiger Lebensverhältnisse nachzukommen (Schuppli, 2017; Kahl and Lorenzen, 2019). Um diesem Anforderungsportfolio gerecht zu werden und gleichzeitig den weiteren Verpflichtungen – wie beispielsweise die während einer Wirtschaftskrise stark ansteigenden Kosten der Unterkunft für Leistungsbeziehende nach SGBII – nachzukommen, haben Kommunen das grundgesetzlich verankerte Recht auf finanzielle Mindestausstattung. Selbstverschuldet oder aufgrund von Migration und Strukturwandel steckten einige Gemeinden jedoch bereits vor der Covid19-Pandemie in einer „kommunalen Finanzkrise“ (Beznoska and Kauder, 2019, S. 1). Insbesondere Kommunen in Nordrhein-Westfalen, dem Saarland sowie Rheinland-Pfalz sind dazu übergegangen, strukturell Ausgaben mit Kassenkrediten zu finanzieren, die als Instrument eigentlich nur für den Liquiditätsausgleich vorgesehen sind. Eine entsprechend geringere Investitionstätigkeit weisen betroffene Gemeinden auf. Zudem geht ein hoher Bestand an Kassenkrediten mit hohen Grund- und Gewerbesteuersätzen einher – der Haupteinnahmequelle für Gemeinden. Eine Erhöhung der Hebesätze mag zwar kurzfristig die kommunale Haushaltslage befrieden, macht den Standort mittelfristig für Unternehmensansiedlungen aber unattraktiv (Beznoska and Hentze, 2019). Die aktuelle Situation verschärft die Gefahr, dass Kommunen in einen Teufelskreis hineinrutschen, in dem sie aus strukturellen wirtschaftlichen Problemen heraus die Unternehmenssteuerlast erhöhen, um dem negativen Haushaltssaldo Herr zu

werden. Damit werden sie aber noch unattraktiver und verzeichnen letztlich eine noch geringere wirtschaftliche Aktivität sowie geringere Steuereinnahmen, mit denen sie den Aufgaben der Daseinsvorsorge kaum noch gerecht werden können. Selbst ein innovativer und integrativer Ansatz der Daseinsvorsorge, der staatliche Akteure entlastet, indem er die Zivilgesellschaft sowie lokale Genossenschaften mit einbindet, läuft ohne kommunale Handlungsfähigkeit und Infrastruktur ins Leere (Heinze, 2020, S. 166).

Tatsächlich deutet der kommunale Finanzreport der Bertelsmann Stiftung auf eine Divergenz der Kommunalfinanzen hin: „Die Schere zwischen starken und schwachen Kommunen öffnet sich seit vielen Jahren. Die Lebensverhältnisse der Menschen sind mehr und mehr abhängig von ihren Wohnorten. Messbar wird dies unter anderem an den Haushaltskennzahlen“ (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2019a, S. 4).⁶¹ Wirtschaftliche Aktivität, der Arbeitsmarkt, die kommunale Bereitstellung öffentlicher Güter sowie die Lebensqualität sind demnach eng verknüpft. Der Staat mag in prosperierenden Regionen stark und durchsetzungsfähig sein, sich in wirtschaftlich schwächeren Regionen hingegen zurückgezogen haben. Einem solchen Befund stellen Fuest et al. (2019) entgegen, dass die Regionen sich in Deutschland etwa mit Blick auf die verfügbaren Haushaltseinkommen angleichen und keinesfalls weiter auseinanderdriften. Dabei erscheint möglich, dass das Niveau der kommunalen Daseinsvorsorge abhängiger vom Wohnort wird, die individuelle Einkommensperspektive hiervon aber nicht grundsätzlich betroffen sein muss.

Eine marode Grundversorgung durch einen schwachen Staat, kann dann – auch ohne Veränderung der eigenen finanziellen Ausstattung – ein Gefühl des Verlassen- oder Abgehängtseins induzieren, aus dem heraus sich politische Frustration nährt. Politische Frustration kann sich mit Blick auf die Daseinsvorsorge zusätzlich auch aus einer *gefühlten* und nicht unbedingt aus einer *tatsächlichen* Benachteiligung herausbilden. Welche Leistungen vom Gesetzgeber formal unter die Daseinsvorsorge gefasst werden, ist dafür grundsätzlich irrelevant. So kann beispielsweise eine Schulschließung oder das Abschaffen einer Nahverkehrsanbindung von den Betroffenen aufgrund der Sichtbarkeit als ein „Verlassenwerden“ eingeordnet werden. Die Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (2017) hebt hervor, dass es den Bürgern bei der Evaluation von Daseinsvorsorge mehr auf „Outcomes“ als auf reine Inputfaktoren ankommt. Wie gut oder schlecht beispielsweise das kommunale Bildungsangebot bewertet wird, muss nicht zwangsläufig in einem Zusammenhang mit der Anzahl an Schulplätzen innerhalb einer Gemeinde stehen, sondern hänge vielmehr von der *Qualität* des schulischen Angebots im Ganzen ab. Ein

⁶¹ Aufgrund der schlechten Datenlage lassen sich die Befunde zur kommunalen Finanzlage nur schwerlich für längere Zeiträume verifizieren. Der Blick auf die kommunalen pro Kopf Ausgaben nordrhein-westfälischer Gemeinden über die vergangenen 25 Jahre zeigt jedoch tatsächlich eine zunehmende Dispersion: Der Variationskoeffizient als Maß der Ungleichheit von pro Kopf Ausgaben steigt von 0,22 im Jahr 1995 auf 0,3 im Jahr 2018 (Siehe Datenbank des Landesbetriebs IT.NRW: <https://www.it.nrw/statistik>).

ähnliches Argument führt die Bertelsmann Stiftung (2019b) an, wenn sie für eine bessere medizinische Versorgung eine Stärkung von Spezialkliniken auf Kosten der „Zahl der Standorte“ fordert.

Nicht zuletzt aus dieser Abwägungen von Effizienz- gegenüber Distributionsargumenten lässt sich der radikale Vorschlag vom Leibniz Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung Halle (2019) einordnen, Ausgaben für (mittlerweile) dünnbesiedelte Regionen in Ostdeutschland drastisch zurückzufahren und auf eine Stärkung der Zentren zu setzen. Dem muss entgegengehalten werden, wie symbolträchtig der Rückzug des Staates im ländlichen Raum sowie der (qualitative) Aufbau von Kapazitäten in den Zentren empfunden werden kann. Selbst wenn die Bündelung der Dienstleistungen letztlich die Angebote auf Kosten einer größeren Entfernung in den abgelegenen Kommunen qualitativ verbessert, muss dies schlussendlich von den Bürgern nicht so empfunden werden.

2.2 Der schwache Staat – politische Entfremdung aufgrund mangelnder Daseinsvorsorge?

Fühlen sich Wählerinnen und Wähler etwa mit Blick auf die Bereitstellung öffentlicher Güter benachteiligt, besteht die Gefahr eines Verfallens in „Apathie und Gleichgültigkeit“ (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2013b, S. 4), woraufhin die „Exit“ Strategie, bei der das Establishment durch ein Fernbleiben von der Wahlurne abgestraft wird, an Attraktivität gewinnt (Pickel, 2019). Empirische Untersuchungen der Wahlbeteiligung bekräftigen diese Interpretation. So finden Haußner and Kaeding (2019) sowie Schäfer and Roßteutscher (2015) in ihren Analysen der Bundestagswahlen in 2017 und 2013 mit Blick auf die Wahlbeteiligung einen klaren Zusammenhang zur regionalen sozio-ökonomischen Lage: in wirtschaftlich benachteiligten Gebieten zieht es weniger Menschen an die Wahlurne als in der prosperierenden Agglomeration. Ähnliches gilt innerhalb von Städten. Einhellig wird die bedenkliche sozio-ökonomische Spaltung der politischen Partizipation herausgearbeitet, bei der wirtschaftlich schwächere Schichten eine wesentlich geringere Wahlbeteiligung aufweisen:⁶² Kaeding et al. (2016, S. 14) nennen diese Beobachtung „die soziale Schieflage der niedrigen Wahlbeteiligung“. Schäfer (2015) erkennt einen „Verlust politischer Gleichheit“. Und die Bertelsmann Stiftung (2013a) konstatiert sogar eine „gespaltene Demokratie“.

Umgekehrt hat sich der Trend der fallenden Wahlbeteiligung erst mit der gestiegenen Partizipation bei der Bundestagswahl 2017 und der Europawahl 2019. Als besonders bedeutsam wird dafür der Erfolg der rechtspopulistischen AfD eingeschätzt: Die Bertelsmann Stiftung (2017) spricht explizit von einem „AfD-Effekt“, der die soziale Spaltung der Wahlbeteiligung gebremst habe. Auch mit Blick auf die Wahl zum Europäischen Parlament schneidet die AfD besonders stark in wirtschaftlich und demographisch

⁶² Einen solchen Zusammenhang hatte in den 1930 Jahren bereits Herbert Tingsten (1975, S. 230) herausgearbeitet: „Je niedriger die Wahlbeteiligung ausfällt, desto ungleicher ist sie“.

gefährdeten Kreisen ab (Franz et al., 2019). Pickel (2019) bescheinigt Wählerinnen und Wählern, die sich vormals aus dem politischen System qua Wahlenthaltung zurückgezogen hatten („Exit“), nun mit einer Protestwahl („Voice“) auf sich aufmerksam gemacht zu haben. Von einer „Revolte an der Wahlurne“ (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018) ist zwar nicht die Rede, aber tatsächlich hat sich die AfD 2017 in den Wahlkreisen erfolgreich gezeigt, in denen die Wahlbeteiligung von besonders niedrigem Niveau stark angestiegen ist (Haußner and Leininger, 2018).

Obwohl durchaus bezweifelt werden darf, dass sich die deutschen Rechtspopulisten für mehr Umverteilung und eine stärkere Daseinsvorsorge einsetzen würden (Diermeier, 2020) und die etablierten Parteien durch Gegenmobilisierung ebenfalls zu einem Anstieg der Wahlbeteiligung beigetragen haben (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2017; Franz et al., 2019), zeigt sich innerhalb der AfD-Anhängerschaft doch ein hohes Maß an Enttäuschung über das politische Establishment (Bieber et al., 2018)⁶³ sowie Anzeichen für einen starken Erfolg im wirtschaftlich schwachen ländlichen Raum (Franz et al., 2018, 2019).⁶⁴ Entgegen der vielfach geäußerten Stadt-Land Spaltung als Erklärungsmuster für die Wahlerfolge der AfD (Franz et al., 2018; Hillje, 2018), stellen Deppisch et al. (2019) klar, dass die starken Ergebnisse der Partei bei der Bundestagswahl 2017 keinesfalls über einen simplifizierten Stadt-Land Konflikt erklärt werden können. Zwar schneidet die AfD in Ostdeutschland tatsächlich in häufig prekären, eher ländlichen Gebieten gut ab, für Westdeutschland, wo einige ländliche Regionen wirtschaftlich prosperieren, birgt die Differenzierung hingegen keinen Erklärungsgehalt.

Benedikt Kaiser (2019), ein Autor der Neuen Rechten, vermutet in seinem „Blick nach Links“ (Antaios Verlag), die Entfremdung zwischen Wählerschaft und etablierten Parteien habe wirtschaftliche wie kulturelle Wurzeln, die sich letztlich in Fragen der Daseinsvorsorge spiegeln: „Die berechtigten Sorgen um Kindergartenplätze, Alltagssicherheit und soziale Fürsorgesysteme, die für kosmopolitische Wohlstandslinke banale, zu ignorierende Themen sind, und die sich auch und vor allem aufgrund der ungehemmten Zuwanderung verschärften, werden also mit dem Verdikt „Rassismus“ kontaminiert, anstatt sie lösungsorientiert in den Fokus zu stellen“ (2019, S. 30). Und tatsächlich wird auf der Suche nach treffsichereren Erklärungsmustern für die AfD-Erfolge im Ländlichen häufig ein Zusammenhang mit der öffentlichen Daseinsvorsorge suggeriert. Solche Befunde beruhen jedoch auf anekdotischer Evidenz und nicht auf einer konsistenten empirischen Analyse. So beschreibt etwa Bednarz (2017) den Rückzug des Staatlichen aus dem ländlichen Raum durch das Schließen zentraler Orte des Austausches,

⁶³ Mit Blick auf die räumliche politische Entfremdung untersuchen Rösel and Sonnenburg (2016) die Auswirkungen einer Kreisgebietsreform in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Für das AfD-Wahlergebnis spielt lediglich die binäre Frage der Ansiedlung von politischen Ämtern eine Rolle, erstaunlicherweise nicht deren tatsächliche Erreichbarkeit.

⁶⁴ Auch Dorn et al. (2020) betonen die Bedeutung der regionalen Disparitäten der wirtschaftlichen Deprivation als Erklärungsmuster der AfD-Wahlergebnisse, die durchaus den Befunden individueller wirtschaftlicher Betroffenheit entgegenstehen.

zu denen sie auch Apotheken⁶⁵ und Arztpraxen zählt.⁶⁶ Den Erfolg der Rechtspopulisten will sie als Mahnung an die etablierten Parteien verstanden wissen, „den ländlichen Raum nicht nur in ihren Wahlprogrammen, sondern auch vor Ort nicht zu vernachlässigen“. Vergleichbare Schlussfolgerungen zieht Hillje (2018) aus 500 „Haustürgesprächen“ in wirtschaftlich gefährdeten Regionen Deutschlands und Frankreichs, in denen die rechtspopulistischen Parteien besonders gut abgeschnitten haben: Die Befragten nennen „Lücken der Daseinsvorsorge“ (Hillje, 2018, S. 15) wie die lokale Verkehrs- und Sozialinfrastruktur am häufigsten als größtes Problem am Wohnort.

Kurtenbach (2019) systematisiert die teils widersprüchlichen Studien zur räumlichen Struktur des Rechtspopulismus und bietet einen hilfreichen Überblick über die Erklärungshypothesen. Mit Blick auf das Angebot öffentlicher Güter bietet die *Marginalisierungshypothese* einen wichtigen Ansatzpunkt. Diese postuliert neben der generellen wirtschaftlichen Perspektive eine besondere Bedeutung an bereitgestellten öffentlichen Gütern. Hierunter lässt sich etwa die mögliche politische Entfremdung aufgrund einer großen Distanz zum nächstgelegenen Bahnhof subsumieren, die durch Hevré Le Bras und Christophe Guilluy angeführt wird (The Economist, 2017; Altwegg, 2018). Guilluy betont zudem das Bedürfnis nach verstärkter Bereitstellung öffentlicher Daseinsvorsorge in politisch-entfremdeten und wirtschaftlich-gefährdeten Regionen: „Dans cette France populaire, la critique de la mondialisation économique se combine avec une défense d’un État protecteur et des services publics“ (2011, S. 44). Dabei verschwimmen die auf den ersten Blick *klaren* wirtschaftlichen mit *komplexen* kulturellen Erklärungsmustern: Denn mit dem Wunsch nach einem präsenteren Staat, der sich nach Meinung von Guilluy und Le Bras insbesondere aus dem peri-urbanen Raum zurückgezogen hat, geht auch ein gefühltes Verlassenwerden durch eine als immer entfernter empfundene Elite in den metropolitanen Zentren einher (Le Bras, 2015; Guilluy, 2018). Für die Zustimmung zu einem EU-Austritt beim Brexit-Referendum liefert Fetzer (2019) ein vergleichbares Argument: Während der Euro-Krise verzeichneten einige britische Distrikte einen Rückgang der Sozialstaatsausgaben um bis zu 50 Prozent. Von den Kürzungen Betroffene gaben in der Folge an, sie hätten keinen Einfluss mehr auf die Politik oder die politischen Repräsentanten kümmerten sich nicht ausreichend. Der Rückzug des Staates in den entsprechenden Regionen lässt sich schließlich als „Austeritäts-Effekt“ für den Ausgang des Brexit-Referendums mitverantwortlich machen.⁶⁷

In seiner Gesamtschau deutet der vorliegende Literaturüberblick darauf hin, dass die rechtspopulistischen Erfolge in Deutschland – vergleichbar mit anderen Ländern – im Sinne der Marginalisierungshypothese mit regionalen Disparitäten der sozio-demographischen Lage im

⁶⁵ Allmendinger and Wetzel (2020, S. 49) zeigen, dass eine bessere Erreichbarkeit von Apotheken tatsächlich mit einem intensiveren sozialen Austausch einhergeht.

⁶⁶ Ein ähnliches Argument findet sich bei Schäfer (2015, S. 165) mit Blick auf Schulen und Vereine.

⁶⁷ Siehe auch Essletzbichler et al. (2018) für einen ähnlichen Befund.

Allgemeinen und dem Angebot von kommunaler Daseinsvorsorge im Speziellen in Verbindung stehen. Im Kontext des Stadt-Land Konfliktes liegt die Vermutung nahe, dass weniger die Stadt-Land Spaltung per se eine Entfremdung von etablierten Parteien im Ländlichen bedingt, sondern der Zusammenhang vielmehr moderiert wird, durch das teilweise sehr schwache Angebot mit öffentlichen Gütern im ländlichen Raum.

Hypothese 1: Die AfD-Wahlergebnisse fallen je besser aus, desto schwächer eine Region mit Gütern der öffentlichen Daseinsvorsorge ausgestattet ist.

Hypothese 2: Besonders deutlich zeigt sich der Zusammenhang zwischen AfD-Wahlergebnis und Daseinsvorsorge in kleineren Kommunen, die kaum ein attraktives Niveau an öffentlichen Gütern bereitstellen können.

3. DATENMATERIAL UND METHODISCHES VORGEHEN

Häufig verharren kleinteilige räumliche Studien zum Wahlverhalten auf Stadtteilebene und klammern aus Gründen der Datenverfügbarkeit den ländlichen Raum als Untersuchungsgegenstand aus (Gardemin, 2009; Geiling, 2009; Schäfer, 2015; Haußner and Kaeding, 2019; Kurtenbach, 2019). Alternativ werden Wahlergebnisse auf der aggregierten Ebene von Landkreisen untersucht, die kaum die hohe Diversität der kleineren Gemeinden abzubilden vermögen (Bergmann et al., 2018; Franz et al., 2018, 2019). Die vorliegende Analyse bemüht sich daher um eine deutschlandweite Datengrundlage auf Gemeindeebene, die sowohl ländlichen Raum als auch Agglomerationsgebiete abzudecken vermag. Eine solche Operationalisierung geht auf Kosten von Datenverfügbarkeit einerseits sowie Trennschärfe des Wahlverhaltens innerhalb der großen Agglomerationsräume andererseits. Wie Leggewie (2019) zu Recht kritisiert, vermag dieserart Analyse insbesondere die unterschiedliche Lebenswirklichkeit zwischen eng beieinanderliegenden Quartieren nicht abzubilden. Weniger treffend zeigt sich dieses Argument gegenüber der relativ homogenen Erreichbarkeit von öffentlicher Infrastruktur innerhalb der großen Städte, wo sich selbst die in den 1960er Jahre errichteten „Satellitenstädte“ durch eine gute Zentrumsanbindung auszeichnen (Friedrich, 1977). Zudem ermöglicht eine Analyse auf Gemeindeebene aufgrund der Vielzahl an Kommunen einen besonderen Fokus auf den ländlichen Raum.

Als Proxy der Entfremdung von etablierten Parteien in Deutschland wird in der folgenden empirischen Analyse das AfD-Wahlergebnis der Bundestagswahl 2017 (Zweitstimmenergebnis) sowie der Europawahl 2019 auf Gemeindeebene („Voice“) als abhängige Variable genutzt. Entgegen möglicherweise verzerrter Befragungsdaten haben amtliche Wahlstatistiken grundsätzlich den Vorteil, die tatsächlichen Wahlergebnisse abzubilden (Manow, 2018; Schwander and Manow, 2018). Als

Datengrundlage werden daher die entsprechenden vom Bundeswahlleiter bereitgestellten Wahlergebnisse auf Wahlbezirksebene herangezogen.⁶⁸ Diese lassen sich von Wahlbezirks- auf Gemeindeebene hochaggrieren. Teilen sich mehrere Wahlbezirke einen Briefwahlbezirk über Gemeindegrenzen hinweg, lassen sich die Briefwähler jedoch nicht eindeutig einem Wahlbezirk zuordnen. Anstatt diese Briefwahlbezirke zu ignorieren, werden die Stimmen des gemeinsamen Briefwahlbezirks nach dem Anteil der jeweilig abgegebenen Urnenwahlstimmen an allen abgegebenen Urnenwahlstimmen der zugehörigen Wahlbezirke verteilt. Die hieraus berechnete Wahlbeteiligung („Exit“) wird als Kontrollvariable in die Regression aufgenommen.⁶⁹

Als Dimension der öffentlichen Daseinsvorsorge werden das medizinische Angebot, die Verkehrsinfrastruktur, die digitale Infrastruktur sowie die Bildungsinfrastruktur betrachtet.⁷⁰ Wie in § 2 ROG Abs. 3 festgeschrieben, ist in den einzelnen Dimensionen besonders die „Erreichbarkeit von Einrichtungen und Angeboten der Grundversorgung“ von Bedeutung.⁷¹ Bezüglich der *medizinischen Infrastruktur* wird auf den Anteil der Haushalte, die in einem Kilometer Umkreis einer Apotheken leben, aus der INKAR-Datenbank sowie auf die Erreichbarkeit von Krankenhäusern in Pkw-Fahrminuten, bereitgestellt vom GKV-Kliniksimulator, zurückgegriffen.⁷² Aufgrund der durch Covid-19 neu angestoßenen Diskussion um Daseinsvorsorge mit Krankenhausinfrastruktur werden alle Regressionen mit der Erreichbarkeit des nächstgelegenen Krankenhauses als separate unabhängige Variable berechnet. Als Proxy der *Verkehrsinfrastruktur* werden die Erreichbarkeiten von Autobahnen in Pkw-Fahrminuten sowie die Abfahrten des ÖPNV pro Kopf aus der INKAR-Datenbank genutzt. Die Haltestellen des ÖPNV werden nicht in Erreichbarkeit ausgelesen, da diese eine zu geringe Varianz aufweisen. Insbesondere in dünn besiedelten Gebieten ist nicht nur bedeutsam, ob es etwa eine Busanbindung gibt, sondern wie diese getaktet ist. Um den Zusammenhang zwischen geographischem Abstand zum nächstliegenden Bahnhof und AfD-Wahlergebnis gesondert zu testen, wird dieser für alle

⁶⁸ Die Festlegung der noch kleinteiligeren Wahlbezirke obliegt den Gemeinden. Da nur wenige Gemeinden die georeferenzierten Koordinaten der Wahlbezirke veröffentlichen, ist auf der disaggregierten Wahlbezirksebene keine konsistente Analyse im Kontext der regionalen Daseinsvorsorge möglich.

⁶⁹ Dieses Vorgehen führt zu einer leichten Ungenauigkeit und kann im Einzelfall zu einer berechneten Wahlbeteiligung von über 100 Prozent führen. Um hieraus entstehende unplausible Ergebnisse zu verhindern, wird die Wahlbeteiligung in solchen Fällen mit 100 Prozent angegeben. Problematisch zeigt sich zudem der Kreis Harz in Sachsen-Anhalt, für den dem Bundeswahlleiter lediglich das Gesamtergebnis aller Briefwahlbezirke vorliegt. Auch hier werden die Briefwahlstimmen auf alle zugehörigen Gemeinden verteilt. Interpretationen bezüglich dieses Kreises sollte mit größter Vorsicht betrieben werden.

⁷⁰ Zwar orientiert sich die Variablenauswahl an in der Literatur als bedeutsam erachteten Dimensionen der Daseinsvorsorge. Die Auswahl ist aber unausweichlich unvollständig und in zukünftigen Forschungsarbeiten zu erweitern und hinterfragen.

⁷¹ Die vorliegende Analyse betrachtet Daseinsvorsorge damit quantitativ und nicht wie von der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (2017) gefordert nach deren qualitativen Outcomes. Eine „tatsächlich“ qualitative Indikatorik der Daseinsvorsorge auf kommunaler Ebene ist kaum verfügbar, sodass qualitative Indikatoren häufig auf umfragenbasierte subjektive Zufriedenheit zurückgreifen müssen, die nicht unbedingt mit der Qualität der empirischen Daseinsvorsorge übereinstimmen muss, die hier im Vordergrund stehen soll.

⁷² Die durchschnittliche Erreichbarkeit der Krankenhäuser wurde aus georeferenzierten Daten berechnet: <https://www.gkv-kliniksimulator.de/>.

5.500 Bahnhöfe der Deutschen Bahn und je Kommune als durchschnittliche bevölkerungsgewichtete Distanz berechnet.⁷³ Als *digitale Daseinsvorsorge* wird auf den Anteil an Haushalten innerhalb einer Kommune, der von einer Breitbandversorgung mit 100Mbit abgedeckt ist, aus der INKAR-Datenbank zurückgegriffen. Die *Bildungsinfrastruktur* wird durch den Anteil von Schülern in allgemeinbildenden Schulen an der Bevölkerung zwischen 6 und 18 Jahren aus der INKAR-Datenbank abgedeckt.⁷⁴ Die Variablen der kommunalen Daseinsvorsorge werden standardisiert und gleichgewichtet zu Indices der medizinischen, digitalen, verkehrs- und bildungsinfrastrukturellen Daseinsvorsorge, und dann zu einem Gesamtindex dieser vier Kategorien aggregiert. Hierfür werden Variablen, die in Erreichbarkeiten gemessen werden, negativ kodiert, sodass eine hohe Ausprägung der Indices eine bessere Versorgung mit Daseinsvorsorge widerspiegelt. Abbildung 2.1 zeigt die räumliche Ausprägung des Gesamtindex und beispielhaft die aus der aktuellen Diskussion als besonders relevant charakterisierten Variablen Distanz zum nächstgelegenen Bahnhof sowie Erreichbarkeit des nächstgelegenen Krankenhauses.

Da nur ein Teil der hier betrachteten Variablen der kommunalen Verantwortung obliegt, wird diese Dimension der Analyse zusätzlich durch die Kommunalverschuldung abgebildet, die von den Statistischen Bundesämtern des Bundes und der Länder bereitgestellt wird.⁷⁵ Schließlich schränkt die häufig persistente und hohe Verschuldung die kommunale Handlungsfähigkeit auch mit Blick auf das Erbringen von Daseinsvorsorge vor Ort ein (Beznoska and Kauder, 2019). Als sozio-ökonomische Kontrollvariablen auf Gemeindeebene muss aufgrund der schwierigen Datenverfügbarkeit in erster Linie auf Daten der Bundesagentur für Arbeit (BA) Bezug genommen werden. Diese stellt den Anteil an Arbeitslosen (SGB II und SGB III) und der erwerbsfähigen Bevölkerung zur Verfügung – nach Haußner and Kaeding (2019) der bedeutsamste Indikator, der die soziale Lage in Wahlanalysen abbildet.⁷⁶ Aus der Datenbank der BA lässt sich zudem der Anteil der Erwerbstätigen im Verarbeitenden Gewerbe berechnen, der sich in vergangenen Regionalanalysen als wichtiger Prädiktor des AfD-Wahlergebnis erwiesen hat (Bergmann et al., 2018; Manow, 2018).⁷⁷ Besondere Bedeutung kommt in der vorliegenden Analyse der IW-Patentdatenbank (Koppel and Röben, 2019) zu. Diese umfasst eine Georeferenzierung aller Patenterstanmeldungen deutscher Anmelder beim deutschen Patent- und Markenamt (DPMA) nach Anmeldersitz. Die Patenttätigkeit auf kommunaler Ebene bietet im

⁷³ Als Rohdatengrundlage stellt die deutsche Bahn eine Liste der von ihr betriebenen Bahnhöfe zur Verfügung: <https://data.deutschebahn.com/dataset/data-stationsdaten>.

⁷⁴ Eine entsprechende Erreichbarkeit in Minuten lässt sich in Ermangelung eines georeferenzierbaren Schulverzeichnis nicht berechnen.

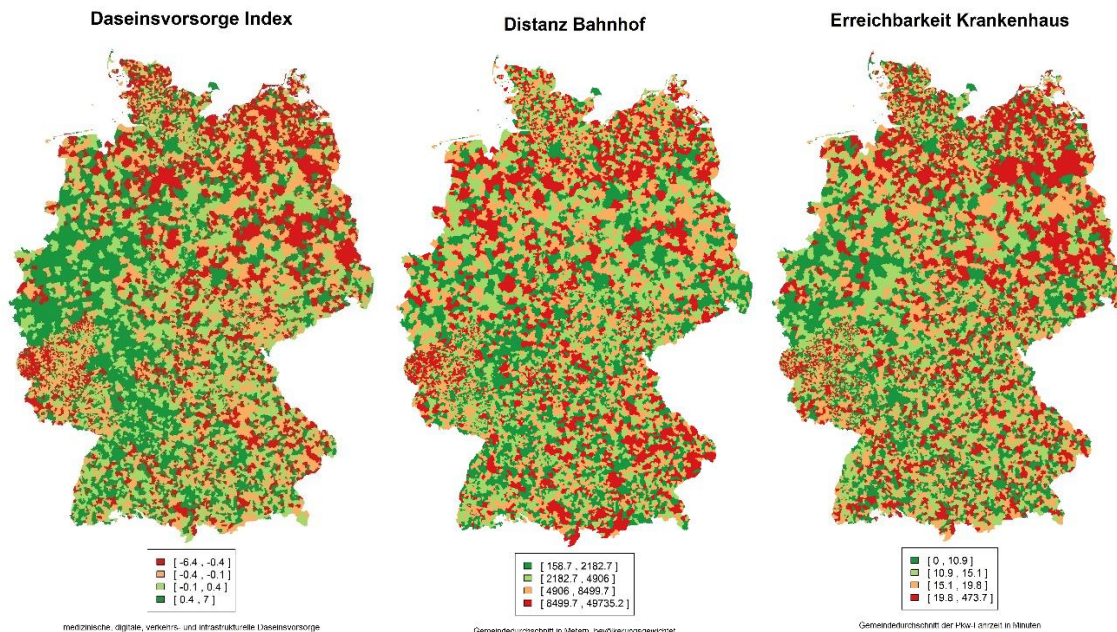
⁷⁵ Die entsprechenden Daten finden sich hier: <https://www.regionalstatistik.de/>.

⁷⁶ Die entsprechenden Daten finden sich hier: <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Navigation/Statistik/Statistik-nach-Themen/Beschaeftigung/Beschaeftigung-Nav.html>.

⁷⁷ Variablen, die das Bildungsniveau der Bevölkerung abbilden, liegen für Deutschland nicht auf Gemeindeebene vor und lassen sich demnach nicht als Kontrollvariablen mit aufnehmen. Das durchschnittliche Bildungsniveau ist aber positiv mit der Gemeindegröße korreliert (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2019, Kapitel 3).

Gegensatz zu den schlichten Beschäftigungsanteilen in der Industrie einen Proxy für die Innovationskraft und Zukunftsträchtigkeit der lokal ansässigen Wirtschaft. Als wichtige Variable im Stadt-Land Kontext wird die Bevölkerungsdichte auf Gemeindeebene der INKAR-Datenbank entnommen.⁷⁸ Der Altenquotient (Anteil der Bevölkerung älter als 65 Jahre) bildet die Demographie aus den Daten der Statistischen Bundesämtern des Bundes und der Länder ab.⁷⁹

Abbildung 2.1: Geographische Verteilung der Daseinsvorsorge in Deutschland



Quelle: eigene Darstellung auf Grundlage von INKAR-Datenbank, Deutsche Bahn, GKV-Kliniksimulator

Nicht alle Datenquellen können für alle Gemeinden die gewünschten Informationen bereitstellen. Bei vielen der Kommunen, für die Daten nicht vollständig zusammengetragen werden konnten, handelt es sich um kleine Gemeinden. Wo dies möglich ist, werden die fehlenden Werte mit den entsprechenden Durchschnitts der Landkreise imputiert.⁸⁰ Für die wenigen Gemeinden, in denen ein solches Vorgehen nicht möglich ist, werden die fehlenden Werte mithilfe der vorhandenen Variablen durch multiple Imputation geschätzt, sodass die Datenbasis 11.049 Gemeinden im Jahr 2017 in Deutschland umfasst. Um zu verhindern, dass Großstädte wie Berlin oder Köln und Kleinstgemeinden wie die in Schleswig-Holstein gelegenen Insel-Gemeinde Gröde (9 Einwohner) oder das rheinland-pfälzischen Hamm (17 Einwohner) mit gleicher Gewichtung in die Regression eingehen, wird in den Regressionen eine Bevölkerungsgewichtung vorgenommen. Damit die Ergebnisse aber nicht ausschließlich durch die

⁷⁸ Der insbesondere für die Konfliktthese bedeutsame Anteil der ausländischen Bevölkerung wird in Deutschland auf Gemeindeebene nicht valide ausgewiesen.

⁷⁹ Die entsprechenden Daten finden sich hier: <https://www.regionalstatistik.de/>.

⁸⁰ Appendix Tabelle 1 gibt einen Überblick über die verwendeten Datenquellen. Appendix Tabelle 2 zeigt die deskriptiven Statistiken.

80 Großstädte mit mehr als 100.000 Einwohner und die 618 Mittelstädte mit zwischen 20.000 und 100.000 Einwohnern determiniert werden, werden alle Regressionen auch exklusiv für die 10.350 Gemeinden mit weniger als 20.000 Einwohnern sowie für alle 8.120 Gemeinden mit weniger als 5.000 Einwohnern gerechnet und ausgewiesen. Dieses Vorgehen soll einen besonderen Analysefokus auf die häufig vernachlässigten kleinen Kommunen im ländlichen Raum lenken.

Zudem ist die Datenverfügbarkeit am aktuellen Rand eingeschränkt. Von allen Kontrollvariablen steht für das Jahr 2019 lediglich die Arbeitslosenquote zur Verfügung, sodass für die Regressionen der Europawahl 2019 für alle weiteren Variablen auf die Datenbasis 2017 zurückgegriffen werden muss. Von einer Längsschnittanalyse muss aufgrund der mangelnden Datenverfügbarkeit der Daseinsvorsorge-Variablen in der Vergangenheit abgesehen werden. Eine solche dynamische Analyse, die etwa den Einfluss der Schließung von Apotheken und Bahnhöfen oder den Anschluss an das Breitbandnetz auf das Wahlergebnis beleuchtet, hat mit einer breiteren Datenbasis in Zukunft das Potential, sich kausalen Schlussfolgerungen anzunähern. Der vorliegende Querschnitt, der mithilfe von OLS-Regressionen geschätzt wird, ist lediglich als vertiefende Korrelationsanalyse zu betrachten,⁸¹ bietet aber nichtsdestotrotz wichtige erste Anhaltspunkte, inwiefern Daseinsvorsorge und das rechtspopulistische Wahlergebnis in Deutschland miteinander einhergehen. Den strukturellen regionalen Unterschieden wird mit Bundeslanddummies Rechnung getragen.⁸²

4. RÄUMLICHE DETERMINANTEN DES AFD-WAHLERGEBNIS

Bei der Bundestagswahl 2017 schaffte mit der AfD erstmalig eine rechtspopulistische Partei in Fraktionsstärke den Sprung in den deutschen Bundestag. Im Vergleich mit der Bundestagswahl 2013 ging der Erfolg der Rechtspopulisten mit einem Anstieg der Wahlbeteiligung um 4,7 Prozentpunkte einher. Das starke AfD-Ergebnis von 12,7 Prozent im Jahr 2017 konnte bei der Europawahl entgegen der hohen Erwartungen mit lediglich 11 Prozent nicht eingestellt werden, dabei stieg die

⁸¹ Die in Abbildung 2.1 ersichtliche räumliche Struktur der vorliegenden Analyse stellt grundsätzlich in Frage, inwiefern eine OLS-Regression die adäquate ökonomische Herangehensweise darstellt. Tatsächlich weisen die verwendeten Variablen ebenso wie die Fehlerterme der in Abschnitt 4 vorgestellten Regressionen ein statistisch signifikantes Maß räumlicher Autokorrelation (Morans I) auf, sodass OLS-Regressionen verzerrte und ineffiziente Schätzergebnisse liefern. Der Fokus der vorliegenden Analyse liegt jedoch auf dem ländlichen Raum und damit auf einem Subsample deutscher Gemeinden. Die Exklusion der größeren Gemeinden stellt konsistente Regressionsmodelle, die die räumliche Struktur kontrollieren vor grundsätzliche Schwierigkeiten: Einerseits sind es häufig die Großstädte, deren Arbeitsmärkte oder Angebote mit Daseinsvorsorge auf die umliegenden Regionen ausstrahlen, andererseits entstehen im Subsample „künstliche Inseln“ (Kommunen ohne Nachbarschaftsgemeinden) innerhalb Deutschlands, was wiederum Annahmen für die räumliche Gewichtungsmatrix bedingt. Zudem zeigen Maximum Likelihood Schätzer für das gesamte Sample, die die räumliche Struktur kontrollieren (etwa Spatial Simultaneous Autoregressive Error Modelle), qualitativ äquivalente Schätzergebnisse zu den entsprechenden OLS-Regressionen, sodass die vorliegenden Ergebnisse durchaus als eine erste vertiefende Korrelationsanalysen interpretierbar sind. In Zukunft wird die Kontrolle der räumlichen Struktur weiter an Bedeutung gewinnen, sollten Analysen auf Wahlbezirksebene mit noch stärkerer räumlicher Autokorrelation möglich werden.

⁸² Die Regressionsergebnisse verändern sich qualitativ nicht wenn anstatt der Bundesland-Dummies, der Unterschied zwischen West- und Ostdeutschen Bundesländern in einer einzigen binären Variablen kontrolliert wird.

Wahlbeteiligung bei der Europawahl gegenüber 2014 sogar um 13,2 Prozentpunkte an. Dies lag wohl auch daran, dass 2019 neben der Mobilisierung durch die AfD auch eine besonders starke Gegenmobilisierung durch den politischen Antagonisten, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, erfolgte (Franz et al., 2019).

4.1 Bundestagswahl 2017

Tabelle 2.1 zeigt die OLS-Regressionen mit dem AfD-Zweitstimmenanteil der Bundestagswahl 2017 als abhängige Variable sowie dem Index der Daseinsvorsorge und seinen Subindices als unabhängige Variablen. Zudem werden die Regressionsergebnisse mit der prominent diskutierten Distanz zum nächstgelegenen Bahnhof und der Erreichbarkeit des nächstgelegenen Krankenhauses als unabhängige Variablen separat ausgewiesen.

Die OLS-Regressionsergebnisse mit dem AfD-Wahlergebnis der Bundestagswahl 2017 als abhängige Variable in Tabelle 2.1 bestätigen wie in Hypothese 1 erwartet, dass grundsätzlich eine bessere Daseinsvorsorge ceteris paribus statistisch signifikant mit einem schlechteren AfD-Wahlergebnis auf kommunaler Ebene einhergeht. Eine Gemeinde mit einer um eine Standardabweichung intensiveren Daseinsvorsorge (Gesamtindex) geht mit einem um 0,14 Standardabweichungen schlechteren AfD-Wahlergebnis einher – lediglich Wahlbeteiligung und Arbeitslosigkeit weisen einen höheren Beta-Koeffizienten aus.⁸³ Entgegen Hypothese 2 verringert die Reduktion des Samples auf Gemeinden mit weniger als 20.000 Einwohnern die Effektstärke jedoch deutlich auf 0,07 Standardabweichungen. Dieses Muster spiegeln auch die Regressionsergebnisse der Subindices – der Effekt des Breitbandversorgungsindex verliert sogar seine statistische Signifikanz im reduzierten Sample. Der Subindex zur Daseinsvorsorge mit Mobilitätsinfrastruktur weist zudem überhaupt keine statistische Signifikanz auf, ebenso wie die durchschnittliche Distanz innerhalb einer Gemeinde zum nächstgelegenen Bahnhof, dem für die rechtspopulistischen Wahlerfolge in Frankreich eine hohe Bedeutung zugemessen wird (The Economist, 2017). Der Effekt zwischen AfD-Ergebnis und Erreichbarkeit des nächsten Krankenhauses ist hingegen statistisch signifikant. Auch hier sinkt jedoch der Beta-Koeffizient mit der Reduktion des Samples deutlich von 0,05 auf 0,02 Standardabweichungen.⁸⁴ Zum einen weisen die schwächeren Effekte innerhalb der Kleinstädte und dem ländlichen Raum darauf hin, dass Unterschiede im AfD-Wahlergebnis zu einem Großteil mit der

⁸³ Siehe Appendix Tabelle 3 für einen Überblick über die Beta-Koeffizienten der Schätzung in Tabelle 2.1. Der Vergleich und die Interpretation der Effektstärke ist besonders wichtig, da Regressionen mit derart hoher Fallzahl dazu neigen, statistische Signifikanz auszuweisen.

⁸⁴ Appendix Tabelle 4 zeigt, dass die Regressionsergebnisse des Subsamples (< 20.000 Einwohner) auch bei einer noch stärkeren Restriktion der Gemeindegrößen (etwa < 5.000 Einwohner) qualitativ vergleichbar bleiben. Mit Blick auf die Daseinsvorsorge besonders starke Effekte lassen sich zudem im Subsample der mittelgroßen Gemeinden (5.000-20.000 Einwohner) feststellen.

Disparität zu den gut versorgten Agglomerationsgebieten in Verbindung stehen. Zum anderen lassen sich mit Blick auf die Daseinsvorsorge besonders starke Effekte im Subsample der zwar relativ gut aber doch heterogen versorgten mittelgroßen Gemeinden (5.000-20.000 Einwohner) feststellen.⁸⁵ Mit einem R-Quadrat von über 0,78 weisen die Regressionsoutputs darauf hin, dass ein sehr hoher Anteil der Varianz des AfD-Wahlergebnis auf Gemeindeebene durch die unabhängigen Variablen erklärt wird. Dieser geht aber lediglich zu einem kleinen Teil auf die Variablen der Daseinsvorsorge zurück. Einen besonders hohen Erklärungsgehalt liefern die sozio-demographischen Kontrollvariablen sowie die fixen Effekte auf Bundeslandebene.

Die Kontrollvariablen zeigen größtenteils die erwarteten Effekte. Tatsächlich findet die AfD in Räumen mit niedrigerer Wahlbeteiligung einen fruchtbaren Boden. Der von der Bertelsmann Stiftung (2017) attestierte „AfD-Effekt“ kann somit auch auf Gemeindeebene reproduziert werden. Zu dem beschriebenen gefühlten „Verlassenwerden“ passt auch, dass eine starke Abwanderung der AfD in die Hände zu spielen scheint. Im Vergleich der kleineren Gemeinden geht nichtsdestotrotz ein höherer Anteil älterer Menschen mit einem schwächeren Abschneiden der rechtspopulistischen Partei einher. Zudem schneidet die AfD vergleichsweise besser ab, je höher die Arbeitslosigkeit oder der Anteil von Beschäftigung im Verarbeitenden Gewerbe sind. Insbesondere der Effekt von industrieller Wertschöpfung oder Beschäftigung auf das AfD-Wahlergebnis hat sich in Auswertungen auf Ebene der Landkreise und kreisfreien Städte als robust erwiesen (Bergmann et al., 2018; Manow, 2018).⁸⁶ Ein solcher Befund erstaunt, da immer wieder auf die gegenüber dem „Dienstleistungsproletariat“ (Reckwitz, 2019, S. 103) positive Lohnentwicklung in der exportorientierten Industrie hingewiesen wird. Trotzdem wird der (noch immer) gutsituierten „alten Mittelklasse“ (Reckwitz, 2019, S. 97) ein hohes Maß an Unsicherheit attestiert. Sowohl eine globalisierungs- als auch eine digitalisierungsbedingte Verunsicherung kommen als mögliche Erklärung der entsprechenden politischen Frustration in Frage (Manow, 2018; Sauer et al., 2018). Eine solche Interpretation wird durch das Hinzuziehen der IW-Patentdatenbank nach Anmeldersitz gestützt (Koppel and Röben, 2019). Da Patentanmeldungen in Deutschland größtenteils auf wenige Industriebranchen zurückgehen, lassen sich die Patentaktivitäten in Kombination mit der Beschäftigung im Verarbeitenden Gewerbe interpretieren. Im Gegensatz zum positiven Zusammenhang zwischen Verarbeitenden Gewerbe und AfD-Wahlergebnis, gehen mehr Patentanmeldungen in einer Gemeinde mit einer geringeren Zustimmung zur AfD einher. Wird die Patentaktivität als Proxy für die Zukunftstauglichkeit und Substituierungsresilienz der lokalen Wirtschaft verstanden, lässt sich interpretieren, dass eine Verunsicherung aufgrund der Abhängigkeit von möglicherweise unsicherer industrieller Fertigung nur

⁸⁵ Siehe Appendix Tabelle 4.

⁸⁶ Appendix Tabelle 4 zeigt jedoch, dass Beschäftigung im Verarbeitenden Gewerbe und AfD-Wahlergebnis in kleineren Gemeinden mit weniger als 5.000 Einwohnern nicht den hier beschriebenen Zusammenhang aufweist.

insoweit besteht, wie die Betriebe vor Ort tatsächlich eine geringe Innovationstätigkeit aufweisen. Eine innovative Wirtschaft hingegen wäre dann, wie von The Economist (2019) vermutet, als Schutzschild vor rechtspopulistischer Zustimmung zu verstehen.

Dem widerspricht nicht, dass die AfD besser abgeschnitten hat, wo die Arbeitslosigkeit vergleichsweise stark gesunken ist, da diese eben dort vorher ein besonders hohes Niveau aufgewiesen hat. Erstaunlicherweise geht eine höhere Kommunalverschuldung ceteris paribus mit einem schwächeren AfD-Wahlergebnis einher. Dies verwundert angesichts der prominenten AfD-Erfolge in den hochverschuldeten Ruhrgebietsagglomerationen, insbesondere in Sachsen erzielt die AfD jedoch extrem gute Wahlergebnisse in äußerst solventen Gemeinden. An dieser Variable gemessene kommunale Handlungsfähigkeit kann demnach per se keine pazifizierende Wirkung bescheinigt werden.

Tabelle 2.1: OLS-Regressionsergebnis Bundestagswahl 2017 AfD-Wahlergebnis (Zweitstimmen)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	AfD Ergebnis	AfD Ergebnis <20.000	AfD Ergebnis	AfD Ergebnis <20.000	AfD Ergebnis	AfD Ergebnis <20.000
Daseinsvorsorge Index	-0.014*** (0.001)	-0.008*** (0.001)				
Daseinsvorsorge Mobilität			0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)		
Daseinsvorsorge Digital			-0.002*** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)		
Daseinsvorsorge Gesundheit			-0.009*** (0.001)	-0.006*** (0.001)		
Daseinsvorsorge Bildung			-0.006*** (0.000)	-0.003*** (0.000)		
Distanz Bahnhof					-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Erreichbarkeit Krankenhaus					0.005*** (0.000)	0.001*** (0.000)
Wahlbeteiligung	-0.191*** (0.008)	-0.155*** (0.008)	-0.201*** (0.008)	-0.168*** (0.008)	-0.165*** (0.008)	-0.140*** (0.008)
Anteil Beschäftigung Verarbeitendes Gewerbe	0.019*** (0.002)	0.005*** (0.002)	0.022*** (0.002)	0.007*** (0.002)	0.020*** (0.002)	0.005*** (0.002)
Einwohnerdichte	-0.003** (0.001)	0.005* (0.002)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.006** (0.003)	-0.009*** (0.001)	-0.007*** (0.002)
Einwohnerdichte^2	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Anteil Arbeitslose	0.483***	0.322***	0.471***	0.320***	0.458***	0.285***

		(0.024)	(0.027)	(0.024)	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.028)
Veränderung Arbeitslose	Anteil	-0.014*** (0.002)	-0.013*** (0.002)	-0.014*** (0.002)	-0.013*** (0.002)	-0.015*** (0.002)	-0.013*** (0.002)
Patentanmeldungen pro Kopf		-0.260** (0.121)	-0.611** (0.288)	-0.297** (0.120)	-0.606** (0.287)	-0.421*** (0.123)	-0.769*** (0.290)
Altenquotient		0.080*** (0.009)	-0.089*** (0.009)	0.094*** (0.009)	-0.080*** (0.009)	0.052*** (0.009)	-0.099*** (0.009)
Bevölkerungsentwicklung		-0.460*** (0.086)	-0.104 (0.077)	-0.422*** (0.086)	-0.091 (0.077)	-0.773*** (0.087)	-0.235*** (0.077)
Kommunalverschuldung		-0.320** (0.150)	-1.082*** (0.243)	-0.484*** (0.151)	-1.140*** (0.242)	-0.392** (0.152)	-1.356*** (0.244)
Bundesland fixe Effekte		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Konstante		0.190*** (0.008)	0.218*** (0.008)	0.195*** (0.008)	0.225*** (0.008)	0.177*** (0.008)	0.211*** (0.008)
N		11,049	10,350	11,049	10,350	11,049	10,350
R-Quadrat		0.798	0.796	0.800	0.797	0.791	0.793

Standardfehler in Klammern

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

4.2 Die Europawahl 2019

An der Charakterisierung der Wahlen zum Europäischen Parlament als „second-order national elections“ hat sich seit Reif and Schmitts (1980) Befund nur wenig geändert: Noch immer ähneln die Wahlergebnisse denen auf nationaler Ebene, die Wahlbeteiligung fällt niedriger aus und kleinere Parteien gewinnen tendenziell gegenüber der amtierenden Regierung (Hix and Marsh, 2011). Demnach ist es nicht verwunderlich, dass die Regressionsergebnisse zur Europawahl 2019 denjenigen der Bundestagswahl 2017 ähneln. Der ungewichtete Korrelationskoeffizient der Wahlbeteiligungen beider Wahlen liegt bei 0,72; der Korrelationskoeffizient der AfD-Ergebnisse fällt mit 0,94 sogar noch höher aus.⁸⁷

Im Gegensatz zur Bundestagswahl 2017 hat die Mobilisierung jedoch nicht primär in den gefährdeten Gemeinden stattgefunden, sondern ebenso in den gutsituierten Quartieren der Großstädte (Franz et al., 2019). Trotzdem reproduziert Tabelle 2.2 viele Ergebnisse aus 2017. Eine um eine Standardabweichung intensivere Daseinsvorsorge geht ceteris paribus mit einem um 0,13 Standardabweichungen schlechteren AfD-Wahlergebnis einher.⁸⁸ Für das reduzierte Sample sinkt dieser Effekt auf 0,07 Standardabweichungen. Diese Ergebnisse lassen sich wieder nicht für alle

⁸⁷ Aufgrund von Gemeindegebietsreformen lassen sich Wahlbeteiligung und AfD-Wahlergebnis für 253 kleinere Gemeinden nicht eindeutig zuordnen. Die entsprechenden Werte wurden mithilfe von multipler Imputation ergänzt. Die Regressionsergebnisse inklusive dieser Gemeinden unterscheiden sich jedoch qualitativ nicht von den Regressionsergebnissen der 10.794 Gemeinden, für die Wahlergebnisse eindeutig zugeordnet werden können.

⁸⁸ Siehe Appendix Tabelle 5 für einen Überblick über die Beta-Koeffizienten der Schätzung in Tabelle 2.2.

Einzelkategorien reproduzieren: Für die Daseinsvorsorge mit Mobilitätsinfrastruktur zeigt sich sogar ein statistisch signifikantes umgekehrtes Vorzeichen, was auf den entsprechenden Zusammenhang innerhalb der kleinen Gemeinden mit weniger als 5.000 Einwohnern zurückgeht.⁸⁹ Dass die Zustimmung zu den Rechtspopulisten ceteris paribus mit steigender Entfernung zum nächstgelegenen Bahnhof sinkt (und eben nicht steigt), und sich gegenteiliges mit Blick auf die Erreichbarkeit des nächsten Krankenhauses zeigt, deutet auf Schwierigkeiten in der Interpretation der suggerierten simplen Zusammenhänge hin.

Mit Blick auf die Kontrollvariablen fällt im Vergleich zur Bundestagswahl auf, dass im ländlichen Raum eine höhere Zustimmung zur AfD nicht in jeder Spezifikation mit einem höheren Beschäftigungsanteil im Verarbeitenden Gewerbe einhergeht. Zudem steht die Patentaktivität lediglich in den mittelgroßen Gemeinden in einem entsprechenden statistisch signifikanten Zusammenhang mit dem AfD Wahlergebnis. Damit weisen die beiden untersuchten Wahlen große Ähnlichkeiten auf, zeigen aber ebenso einige wichtige Unterschiede, die sowohl aus der veränderten Anhängerschaft der AfD zwischen 2017 und 2019, als auch aus der unterschiedlichen Zusammensetzung des Elektorates resultieren könnten.

Tabelle 2.2: OLS-Regressionsergebnis Europawahl 2019 AfD-Wahlergebnis

	(1) AfD Ergebnis	(2) AfD Ergebnis <20.000	(3) AfD Ergebnis	(4) AfD Ergebnis <20.000	(5) AfD Ergebnis	(6) AfD Ergebnis <20.000
Daseinsvorsorge Index	-0.014*** (0.001)	-0.009*** (0.001)				
Daseinsvorsorge Mobilität			0.002*** (0.001)	0.002*** (0.001)		
Daseinsvorsorge Digital			-0.002*** (0.000)	-0.001 (0.000)		
Daseinsvorsorge Gesundheit			-0.009*** (0.001)	-0.006*** (0.001)		
Daseinsvorsorge Bildung			-0.005*** (0.000)	-0.004*** (0.000)		
Distanz Bahnhof					-0.001** (0.000)	-0.001*** (0.000)
Erreichbarkeit Krankenhaus					0.006*** (0.000)	0.002*** (0.000)
Wahlbeteiligung	-0.119***	-0.089***	-0.128***	-0.100***	-0.112***	-0.083***

⁸⁹ Siehe Appendix Tabelle 6 für die entsprechenden Regressionsergebnisse mittelgroßer und kleiner Gemeinden.

		(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Anteil Beschäftigung Verarbeitendes Gewerbe		0.013*** (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.016*** (0.002)	0.004** (0.002)	0.014*** (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)
Einwohnerdichte		-0.008*** (0.001)	-0.000 (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.001)	0.000 (0.002)	-0.014*** (0.001)	-0.012*** (0.002)
Einwohnerdichte^2		0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)
Anteil Arbeitslose		0.584*** (0.024)	0.406*** (0.027)	0.565*** (0.024)	0.400*** (0.027)	0.528*** (0.024)	0.344*** (0.027)
Veränderung Arbeitslose	Anteil	-0.013*** (0.001)	-0.009*** (0.001)	-0.013*** (0.001)	-0.009*** (0.001)	-0.013*** (0.001)	-0.009*** (0.001)
Patentanmeldungen pro Kopf		-0.030 (0.114)	-0.267 (0.267)	-0.082 (0.113)	-0.267 (0.266)	-0.188 (0.115)	-0.420 (0.269)
Altenquotient		0.147*** (0.009)	-0.012 (0.009)	0.163*** (0.009)	0.001 (0.009)	0.119*** (0.009)	-0.023*** (0.009)
Bevölkerungsentwicklung		-0.742*** (0.081)	-0.253*** (0.071)	-0.701*** (0.081)	-0.244*** (0.071)	-1.050*** (0.081)	-0.397*** (0.071)
Kommunalverschuldung		-0.248* (0.141)	-0.514** (0.225)	-0.441*** (0.142)	-0.561** (0.224)	-0.318** (0.144)	-0.817*** (0.225)
Bundesland fixe Effekte		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Konstante		0.092*** (0.005)	0.124*** (0.005)	0.094*** (0.005)	0.127*** (0.005)	0.095*** (0.005)	0.127*** (0.005)
N		11,049	10,350	11,049	10,350	11,049	10,350
R-Quadrat		0.823	0.833	0.825	0.834	0.817	0.830

Standardfehler in Klammern

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

5. DISKUSSION UND ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Bevölkerungsschwund vieler ländlicher Kommunen erschwert die Finanzierung einer Daseinsvorsorge, wie diese in den Agglomerationsgebieten angeboten werden kann. Angesichts des Teufelskreises aus „weniger Bevölkerung, weniger Wachstum, weniger Steuern, weniger finanzielle Handlungsmöglichkeiten der öffentlichen Hand“ (Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt und Raumforschung, 2017, S. 6) sehen viele wissenschaftliche Kommentatoren nur noch den Ausweg in einer Bündelung von öffentlichen Mitteln. Das Leibniz Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung Halle (2019) fordert den Exit aus der Förderung ländlicher Kommunen in Ostdeutschland und einen Fokus auf die wirtschaftsstarke Städte. Die Bildungsministerin signalisiert, dass sie „5G nicht an jeder Milchkanne“ für notwendig hält (Grasnick, 2018) und die Bertelsmann Stiftung (2019b, S. 7) fordert „eine stärkere Zentralisierung und Spezialisierung der stationären Versorgung“ von Krankenhäusern. Die enormen finanziellen Anstrengungen aus der Covid-19 Pandemie schlagen sich in Bundes- Länder- sowie Kommunal финанzen

nieder und werden die Schwierigkeiten der bereits vorbelasteten Gemeinden weiter verstärken. Dabei zeigt sich schon heute: Selbst wenn etwa in Oberzentren gebündelte Infrastruktur auch Menschen in abgelegenen Regionen eine qualitativ bessere Daseinsvorsorge bieten würde und sogar „gleichwertige Lebensverhältnisse“ (§ 72 GG) besser zu wahren vermöchte, bestünde immer die Gefahr der symbolischen Schließung öffentlicher Einrichtungen, die mit einem „Gefühl des Verlassenseins“ (Hillje, 2018, S. 2) einhergehen kann.

Studien aus den USA (Cramer, 2016), dem Vereinigten Königreich (Essletzbichler et al., 2018; Rodríguez-Pose, 2018; Fetzer, 2019) und Frankreich (Le Bras, 2015; Guilluy, 2018) haben zuletzt auf die politischen Implikationen eines solchen Rückzug des Staates hingewiesen. Nachdem sich die Menschen in den *verlassenen* Regionen langsam von der Wahlurne verabschiedet hatten, schlagen die betroffenen Regionen nun in einer „Revenge of Places That Don’t Matter“ (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018) durch die Wahl von rechten Parteien außerhalb des politischen Establishments zurück. Auch für Deutschland liegt die Vermutung nahe, in Kommunen mit schlechter Daseinsvorsorge habe eine Entfremdung zu den etablierten Parteien stattgefunden, die sich nun in einer „Geographie der Unzufriedenheit“ (Dijkstra et al., 2019) spiegelt. Tatsächlich hat die lange Zeit sinkende Wahlbeteiligung bei Bundestagswahlen erst mit dem Erfolg der AfD im Jahr 2017 ein vorläufiges Ende gefunden und diesem „AfD-Effekt“ wurde sogar ein Abmildern der sozialen Schieflage der Wahlbeteiligung attestiert (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2017).

Der vorliegende Beitrag eröffnet nun die empirische Analyse des räumlichen Zusammenhangs zwischen disparater öffentlicher Daseinsvorsorge und der politischer Entfremdung zwischen Wählern und etablierten Parteien in Deutschland – insbesondere im ländlichen Raum. Wie erwartet deckt die Regressionsanalyse für die Bundestagswahl 2017 und die Europawahl 2019 einen räumlichen Zusammenhang auf zwischen AfD-Wahlerfolgen und schlechter Daseinsvorsorge, geringer politischer Partizipation, einer angespannten Lage auf dem Arbeitsmarkt sowie Bevölkerungsabwanderung. Grundsätzlich bieten die räumlichen Variablen einen maßgeblichen Erklärungsbeitrag der großen Unterschiede im AfD-Wahlergebnis zwischen deutschen Gemeinden und deuten so auf die Bedeutung regionaler gegenüber den umstrittenen individuellen sozio-ökonomischen Faktoren hin.

Mit Blick auf die Daseinsvorsorge im ländlichen Raum kommt die Analyse hingegen nicht zu dem erwarteten Ergebnis. Zwar sinkt die Daseinsvorsorge klar mit abnehmender Gemeindegröße, sie bietet innerhalb der kleineren Kommunen aber einen wesentlich geringeren oder gar keinen Erklärungsbeitrag zum AfD-Wahlergebnis. Besonders deutliche Effekte lassen sich demgegenüber zwischen den sehr heterogenen mittelgroßen Gemeinden feststellen. Der für Frankreich häufig vorgebrachte Befund, rechtspopulistische Parteien würden mit zunehmendem Abstand zum nächstgelegenen Bahnhof, immer erfolgreicher, lässt sich für Deutschland keinesfalls nachweisen und

deutet somit auf die Gefahr der Überinterpretation griffiger aber übersimplifizierender Erklärungsmuster des Niedergangs etablierter Parteien hin. Ebenso wenig kann einer niedrigen Kommunalverschuldung – als Proxy für die Handlungsfähigkeit der Lokalpolitik – eine pazifizierende Wirkung nachgewiesen werden. Zudem vermögen auch die vergleichsweise hohen Einkommen aus dem Verarbeitenden Gewerbe den Zulauf zur AfD nicht zu beschränken – ganz im Gegenteil. Dafür hat jedoch eine innovative, zukunftsgerichtete Wirtschaftsstruktur das Potential, die Zustimmung zum Rechtspopulismus abzumildern.

Zwar kann damit gezeigt werden, dass die Erfolge der AfD auch im ländlichen Raum geographisch mit wirtschaftlichen Schwierigkeiten einhergehen, um die komplexe Wirkungsrichtung dieser Zusammenhänge zu verstehen und politische Handlungsoptionen auszuloten, bedarf es hingegen tiefgreifenderer und noch kleinteiligerer Analysen. Erst wenn eine breitere Datenbasis zur Daseinsvorsorge über einen längeren Zeithorizont zugänglich ist, die auch qualitative Faktoren umfasst, und ebenso georeferenzierbare Wahlergebnisse auf Wahlbezirksebene vorliegen, kann auseinanderzisiert werden, inwiefern eine schwache oder schwächer werdende Daseinsvorsorge tatsächlich kausal eine politische Entfremdung auslöst oder lediglich räumlich mit spezifisch gewachsenen, kulturellen Einstellungs- und Wertemustern einhergeht. In Verbindung mit Befragungsdaten muss darüber hinaus die Heterogenität der räumlichen Struktur analysiert werden, um zu prüfen, inwiefern Wählerinnen und Wähler in den gefährdeten Regionen tatsächlich von wirtschaftlichen Schwierigkeiten und schwacher Daseinsvorsorge betroffen sind oder ob gerade diejenigen der AfD zuneigen, die entsprechende Probleme in ihrem räumlichen Umfeld beobachten, selbst aber (noch) nicht zu spüren bekommen haben.

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Appendix 3

Contribution 3

Bild-Online's inequality headlines – a mouthpiece of the deservingnes hierarchy?

Matthias Diermeier and Judith Niehues⁹⁰

Although the unemployed and immigrants rather run the risk of poverty than retirees, welfare state interventions for the latter group are much more popular among the German population. This paper examines the extent to which narratives, disseminated through the media, contribute to the decoupling of the legitimacy of welfare state entitlements and actual need. For this purpose, a qualitative and quantitative sentiment analysis of the coverage of inequality and poverty in the online portal of the Bild-Zeitung is conducted. While reports on the elderly, the sick and the unemployed largely reflect the widespread welfare deservingness hierarchy and entail a strong merit-based justice narrative, articles with reference to immigrants reveal a more ambivalent picture. It needs to be noted that refugees constitute an exception to the deservingness hierarchy due to their particular characteristics as well as the institutional setting. Accordingly, people with a refugee background are portrayed as "honest" and "highly motivated", immigrants from Eastern Europe are defamed as "poverty migrants" who are only drawn to Germany for the sake of social benefits. The injustice of old-age poverty is portrayed particularly emotionally, while the unemployed are depicted as "welfare parasites" or "Hartz IV cheaters". Except the reports on refugees, the Bild's coverage thus has the potential to further undermine society's solidarity with the socio-economically neediest groups and to promote a hierarchy of values that resonates especially among supporters of the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (AfD).

⁹⁰ Diermeier, M., Niehues, J., 2021, Bild-Online's inequality headlines – a mouthpiece of the deservingnes hierarchy?, Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft.

1. EINLEITUNG

Das Wertekonstrukt breiter Bevölkerungsschichten in West-Europa folgt einer Gerechtigkeitspräferenz, die Profiteure bestimmter sozialstaatlicher Politik klar bevorzugt. Am unteren Ende der empfundenen „Deservingness“ stehen in der mehrheitlichen Auffassung Menschen mit Migrationserfahrung, eine „Out-Group“, der vielerlei Ressentiments entgegenschlagen und gegen die sich politisch höchst erfolgreich mobilisieren lässt. Gefolgt werden Menschen mit Migrationserfahrung von „den Arbeitslosen“, die potenziell mit den weit verbreiteten Vorstellungen der Leistungsgerechtigkeit kollidieren. Kranke werden als eher unverschuldet in Not geraten wahrgenommen, sodass Ihnen eine höhere Solidarität entgegengebracht wird. Am solidarischsten verhält sich die westeuropäische Gesellschaft jedoch gegenüber der Gruppe der Alten, deren Prekarisierung am wenigsten toleriert wird (van Oorschot, 2000, 2006).

Würde sich Sozialpolitik an diesen vorherrschenden Präferenzen orientieren, um die wahrgenommene Verteilungssituation zu verbessern, ergäbe sich keineswegs zwangsläufig – wie ebenfalls mehrheitlich von der Bevölkerung gewünscht – eine gleichere Verteilung der materiellen Ressourcen. Denn obwohl auch Menschen in Deutschland besonders bei der Lebensstandardsicherung älterer Menschen staatlichen Handlungsbedarf sehen, zeigt sich nach aktueller Datenlage für diese Altersgruppe kein überdurchschnittliches Armutsrisiko.⁹¹ Würde Sozialpolitik an der empirischen Bedürftigkeit ausgerichtet, müsste vielmehr die Gruppe der Arbeitslosen oder Menschen mit Migrationserfahrung im Vordergrund stehen, deren Armutsrisiken deutlich höher ausfallen.

Der vorliegende Beitrag untersucht, ob sich die Diskrepanz zwischen empfundener Deservingness sozialstaatlicher Ansprüche und tatsächlicher Bedürftigkeit der unterschiedlichen Gruppen aus einer (de)legitimierenden narrativen Erzählstruktur im durch die Medien getragenen öffentlichen Ungleichheitsdiskurs spiegelt. Gegenstand der Analyse ist das Online-Portal der auflagenstärksten deutschen Tageszeitung, der Bild-Zeitung. Diese hat mit ihren viralen Portraits einzelner Arbeitsloser, wie „Florida-Rolf“ oder „Karibik Klaus“ eine lange Tradition in der Stigmatisierung von Beziehern von Sozialhilfe beziehungsweise Hartz-IV. Zudem sieht sich die Redaktion mit Blick auf die Gruppe der Zugewanderten trotz kurzzeitiger Euphorie für die „Willkommenskultur“ latent den Vorwürfen ausgesetzt, der rechtspopulistischen AfD in die Hände zu spielen: Der vormalige Chefredakteur von Bild am Sonntag Michael Spreng bezeichnet das Blatt sogar als „Vorfeldorganisation der AfD“ (Salmen, 2018). Da sich die Zeitung als „Seismograf der deutschen Befindlichkeiten“ (BILDblog, 2008) versteht, der den Menschen das gibt, „was sie bewegt“ (Mediaimpact, 2019a), stellt sich als Forschungsfrage,

⁹¹ Die Beurteilung von Armutsrisiken nach Altersgruppen (sowie deren zeitliche Entwicklung) hängt zu einem gewissen Teil auch von der verwendeten Datenquelle ab. Eine detaillierte Diskussion der Befunde folgt in Kapitel 3.

inwiefern die Bild-Zeitung die verbreitete sozialstaatliche Wertehierarchie mit ihrer Berichterstattung in die Gesellschaft begünstigt.

Aufbauend auf einer Text-Mining gestützten Sentiment-Analyse werden dazu die Narrative herausgearbeitet, mit denen sozialstaatliche Ansprüche der unterschiedlichen Gruppen auf- oder abgewertet werden. Insbesondere für die Gruppen Alte, Kranke und Arbeitslose lässt sich deutlich aufzeigen, dass die Bild-Online-Berichterstattung die vorherrschende Legitimitätshierarchie stützen und womöglich verstärken. In emotional beschriebenen Einzelfallbeispielen arbeitet sich die Zeitung an „respektierten“ Rentnern, „tapferen“ Menschen mit Behinderung und „frechen“ Arbeitslosen ab. Häufig leisten die Zuschreibungen einem Narrativ der Leistungsgerechtigkeit Vorschub und folgen der Logik „wer viel arbeitet soll auch mehr bekommen“. Im Gegensatz zur Deservingness-Präferenzordnung öffnet die Analyse eine differenzierende Perspektive auf die Gruppe der Zugewanderten. Einerseits werden Geflüchtete im betrachteten Zeitraum fast durchweg positiv und als legitim hilfebedürftig charakterisiert. Negative Artikel formulieren lediglich Kritik an der Ineffizienz der Behörden, aber nicht an den Zugewanderten selbst. Andererseits lesen sich Zuschreibungen der so titulierten „Armutsmigration“, vornehmlich aus osteuropäischen Staaten als durchweg diffamierend. Diese Gruppe von Zugewanderten wird merklich abgewertet und häufig dargestellt, als würden sie den deutschen Sozialstaat bewusst ausnutzen.

2. DIE WERTEHIERARCHIE SOZIALSTAATLICHER SOLIDARITÄT

Demokratisch organisierte Wohlfahrtsstaaten unterliegen einem ständigen Austarieren teils völlig konträrer Gerechtigkeitsvorstellungen unterschiedlicher Bevölkerungsschichten. Ganz grundsätzlich konkurrieren diejenigen, die für eine stärkere staatliche Umverteilung eintreten mit solchen, die sich gegen entsprechende Eingriffe stellen. Welche wohlfahrtsstaatlichen Politiken aber im Speziellen als gerecht empfunden werden, ist wesentlich komplexer – auch weil Gerechtigkeitspräferenzen nicht immer einer konsistenten Logik folgen, sondern das Ergebnis einer schwieriger Abwägung rivalisierender Präferenzmuster darstellen. So stimmen in Deutschland über 60 Prozent der Befragten des European Social Survey (ESS) 2016 der Aussage zu, „in einer fairen Gesellschaft sollten die Einkommensunterschiede gering sein“. Gleichzeitig befürworteten in derselben Umfrage mehr als die Hälfte der deutschen Umfrageteilnehmer, dass selbst „große Einkommensunterschiede aufgrund von Talent und Anstrengung akzeptabel“ sind. Selbst in den skandinavischen Ländern, deren Bevölkerung für ihre breite Zustimmung zu universalistisch organisierten und stark nivellierend wirkenden

Wohlfahrtsstaaten bekannt sind, findet sich mehr Akzeptanz als Ablehnung zu Einkommensunterschieden, die sich durch Leistungsunterschiede begründen.⁹²

Ob sich Einkommensunterschiede auf Anstrengung zurückführen lassen oder (un)glücklichen Umständen geschuldet sind, mag in den Augen unterschiedlicher Beobachter wiederum sehr unterschiedlich beschieden werden. Aufschlussreich ist in diesem Kontext eine differenzierte Betrachtung der als legitim oder illegitim bewerteten Ansprüche verschiedener bedürftiger Gruppen. Erstaunlich stabil lässt sich eine europaweit gültige gruppenspezifische Hierarchie einer solchen Deservingness nachweisen (van Oorschot, 2006). Gerade die Bedürfnisse älterer Menschen stehen in der Rangfolge weit oben und werden als besonders berechtigt bewertet. An zweiter Stelle sortieren sich die Ansprüche von Kranken sowie Menschen mit Behinderungen ein. Arbeitslosen kommt bereits eine wesentlich geringere Solidarität zuteil. Noch weniger Solidarität erfahren Menschen mit Migrationserfahrung, denen im Vergleich dieser Gruppen das größte Misstrauen entgegenschlägt und die selbst bei positiver Arbeitsmarktsperformance am Ende der Wertehierarchie eingeordnet werden (Reeskens and van der Meer, 2019).

Während die als niedrig empfundene Legitimität der sozialstaatlichen Ansprüche von Menschen mit Migrationserfahrung einen im Speziellen zu diskutierenden Sonderfall darstellt, lassen sich die Abstufungen zwischen älteren Menschen, Kranken sowie Arbeitslosen durchaus aus den weit verbreiteten Präferenzen für Chancen- und Leistungsgerechtigkeit ableiten. Schließlich werden Alter und Krankheit als Lebenszyklus-Risiken bewertet, denen alle in ihrem Leben mehr oder minder gleichermaßen ausgesetzt sind (Jensen, 2012). Ein Sozialversicherungssystem, das die Risiken von Altersarmut abmildert oder eine Krankenversicherung, die Gesundheitsrisiken absichert, erfährt daher klassischerweise höhere Zustimmung als eine Arbeitslosenversicherung, deren Leistungsbezieher latent im Verdacht stehen, sich nicht zur Genüge bemüht zu haben. Entsprechend bewerten auch die deutschen Befragten im ESS 2016 die „Verantwortung des Staates, den Lebensstandard der Alten zu sichern“ auf einer 11-Punkte Skala mit durchschnittlich 7,6 statistisch signifikant höher als die „Verantwortung des Staates, den Lebensstandard der Arbeitslosen zu sichern“ (durchschnittlicher Skalenwert in Höhe von 6). Insbesondere wenn angenommen wird, dass Arbeitslose das System ausnutzen und nicht unverschuldet Unterstützung beziehen, sinkt die Legitimität der Arbeitslosenhilfe in der Bevölkerung (Fong et al., 2006). Rhetorisch haben rechtspopulistische Parteien eine lange Historie darin, unabhängig von der Herkunft von Sozialleistungsbeziehern, eine solche Hierarchisierung sozialstaatlicher Ansprüche zu befeuern und sozialhilfebedürftige Gruppe zu diffamieren (Ivarsflaten, 2005): Das Ausspielen vieler rechtspopulistischer Parteien von vermeintlich

⁹² European Social Survey (2016), eigene Berechnungen.

hart Arbeitenden gegen vermeintlich selbstverschuldeter Arbeitslosigkeit nennen Koster et al. (2013) "Wohlfahrtspopulismus".⁹³

Die Bedeutung selbst einer zufällig konstruierten Trennung zwischen einer mildtätigen *in-Group*, die für die Finanzierung des Sozialstaates aufkommt und einer vermeintlich das System ausbeutenden *out-Group*, lässt sich bis zu den sozialpsychologischen Experimenten in den 1970er Jahren zurückverfolgen. In diesen Experimenten waren Teilnehmer bereit auf Pay-Offs für die eigene Gruppe zu verzichten, um Mitglieder der *out-Group* zu bestrafen (Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel et al., 1971; Brewer, 1979). Je unterschiedlicher die beiden Gruppen empfunden werden, desto deutlicher zeigt sich die Abwertung der *out-Group* durch die *in-Group*. Ein markantes Beispiel hierfür stellt die Gruppe der Zugewanderten dar, deren empfundene ethnische, religiöse oder sozio-ökonomischen Unterschiede als ausschlaggebend für die niedrige Solidarität in wohlfahrtsstaatlichen Fragen identifiziert werden kann (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2010; Helbling and Kriesi, 2014; Alesina et al., 2019). Eindrucksvoll konnten Alesina et al. (2018) zudem aufzeigen, wie verbreitet Vorurteile gegenüber dem sozio-ökonomischen Status und Arbeitslosigkeit von Zugewanderten in Europa sind.

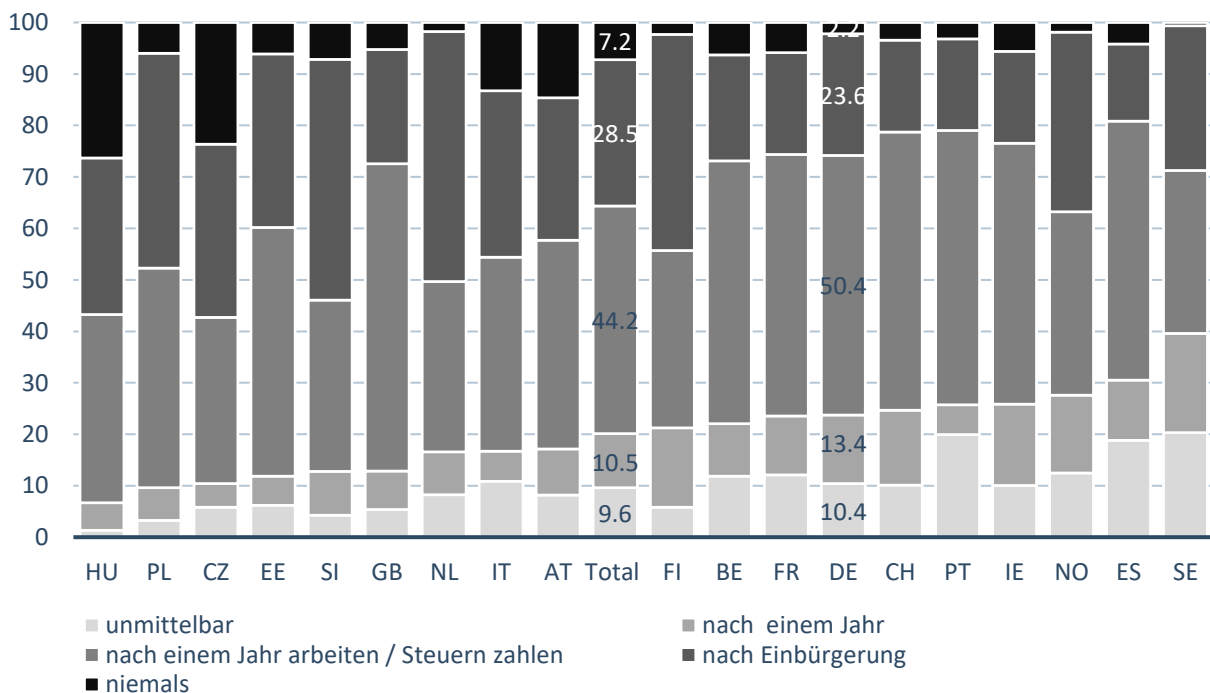
Abbildung 3.1 zeigt für verschiedene europäische Länder die von den Befragten präferierten Bedingungen, wann Zugewanderte die gleichen Rechte auf soziale Leistungen erhalten sollen, wie diejenigen, die bereits in dem Land leben: Über alle Länder hinweg gibt lediglich eine kleine Minderheit von rund 10 Prozent aller Befragten an, dass Zugewanderte Einheimischen unmittelbar sozialstaatlich gleichgestellt werden sollten. Weitere 10 Prozent würden Zugewanderten erst nach einem Jahr Aufenthalt im Zielland den Zugang zum Sozialstaat ermöglichen. Ganze 44 Prozent bevorzugen eine gewisse Reziprozität und erwarten, dass Zugewanderte mindestens ein Jahr arbeiten und Steuern zahlen, bevor sie den gleichen Zugang zu sozialstaatlichen Leistungen erhalten. Über ein Viertel der Umfrageteilnehmer gibt an, Zugewanderte sollten erst dann die gleichen Rechte auf sozialstaatliche Leistungen erhalten, wenn sie die nationale Staatsbürgerschaft erhalten haben. Und ein relativ geringer Anteil würde Zugewanderten Rechten auf sozialstaatlichen Leistungen sogar gänzlich verweigern. Befragte in Deutschland befürworten eine etwas schnellere Berechtigung migrantischer Ansprüche an den Wohlfahrtsstaat, qualitativ stimmt das Antwortmuster jedoch mit dem der europäischen Nachbarn überein.

Interessanterweise beschränken sich die Vorbehalte gegenüber Zugewanderten im Allgemeinen nicht auf Menschen, die den Sozialstaat per se als kritisch beurteilen. Ein vergleichbares Meinungsbild herrscht auch unter vielen Befürwortern des Bedingungslosen Grundeinkommens (Diermeier et al.,

⁹³ Interessant ist in diesem Zusammenhang die Beobachtung, dass in vielen westeuropäischen Staaten Anhänger rechtspopulistischer Parteien die Arbeitslosigkeit deutlich stärker überschätzen als Anhänger anderer Parteien (Diermeier and Niehues, 2019).

2020). Selbst innerhalb dieser Gruppe gilt Bedingungslosigkeit nicht bedingungslos für alle Menschen: Lediglich rund 20 Prozent (in Deutschland knapp 30 Prozent) der Befürworter eines bedingungslosen Grundeinkommens stimmen einer Ausweitung des Sozialstaats auf Zugewanderte unmittelbar oder ohne weitere Auflagen nach einem Jahr zu. Paradoxerweise fordern viele Befürworter des bedingungslosen Grundeinkommens bei Zugewanderten ein, dass diese erst den gleichen Zugang zu sozialstaatlichen Leistungen erhalten sollen, „nachdem sie mindestens ein Jahr gearbeitet und Steuern bezahlt haben.“. Verbreitete Vorbehalte gegenüber Zugewanderten zeigen sich auch darin, dass rund 70 Prozent der Deutschen der Aussage zustimmen, dass „wir ein reiches Land sind, weil wir fleißiger und tüchtiger sind als andere“ (Vester, 2017).

Abbildung 3.1: Hohe Sozialstaatskonditionalität für Zugewanderte
 Wann sollten Zugewanderte die gleichen Rechte auf Sozialleistungen bekommen?
 in Prozent aller Befragten des jeweiligen Landes



Quelle: European Social Survey (2016)

Ein Nachteil dieser Analysen konstituiert sich aus der Betrachtung von Immigranten als monolithischen Block. Dass die *in-Group* tatsächlich eine differenziertere Perspektive einnimmt als sich aus vielen Forschungsbeiträgen erahnen lässt, deckt für Deutschland etwa die Allgemeinen Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften (ALLBUS) aus dem Jahr 2016 auf. Hier fordern 40 Prozent der Befragten, „Kriegsflüchtlingen“ uneingeschränkten Zuzug zu gewähren; 56 Prozent möchten den Zuzug begrenzen; lediglich knapp 4 Prozent gänzlich unterbinden. Mit Blick auf die recht unscharfe Kategorie „Wirtschaftsmigranten“ werden hingegen deutliche härtere Restriktionen gefordert: nur 7 Prozent der Befragten möchte dieser Migrationsgruppe eine uneingeschränkte Immigrationsperspektive bieten; 56 Prozent fordern eine Begrenzung des Zuzugs; 37 Prozent würden

den Zuzug sogar gänzlich unterbinden.⁹⁴ „Wirtschaftsmigranten“ werden folglich wesentlich kritischer betrachtet als „Kriegsflüchtlinge“ und das, obwohl auf dem Höhepunkt der Fluchtmigration nach Deutschland die Auswirkungen von Geflüchteten auf den Wohlfahrtsstaat in derselben Befragung besonders negativ gedeutet werden: Über 65 Prozent der Befragten betrachten „Flüchtlinge“, (eher) als Risiko für den Sozialstaat – 37 Prozent stimmen der (eher) generelleren Aussage zu: „Ausländer belasten unser soziales Netz“. Die Antworten gilt es vor dem Hintergrund der strikten arbeitsrechtlichen Regelungen von Geflüchteten einzuordnen, die zeigen, dass manchen Anspruchsgruppen der Zugang zum sozialen Sicherheitsnetz gewährt wird, ohne zu erwarten, dass diese in gleichem Maße reziprok beitragen.

Wie Steffen Mau (2003) mit *“The Moral Economy of Welfare States”* umschreibt, hat die diskutierte Deservingness-Präferenzordnung in einer Demokratie selbstredend Auswirkungen auf die institutionelle Ausgestaltung des Wohlfahrtsstaates. Wie sich spezifische Umverteilungspräferenzen politisch instrumentalisieren lassen, haben rechtspopulistische Parteien zuletzt nur zu deutlich gezeigt, indem sie einen „ökonomischen Nativismus“ (Otjes et al., 2018), „exklusive Solidaritäten“ (Lefkofridi and Michel, 2017), *“solidarischen Patriotismus”* (Kaiser, 2020) oder „Wohlfartschauvinismus“ (Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2016) in den Mittelpunkt ihrer wirtschaftspolitischen Agenda rückten. Der Vorschlag des rechten AfD-Flügels mit einer „Staatsbürgerrente“ einen Rentenbonus für Einheimische einzuführen (AfD Fraktion im Thüringer Landtag, 2018), liefert ein eindrückliches Beispiel solcher Politikangebote. Tatsächlich spiegelt sich die typisch-europäische Wertehierarchie in der wohlfahrtsstaatlichen Präferenzordnung der AfD-Anhänger, welche wohlfartschauvinistische Ansichten mit einem klassenbasierten Wohlfahrtspopulismus kombiniert: Wohingegen Wohlfahrtsprogramme zur Armutsreduktion und Arbeitslosenhilfe stark abgelehnt werden, besteht in der AfD-Anhängerschaft gegenüber Krankenversicherung und Alterssicherung kein statistisch signifikanter Unterschied zum Bundesdurchschnitt (Goerres et al., 2018). Zudem lässt sich unter AfD-Anhängern ein besonders differenzierender Blick auf die Einwanderung nach Deutschland nachweisen: So geben in der Allgemeinen Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften 2016 über 70 Prozent der AfD-Anhänger an, den Zuzug von „Wirtschaftsmigranten“ ganz unterbinden zu wollen; lediglich 12 stimmen der entsprechenden Aussage hingegen bezüglich „Kriegsflüchtlingen“ zu.

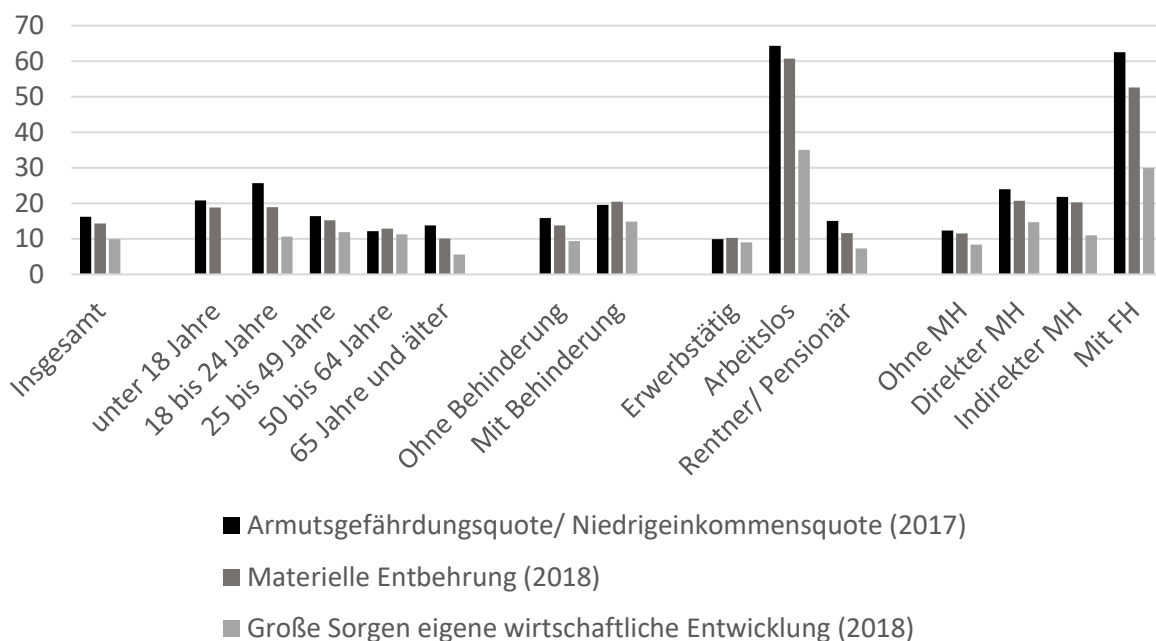
3. DIE EMPIRISCHE IDENTIFIKATION DER BEDÜRFTIGEN

Der Themenkomplex Ungleichheit wird in Deutschland kontrovers diskutiert. Nach einer Umfrage des Meinungsforschungsinstituts Ipsos im Juli 2018 nennen beispielsweise 45 Prozent der Befragten in

⁹⁴ Für eine Diskussion der engen Beziehung zwischen Beschränkungen der Einwanderungsperspektive („hospitality“) und Legitimität der sozialstaatlichen Ansprüche („deservingness“) im Kontext von Fluchtmigration siehe Kyriakidou (2021).

Deutschland „Armut und soziale Ungleichheit“ an erster Stelle ihrer größten Sorgen und damit deutlich mehr Befragte als in den meisten anderen betrachteten Ländern (Ipsos, 2018). Auch andere Befragungsdaten deuten robust darauf hin, dass die Mehrheit der Deutschen die Verteilungsverhältnisse für „eher ungerecht“ und die Einkommensunterschiede für „zu groß“ hält. In einer Umfrage zur Zukunft des Wohlfahrtsstaates der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung sind beispielsweise 82 Prozent der wahlberechtigten Bevölkerung der Meinung, die soziale Ungleichheit in Deutschland sei mittlerweile zu hoch (Heinrich et al., 2016). Gemäß der Befragung von Engelhardt and Wagener (2018), in der explizit nach dem Wunsch gefragt wird, die Ungleichheit in Deutschland zu reduzieren, geben 83 Prozent der Befragten an, dass hierzu mehr Anstrengungen unternommen werden sollten. Nur 11 Prozent äußern sich zufrieden mit dem Status Quo und lediglich 6 Prozent empfinden die Anstrengungen zur Ungleichheitsreduktion bereits zu hoch.

Abbildung 3.2: Armutsrisiken, materielle Entbehrung und große Sorgen um die eigene wirtschaftliche Entwicklung nach ausgewählten sozio-ökonomischen Kriterien, Deutschland
In Prozent der jeweiligen Bevölkerung



Mit Behinderung: Menschen, mit einem Grad der Behinderung von mindestens 50 (nach eigener Einschätzung im SOEP); MH: Migrationshintergrund; FH: Fluchthintergrund

Armutsgefährdungsquote/ Niedrigeinkommensquote = Anteil der Bevölkerung mit einem bedarfsgewichteten Nettoeinkommen (inklusive Einkommensvorteile aus selbstgenutztem Wohneigentum) unterhalb von 60 Prozent des Medianeinkommens

Materielle Entbehrung: Mindestens drei der neun folgenden Alltagsgüter können aus finanziellen Gründen nicht erworben werden (Selbstauskünfte der Befragten): Internetanschluss im Haushalt, mindestens einwöchige Urlaubsreise, neue Möbel, Einladung von Freunden zum Essen, Auto im Haushalt, Wohnung in kalten Monaten angenehm beheizt, keine warme Mahlzeit alle zwei Tage, abgetragene Kleidungsstücke werden durch neue ersetzt, finanzielle Rücklagen (Anmerkung: Auswahl von 12 verfügbaren Kriterien, die im SOEP abgefragt werden; die Kriterien unterscheiden sich teilweise von den verwendeten Kriterien zur Definition der materiellen Entbehrung gemäß Eurostat)

Quellen: SOEP – Sozio-oekonomisches Panel (2020, v35); eigene Berechnungen

Die Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften 2018 gibt Aufschluss über die gewünschte Zielrichtung der Umverteilung. 62,6 Prozent der Befragten stimmen eher oder voll und

ganz zu, dass Einkommen und Wohlstand „zu Gunsten der einfachen Leute umverteilt“ werden sollten. Nur 19,5 Prozent stimmen dem eher oder überhaupt nicht zu. Auch wenn „einfache Leute“ nicht weiter spezifiziert wird, ist davon auszugehen, dass sich die Befragten mehrheitlich eine stärkere Unterstützung der Menschen im unteren Einkommensbereich wünschen. Dieser Befund wird durch eine telefonische Repräsentativbefragung im Frühsommer 2017 im Auftrag des Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung (2017) unterstützt, nach der 60 Prozent der Befragten es für sozial gerecht halten, dass „man sich besonders um sozial Schwächere kümmert, damit sie im Leben die gleichen Chancen bekommen“.

Eine mögliche Herangehensweise materiell Bedürftige oder „sozial Schwächere“ zu identifizieren, ergibt sich durch einen Blick auf die Verteilung von Armutsrisiken oder materiellen Entbehrungen nach unterschiedlichen sozio-ökonomischen Merkmalen. Mit Blick auf die zuvor definierte Wertehierarchie werden hier materielle Entbehrungen, Armutsrisiken (auch als Armutsgefährdungs- oder Niedrigeinkommensquote bezeichnet) und große Sorgen um die eigene wirtschaftliche Entwicklung nach Alter, Erwerbstatus, Behinderung und Migrations- sowie Fluchthintergrund abgebildet.⁹⁵ Wäre „finanzielle Bedürftigkeit“ das einzig ausschlaggebende Kriterium für Solidarität, müssten demnach Arbeitslose den stärksten solidarischen Zuspruch erhalten. 64,3 Prozent der Erwerbslosen verfügten im Jahr 2017 über ein Einkommen unterhalb der Niedrigeinkommensschwelle, 60,7 Prozent entbehrten im Jahr 2018 mindestens drei der betrachteten neun Alltagsgüter (siehe Abbildung 3.2). 35,1 Prozent der Arbeitslosen machten sich im Jahr 2018 große Sorgen um die eigene wirtschaftliche Entwicklung, gegenüber 7,3 Prozent in der Gruppe der Rentner. Bei der Armutsgefährdungsquote ist der Unterschied sogar noch bedeutsamer: So liegt der Anteil von Rentnern, die als armutsgefährdet eingestuft werden bei vergleichsweise niedrigen 15 Prozent. Wird berücksichtigt, dass es sich in der Altersgruppe der 18- bis 24-Jährigen aufgrund von Ausbildungszeiten häufig um temporäre Armutsrisiken handelt, sind weiterhin unter 18-Jährige und Zugewanderte deutlich häufiger von niedrigem Einkommen und materiellen Entbehrungen betroffen als der Durchschnitt der Gesamtbevölkerung. Aufgrund der unterschiedlichen wahrgenommenen Deservingness der verschiedenen Zuwanderungsgruppen, gilt es auch an dieser Stelle innerhalb der Kategorie zu differenzieren: Besonders prekär stellt sich die wirtschaftliche Lage bei Menschen mit Fluchthintergrund dar, die ähnliche Armutsrisiken, materielle Entbehrungen sowie große Sorgen um die eigene wirtschaftliche Lage aufweisen wie die Gruppe der Arbeitslosen. Da ein Großteil der Menschen mit Fluchthintergrund erst in den vergangenen Jahren nach Deutschland immigriert ist, der

⁹⁵ Neben den in Abbildung 3.2 identifizierten Risikogruppen zeigen sich weiterhin deutlich erhöhte Armutsrisiken und materielle Entbehrungen bei Alleinerziehenden-Haushalten sowie erkennbar überdurchschnittliche Risiken bei Alleinstehenden, Mieterhaushalten und Menschen, die in Ostdeutschland leben. Da in der Betrachtung die Wertehierarchie im Vordergrund steht, bleibt diese Differenzierung hier außen vor. Aus selbigem Grund steht auch das erhöhte Niedrigeinkommensrisiko der unter 18-Jährigen im weiteren Verlauf nicht im Fokus der Betrachtung.

Zugang zum Arbeitsmarkt teilweise restringiert ist und zusätzlich Sprachbarrieren noch immer eine vergleichsweise hohe Beschäftigungshürde darstellen, erstaunt dieser Befund kaum. Der Unterschied selbst zu den in Durchschnitt ökonomisch ebenfalls wenig privilegierten Menschen mit direktem oder indirektem Migrationshintergrund ist jedenfalls enorm. Da diese Gruppen tendenziell auch über geringere Vermögen verfügen (Schröder et al., 2020, S. 49), erhöht sich deren überdurchschnittliche finanzielle Bedürftigkeit weiter, wenn ebenfalls Vermögensbestände in die Betrachtung mit einbezogen werden. Wenn die Unterstützung sozial Schwächerer sowie die Reduktion materieller Unterschiede im Fokus der Sozialpolitik stünde, dann müsste die Solidarität für diese Gruppen am höchsten sein.

4. DIE ROLLE VON NARRATIVEN IN DER SOZIALSTAATLICHEN WERTEHIERARCHIE

Der Vergleich von tatsächlicher Bedürftigkeit unterschiedlicher Gruppen und deren Einordnung in die Deservingness-Rangordnung mag auf den ersten Blick verwundern. Die Armutsrisiken von Arbeitslosen und Menschen mit Migrationserfahrung sind vergleichsweise hoch, die sozialstaatlichen Ansprüche dieser Gruppen werden aber als am wenigsten legitim wahrgenommen. Im Vergleich zu diesen Gruppen sind Menschen im Rentenalter in Deutschland erkennbar seltener Armutsrisiken ausgesetzt. Staatliche Unterstützung für diese Gruppen findet aber breite Zustimmung.

Die hohe Zustimmung zu Kriterien der Leistungsgerechtigkeit sowie die Stigmatisierung von Arbeitslosen und Menschen mit Migrationserfahrung kann Anhaltspunkte liefern, weshalb die Deservingness-Rangfolge sich nicht an der tatsächlichen Bedürftigkeit orientiert. Offen bleibt jedoch, wie in der Gesellschaft bestimmte Ressentiments, Ideologien oder Gerechtigkeitseinstellungen tradiert werden und wie sich Meinungshoheiten im langanhaltenden öffentlichen Diskurs austarieren. In den Fokus rücken dabei die unterschiedlichen Akteure, die im öffentlichen Raum und vor allem öffentlichkeitswirksam miteinander um Deutungen ringen. Im Vordergrund steht damit weniger die Suche nach der *absoluten öffentlichen Wahrheit* als vielmehr das Werben für Unterstützung einer plausibel vermittelbaren *Version der öffentlichen Wahrheit*.

Ringende unterschiedliche Akteure in der Öffentlichkeitsarena um Zustimmung, bedienen sie sich möglichst überzeugender Erzählungen, um bei ihrer Anhängerschaft an Einfluss zu gewinnen: „Wo immer sozial Bedeutsames verhandelt wird, ist das Erzählen im Spiel“ beschreibt der Literaturwissenschaftler Albrecht Koschorke (2013, S. 19) das Ringen um Meinungsmonopole. Die Wahrheit oder wenigstens die Faktizität rücken damit in den Hintergrund: „[D]ie Erzählung herrscht, so scheint es, in ihrem Reich bindungslos und allmächtig; sie muss sich um Kongruenz und mit der äußeren Realität nicht bekümmern; sie nimmt sich die Freiheit alles und jedes zu einem Gegenstand

dieser Welt zu erklären. [...] Wie in einem Wirbel mischen sich darin Elemente von Wahrheit, Anschein, Hörensagen, Unwissenheit, Irrtum und Lüge“ (Koschorke, 2013, S. 12). Mit Blick auf die unterschiedlichen Anspruchsgruppen im Sozialstaat stellt sich damit die Frage nach der Eloquenz und Wirkungskraft des Unterstützerkreises und inwieweit dieser es schafft in der Gesellschaft etwa mit einer plausiblen aber nicht notwendigerweise realitätsgetreuen – zumindest nicht repräsentativen – *Tiefengeschichte* (Hochschild, 2016; Dörre, 2020) seine Perspektive zu verankern. Zwar betonen sozialpsychologische Experimente in langer Tradition die Bedeutung *zufällig definierter Zugehörigkeit* für intra-gruppenbezogene Solidarität und inter-gruppenbezogene Ablehnung. Selbst der renommierte Ökonom Robert Shiller (2019) hat jedoch zuletzt für das Verständnis sozio-ökonomischer Konflikte auch die Bedeutung von gemeinsamen Narrativen herausgearbeitet.

Auch die vorherrschende empfundene Illegitimität sozialstaatlicher Ansprüche von Gruppen wie Menschen mit Migrationserfahrung oder auch Arbeitslosen lässt sich womöglich durch eine Analyse der Bedeutung kollektiver Erzählungen einordnen. Karl-Rudolf Korte (2002) betont etwa die Bedeutung von Sprache für die Durchsetzung von Interessen im politischen Diskurs und insbesondere den Machtverlust, der mit der Abwesenheit von Sprache einhergeht. Kann eine Gruppe ihre Interessen nicht verständlich machen, hat sie es schwer, Deutungsmacht zu erlangen. Mit Blick auf migrantische Ansprüche an den Sozialstaat lässt sich die Vermutung ableiten, sie seien in den Wertehierarchieprägenden und identitätsstiftenden Narrativen der Bevölkerung unterrepräsentiert.

Hinzu kommt, dass die verfassungsrechtliche Gleichstellung von Geflüchteten und Hartz-IV-Empfängern in Deutschland nicht nur das Potential hat, aufgrund von nativistisch begründeten Ressentiments politisch virulent zu werden, sondern ebenso, weil sie in der Auffassung einiger dem Prinzip der Leistungsgerechtigkeit zuwider laufen könnte. So begründet etwa Philip Manow die Erfolge der rechtspopulistischen AfD über eine solche, empfundene Ungerechtigkeit: „Jetzt war klar, dass man im Falle der Arbeitslosigkeit nach nur einem Jahr in seiner sozialstaatlichen Absicherung faktisch den Flüchtlingen gleichgestellt wäre, und das völlig unabhängig vom Ausbildungsstand und, vorherigem Verdienst (und damit der Beitragshöhe) und der vorherigen Beitragsdauer“ (2018, S. 88). In einem Interview bezeichnete Manow Migration als „eine offene Flanke“ für „großzügige Wohlfahrtsstaaten“: „Genau so, wie eine stark von Migration geprägte Gesellschaft Probleme hat, einen generösen Wohlfahrtsstaat zu konstruieren, so hat ein Land mit sehr generösem Wohlfahrtsstaat ein Problem mit unregelter Zuwanderung“ (Wirtschaftswoche, 2019). Tatsächlich hat auch Benedikt Kaiser, einer der wohlfahrtsstaatsaffinen Autoren der Neuen Rechten, das von Manow identifizierte Spannungsfeld erkannt, wenn er die Bedeutung des „untrennbaren Duos Solidarität und Identität im Rahmen einer anzustrebenden solidarischen Leistungsgemeinschaft“ (2020, S. 236) betont.

Schon lange hatte einer der Vordenker der Neuen Rechten in Deutschland, Götz Kubitschek, ganz im narratologischen Sinne von einer „Bewaffnung der Sprache“ (Stahl, 2019, S. 98) geträumt. Wie der parlamentarische Arm dieser Bewegung, die rechtspopulistische AfD, diese Erzählstruktur aufnimmt arbeitet Enno Stahl (2019) in seiner Analyse populistischer Rhetorik heraus. Diese baut auf ressentimentsbehaftete und diffamierenden Bilder auf, die klarstellen sollen, dass Menschen mit Migrations- und Fluchterfahrung sowohl kriminell sind als auch in Deutschland wirtschaftlich Schaden anrichten. Nachdem die AfD schon in ihrer Gründungsphase unter Parteichef Lucke 2013 plakatierte „Wir sind nicht das Weltsozialamt“ (Fedders, 2016, S. 165) und rhetorische Figuren wie „Armutsmigration“ (Fedders, 2016, S. 165) zur Abwertung von Migranten aus Osteuropa eingeführt hatte, radikalisierte sich die Tonart der Partei im Zuge der Fluchtmigration nach Westeuropa in den Jahren 2015 und 2016 deutlich. Daran lässt auch AfD-Bundessprecher Alexander Gauland auf dem Parteitag der AfD-Bayern keinen Zweifel: „Wer abertausende, zum Teil hoch aggressive Analphabeten in sein Land holt und ihren Lebensunterhalt finanziert, ist nicht weltoffen, sondern dämlich“ (2018). Viele der bei Stahl (2019) angeführten Zitate offenbaren deutlich die Abwertung der sozialstaatlichen Ansprüche von Menschen mit Migrationserfahrung. Diese werden durchweg als unqualifiziert, unmotiviert und als finanzielle Last beschrieben.

Besondere Reichweite erlangen solche Erzählungen, wenn sie von Massenmedien rezipiert an ein breites Publikum weitergegeben werden. Tatsächlich ist seit längerem bekannt, dass einer narrativen Berichterstattung im Journalismus eine besondere Bedeutung zukommt (Machill et al., 2007). So wirkt eine narrative Erzählung wesentlich überzeugender als die rein statistische Darstellungen eines Sachverhalts, beispielsweise wenn es darum geht, Mitgefühl zu aktivieren (Weber et al., 2006). Dass Medien nicht nur bei der Auf- sondern auch bei der Abwertung bestimmter Gruppen eine relevante Rolle spielen hat Martin Gilens (1999) in seiner einflussreichen Untersuchung „Why Americans hate Welfare“ aufgezeigt. Gilens arbeitet die deutliche Überrepräsentation afro-amerikanischer Protagonisten in der Armutsberichterstattung US-amerikanischer Medien sowie die häufigen Berichte über Mittelmissbrauch und Verschwendung dieser Gruppen ebenso heraus, wie die wohlwollendere Beschreibung von Alters- und Arbeitsarmut, die beispielhaft durch weiße Bedürftige portraitiert wird. Als Schlussfolgerung seiner Analyse führt Gilens die Ablehnung des Wohlfahrtsstaats durch die weiße US-amerikanische Mehrheitsgesellschaft explizit auf die negativ verzerrten Erzählungen über nicht-weiße Bevölkerungsschichten zurück.

Auch der Analyse des deutschen Ungleichheits-, Armuts- und Gerechtigkeitsdiskurses liegt die Annahme zugrunde, dass Menschen Ungleichheitsthemen vor allem durch Medien wahrnehmen: Eine Untersuchung der Leitmedien Die Zeit, Spiegel und Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung in (West-) Deutschland seit den 1940er Jahren zeigt, dass sich Medienberichterstattung tendenziell an einer

Verschlechterung der Realindikatorik orientiert und weniger durch eine Agendasetting-Eigendynamik angetrieben werden (Schröder and Vietze, 2015). Eine vertiefende Diskursanalyse legt Smith Ochoa (2019) für den Zeitraum 2005 bis 2017 anhand der unterschiedlich positionierten überregionalen Medien Die Welt, Die Zeit und taz sowie der Reden im deutschen Bundestag vor. Er arbeitet konkurrierende Ungleichheitsnarrative heraus und bemängelt den großen Raum, den die Diskussion um korrekte Fakten und deren statistische Genese in den Berichten einnimmt, da dies den moralischen Impetus einschränke, den die Berichterstattung anhand von subjektiven Einzelfallbeispielen innehatte: „Rarely are citizens’ everyday experiences with poverty, precarity, and rent affordability discussed“ (Smith Ochoa, 2019, S. 14). Diese Entkoppelung des Diskurses von alltäglichen, erlebbaren Geschichten hält der Autor für einen bedeutsamen Grund, weshalb zunehmende Ungleichheitskritik in Deutschland (noch) nicht in politischen Maßnahmen und Gesetzesvorhaben mündet.

Der bemängelte Abstraktionsgrad des Ungleichheitsdiskurs mag teilweise an den analysierten Medien liegen, die sich eine gewisse Objektivität zum Ziel gemacht haben: So zitiert etwa Die Zeit ihre ehemalige Herausgeberin Marion Gräfin Dönhoff: „Wir wollten dem Leser Material bieten, damit er sich selber eine Meinung bilden kann, wir wollten ihn nicht indoktrinieren“ (DIE ZEIT, 2007). Am deutlichsten wird der Fokus auf die Faktendiskussion bei der FAZ: „Die Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung [...] liefert täglich gründlich recherchierte Fakten, präzise Analysen, kluge Kommentare und diskursfähige Positionen“ (FAZ, 2019). Auch Die Welt betont die Recherchetiefe ihrer journalistischen Arbeit: „DIE WELT konzentriert sich auf das, was die Stärke einer modernen Tageszeitung ausmacht: auf das geschriebene Wort. Mehr große Themen, hintergründiger recherchiert und ausführlicher kommentiert – Zeitung, wie sie heute sein muss“ (Mediaimpact, 2019b).

Bislang nicht analysiert worden ist hingegen die deutsche Boulevardpresse, die durchaus einen konträren Anspruch an ihre Arbeit stellt. Deutschlands mit Abstand auflagenstärkste Tageszeitung (1,2 Mio. Exemplare; 7,9 Mio. Leser/ Reichweite), die Bild-Zeitung, beschreibt ihren Anspruch wie folgt:

„Wir geben den Menschen alles, was sie bewegt. Wir denken größer. Wir geben nicht auf, bis wir finden, was die Menschen in Deutschland wirklich berührt. [...]

Wir machen aus Fakten Gefühle. Informationen sind nur Informationen, bis wir sie fühlen können. Wir erzählen Tatsachen als menschliche Geschichten.

Wir sind große Bilder. Wir sprechen eine Sprache, die Bilder erzeugt. Und wir zeigen Bilder, die sprachlos machen“ (fett in Original, Mediaimpact, 2019a).

Das, was in den bisherigen Diskursanalysen vermisst wurde, ist folglich in boulevardisierter Aufmachung in der Bild-Zeitung zu vermuten. Die geforderte Übersetzung von „Fakten in Gefühle“, sowie das Aufgreifen dessen, was „die Menschen in Deutschland berührt“, hat sich das Medium explizit

auf die Fahnen geschrieben. Von besonderem Interesse ist in diesem Zusammenhang zudem, inwiefern die Bild-Zeitung, die sich als „Seismograph der deutschen Befindlichkeiten versteht“ (BILDblog, 2008), bei konkreten Verteilungsfragen die Wertehierarchie der Bevölkerung bedient und verstärkt. Entgegen der tatsächlichen Bedürftigkeit werden die sozialstaatlichen Ansprüche von alten und kranke Menschen als wesentlich legitimer angesehen als die von Arbeitslosen oder Zugewanderten. Analysiert werden soll nun, ob Bild-Online mit ihrer bewusst einzelfallbezogenen und emotionalen Berichterstattung Erzählungen aufspannt, die mit der in der Bevölkerung präsenten Hierarchie übereinstimmen.

5. EMPIRISCHE UNTERSUCHUNG

Gegenstand der folgenden empirischen Untersuchung ist mit Bild-Online das meist besuchte Online-Portal einer deutschen Tageszeitung. Seit Start der Bild-Online Präsenz am 21. Januar 2006, wurden hier über 1,6 Millionen Artikel eingestellt, wobei ab dem Jahr 2009 eine deutlich zunehmende Artikeldichte zu verzeichnen ist. Der Betrachtungszeitraum der vorliegenden Analyse endet am 24. Oktober 2019, was nach einer Erstfilterung nach Artikelüberschriften mit Ungleichheits- oder Armutsbezug in einer Grundgesamtheit von knapp 80.000 frei zugänglichen Artikeln resultiert. Aus dieser Grundgesamtheit lassen sich anhand der Überschriften wiederum die aus der sozialstaatlichen Wertehierarchie bekannten Kategorien (Alte, Kranke, Arbeitslose, Zugewanderte) herausfiltern. Tabelle 3.1 gibt einen Überblick über die entsprechende Anzahl an Artikeln nach einer händischen Relevanzprüfung der Schlagzeilen und Artikelinhalte durch die Autoren. Hierbei wurden solche Artikel aussortiert, die zwar die entsprechende Schlagwörter beinhalten, aber sich inhaltlich für die zu untersuchende Fragestellung als relevant erweisen.

Tabelle 3.1: Anzahl der verfügbaren und analysierten Artikel

Filterung (Geld, Euro, Steuer, Transfer, Politik, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft, Verteilung, Einkommen, Armut, Reichtum, Ungleich*, *geld, *armut, *ungleich)	79.758 Artikel
Alte (Alt, Rentner, Senior, alt, rentner) + Prüfung auf Relevanz	255 Artikel
Kranke (Krank, krank, Verletzt, verletzt) + Prüfung auf Relevanz	48 Artikel
Arbeitslose (Arbeitslos, Hartz, arbeitslos) + Prüfung auf Relevanz	315 Artikel
Zugewanderte (Flüchtling, Migrant, Ausländer, flüchtling, migrant) + Prüfung auf Relevanz	220 Artikel

5.1 Textanalyse: Die Bild-Zeitung als Spiegel der Wertehierarchie

Mithilfe einer quantitativen Sentiment-Analyse können aus den Texten der Artikel inklusive der Überschriften und Teaser weiterer online eingebetteter Artikel nun die Unterschiede in der Tonalität der verwendeten Wörter zwischen den Kategorien untersucht werden. Alphanumerische Zeichen, Füllwörter und andere, für die Sentiment-Analyse irrelevanten Wörter bleiben bei der Sentiment-Analyse außen vor. Die folgende Sentiment-Analyse stützt sich auf das öffentlich verfügbare Wörterbuch „SentiWS_v2.0“ der Universität Leipzig. Dieser SentimentWortschatz (kurz SentiWS) enthält Wörter, deren Wortart und die entsprechenden Flexionsvarianten mit einer positiven bis negativen Polarität auf dem Intervall $[-1,1]$ angegeben werden. Die SentiWS-Bewertung von Wörtern ist dabei unabhängig von deren Wortart: Einen positiven oder negativ wertenden Score enthalten nicht nur Nomen und Adjektive, sondern ebenso Verben. Inklusive aller Flexionsformen enthält das Wörterbuch rund 16.000 positive und 18.000 negative Wortformen, wobei eine Polarität zwischen -1 und 0 ein negatives Wort darstellt und eine Polarität zwischen 0 und 1 ein positives Wort darstellt. Die Abstufungen innerhalb der $[1,0]$ und $[0,1]$ Intervalle erlauben so, für Textkorpora gewichtete Sentimentwerte zu berechnen.

Eine gewichtete Sentiment-Analyse, die für jedes Wort prüft, ob es sich im verwendeten Wörterbuch befindet und die Stärke der positiven oder negativen Polarität abgleicht, ermöglicht einen ersten kategorie-übergreifenden Vergleich, indem für jede kategoriale Unterteilung ein Gesamt-Sentimentwert des jeweiligen Textkorpus errechnet wird. Dieser ergibt sich aus der gewichteten Summe der Sentimentscores aus dem Polaritätsintervall zwischen -1 und 1. Als Grundlage der Analyse dienen die gesammelten Textkorpora der Bild-Online Artikel in den Kategorien *Alte*, *Kranke*, *Arbeitslose* und *Zugewanderte*. Bei der Interpretation der folgenden Analyse bleibt demnach zu beachten, dass der übergreifenden Gesamt-Sentimentwert sich auf den aggregierten Textkorpus aller Artikel einer Kategorie bezieht. Einzelne extrem positive Darstellungen können dabei eine Vielzahl an leicht negativen Berichten überlagern und eine positive Darstellung einer Kategorie suggerieren, obwohl die Mehrzahl der Artikel die Gruppe (eher) negativ darstellt. Zwar lassen die Sentimentwerte somit keine absolute Bewertung zu, ob eine Kategorie tatsächlich positiv oder negativ porträtiert wurde, es lässt sich jedoch durchaus eine relative Hierarchisierung zwischen den Kategorien vornehmen.

Tatsächlich spiegeln die SentiWS gewichteten Gesamt-Sentimentwerte der Bild-Artikel für die Kategorien *Arbeitslose* (-46,4), *Kranke* (-18,1) sowie *Alte* (-6,3) die vorherrschende sozialstaatliche Wertehierarchie der Bevölkerung. Eine deutliche Abweichung stellt der Gesamt-Sentimentwert des Textkorpus *Zugewanderte* dar: Mit 4,7 haben die Artikel dieser Kategorie eine deutlich positivere Tonalität als die der anderen Gruppen. Eine differenzierende Betrachtung zeigt jedoch, dass besonders

die Untergruppe der *Geflüchteten* mit einem Sentimentwert von 6,6 in positiv intonierten Artikeln portraitiert wird. Die Untergruppe der *nicht-Geflüchteten Immigranten* wird dabei mit wesentlich kritischeren Wörtern beschrieben: Der Sentimentwert von -2 liegt aber dennoch über denjenigen der anderen sozialstaatlichen Anspruchsgruppen. Die Kategorie der *nicht-Geflüchteten Immigranten* enthält allerdings nur 29 Artikel, was die Gefahr einer Verzerrung des Sentimentwertes durch einzelne extrem positive Berichte deutlich erhöht. Da das verwendete Wörterbuch mehr negative als positive Wörter besitzt, kommen negative Sentimentwerte grundsätzlich häufiger vor, was den positiven Sentimentwert der Kategorie *Geflüchtete* umso bemerkenswerter macht.⁹⁶

5.2 Qualitative Auswertung: Die Bild-Zeitung als narratologischer Akteur

Deutlich einschränkend muss an dieser Stelle festgehalten werden, dass sich die Sentimentwerte nur mit Vorsicht interpretieren lassen. So werden bei dieser ersten, rein quantitativen Sentimentanalyse weder doppelte Verneinungen berücksichtigt noch werden Bezüge zwischen Wörtern zugeordnet. Das für sich genommen negativ konnotierte Wort „arm“ taucht in der Kategorie Arbeitslose beispielsweise im Kontext eines Hartz-IV „Aufstockers“ unter der Zuschreibung „arm trotz Arbeit“ auf. Die negative Einstufung des Wortes „arm“ bei der quantitativen Sentimentanalyse ist im Kontext der vorliegenden Analyse somit nur bedingt aussagekräftig, da der handelnde Protagonist positiv (deserving) dargestellt wird und der Artikel somit Solidarität mit der beschriebenen Gruppe weckt. Ähnliches zeigt sich bei der Darstellung von Geflüchteten. Werden diese direkt porträtiert, greift Bild-Online auf fast durchweg positiv konnotierte Wörter und Bilder zurück. Befassen sich die Artikel hingegen mit dem wirtschaftspolitischen Kontext der Fluchtmigration bieten die Autoren eine durchaus kritischere Lesart an. Dies ist etwa der Fall, wenn einer CDU-Politikerin, dem Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund, der Leipziger Aus- und Fortbildungsgesellschaft oder der gemeinnützigen Kölner Aktiengesellschaft für Wohnungsbau GAG vorgeworfen wird, einen wirtschaftlichen Vorteil aus der Unterbringung oder Weiterbildung von Geflüchteten zu ziehen. In diesen Fällen stehen jedoch nicht die Geflüchteten selbst als Protagonisten im Fokus der Kritik, sondern vielmehr andere Akteure, die sich einen unlauteren Vorteil zu verschaffen versuchen.

Die Sentiment-Analyse bietet zwar einen ersten Eindruck bezüglich der vorrangigen Tonalität der Artikel über die verschiedenen sozio-ökonomischen Gruppen. Allerdings ergibt sich in der rein quantitativen Analyse die Schwierigkeit, auf welche Protagonisten sich die negativen (oder positiven)

⁹⁶ Verzichtet wird an dieser Stelle auf eine zeitliche Differenzierung der Ergebnisse. Es bleibt aber anzumerken, dass die Text-Mining Analyse auf eine deutlich kritischere Bild-Berichterstattung zum Thema Migration ab 2017 hinweist: Vor 2017 weist der Algorithmus 3,1 mal so viele positive wie negative Wörter und einen Sentimentwert von 13,1 auf. Ab 2017 kommen hingegen auf jedes negative Wort nur noch 2,1 positive Wörter. Diese Entwicklung spiegelt sich ebenso in einem Absinken des Sentimentwerts auf -8,5 wider.

Zuschreibungen jeweils beziehen. Negative Wörter können beispielsweise entweder den Arbeitslosen negativ beschreiben, oder auch den Umgang des Staates oder der Ämter mit dem Arbeitslosen – und damit eher Mitgefühl für die Situation des Arbeitslosen erzeugen. In Ergänzung der quantitativen Sentiment-Einordnung haben die Autoren daher sämtliche identifizierte Artikel gelesen und bewertet, ob ein positives, neutrales oder negatives Bild der jeweiligen sozio-kulturellen Gruppe gezeichnet wird.⁹⁷ Diese Einordnung erweist sich auch mit Blick auf die Protagonisten-Problematik als relevant: Zwar fällt die Darstellung von Geflüchteten fast durchweg positiv (deserving) aus, wird hingegen über die aus dem Ruder laufenden Kosten von Geflüchtetenunterkünften sowie Integrationsmaßnahmen berichtet oder korruptionsähnliche Fälle „aufgedeckt“, wo Dritte einen persönlichen Vorteil aus dem (vermeintlichen) Verwaltungschaos ziehen, zeichnet Bild-Online ein verheerendes Bild. Entsprechend werden solche Artikel mit abweichenden Protagonisten negativ (undeserving) kodiert.

Auch auf Bild-Online werden eine Vielzahl an rein beschreibenden Artikel angeboten, die Zahlen und Fakten rapportieren und kaum Wertungen enthalten. Solche Artikel mögen in der Sentimentanalyse je nach Entwicklung bestimmter Kennzahlen (steigend oder fallend) leicht positive oder negative Wertungen spiegeln, in der qualitativen Betrachtung werden diese insgesamt 371 Berichte neutral kodiert (siehe Tabelle 3.2). Dem stehen 467 Artikel gegenüber, die sich klar einer positiven (286) oder negativen (181) Lesart zuordnen lassen. Hierbei handelt es sich einerseits um eigentlich berichtende Beiträge, die einen Sachverhalt extrem einseitig darstellen und mit unwidersprochenen (Politiker-) Zitaten untermalt werden. Andererseits wählt Bild-Online häufig das Genre des detailliert ausgeschmückten Einzelfallbeispiels. Aus beiden Fällen erwächst kaum eine Kontroverse für die entsprechende Kodierung.

Tabelle 3.2 gibt auch einen Überblick über die Anzahl von positiv und negativ kodierten Artikeln sowie deren Verhältnis für die unterschiedlichen Anspruchsgruppen. In der Gesamtschau werden die Ergebnisse der quantitativen Sentimentanalyse größtenteils reproduziert. Der Wertehierarchie entsprechend wird die Gruppe der *Alten* als besonders bedürftig dargestellt; finden sich im sozialstaatlichen Kontext doch knapp neun Mal so viele positiv wie negativ konnotierte Berichte. Mit weitem Abstand folgen *Kranke* sowie *Geflüchtete*, bei denen auf einen negativen rund zwei positive Artikel kommen. Umgekehrt stellt sich das Verhältnis bei den *Arbeitslosen* dar, wo mehr als doppelt so viele negative intonierte Beiträge angeboten werden. Im Gegensatz zur Sentimentanalyse reiht sich jedoch die Gruppe der *nicht-Geflüchteten Immigranten ganz* am Ende der Bild-Online Deservingness Hierarchie ein. Im Fokus stehen dabei Zugewanderte aus Osteuropa, die fünf Mal so häufig negativ wie positiv porträtiert werden. Unterschiede zur Sentimentanalyse können sich aus der Gleichgewichtung

⁹⁷ Unklare Fälle wurden unter den Autoren diskutiert und blieben im weiteren Zweifel bei der Beurteilung der Einordnung außen vor.

der Artikel in der qualitativen Analyse ergeben. Im Gegensatz zur Sentimentanalyse, wo die gesammelten Textkorpora auf ihre Wertung geprüft werden, fließt hier jeder Artikel unabhängig von seiner Länge oder der Schärfe der Tonalität separat in die Auswertung ein. Die eindeutige Intonierung der Artikel vereinfacht dieses Vorgehen.

Diese recht eindeutige Kategorisierung der einzelnen Gruppen und Subgruppen in Übereinstimmung mit der Wertehierarchie motiviert den Blick auf übergeordnete Narrative, die Bild-Online seinen Lesern anbietet, die Solidarität mit den *Alten*, *Kranken* sowie *Geflüchteten* wecken, und Ansprüche von *Arbeitslosen* sowie *nicht-Geflüchteten Immigranten* eher abwerten. Anlehnend an Gibbs (2012) wird im Folgenden die narrative Erzählstruktur mit Blick Gemeinsamkeiten, häufig verwendete Metaphern sowie Muster in Einzelfallbeschreibungen analysiert. Ziel ist es, herauszuarbeiten, ob Bild-Online seine Leser mit gruppenspezifischer Rhetorik und Erzählungen von sozialstaatlicher (Un-)Deservingness beeinflusst.

Tabelle 3.2: Überblick Tonalität nach qualitativer Bewertung der analysierten Artikel

	Alte Kranke Arbeitslose Zugewanderte				davon Geflüchtete	davon andere Zugewanderte
Total	255	48	315	220	191	29
davon "positiv"	167	15	44	60	55	5
davon "neutral"	69	26	168	108	105	3
davon "negativ"	19	7	103	52	30	22
Verhältnis "positiv" / "negativ"	8.79	2.14	0.43	1.15	1.83	0.23

Die „respektierten“ Alten

Die Berichterstattung über die finanzielle Situation der Älteren passt insofern zur Sentiment-Analyse, dass – insbesondere wenn man die Artikel mit beschreibender und eher wertfreier Berichterstattung außen vor lässt – 85 Prozent der Berichte eindrücklich auf die schwierige Lage der Älteren hindeutet und das Mitgefühl der Leser für die Situation Älterer zu aktivieren versucht. Lediglich neunzehn der 255 näher betrachteten Artikel zeichnen ein eher positives Bild der (materiellen) Lebenssituation der Älteren. Diese bedienen entweder Botschaften wie „den Rentnern geht es so gut wie nie“ oder sie spielen über die „Gekniffenen“ (die jüngere Generation) auf einen möglichen Generationenkonflikt bei der Finanzierung der Renten an.

Gegenüber den wenigen Artikeln, die eher eine positive Lebenssituation der Älteren beschreiben, gibt es ganze 167 Berichte, welche auf die steigende Altersarmut aufmerksam machen. Mehrheitlich lässt sich die Berichterstattung in eher beschreibende Artikel einsortieren, die jedoch eine implizite oder explizite Wertung in dem Sinne enthalten, dass „die Situation immer schlimmer“ wird. Neben den eher beschreibenden Artikeln gibt es eine Vielzahl an detaillierten Geschichten über die Schicksale armer älterer Menschen. Die Protagonisten werden mit Klarnamen portraitiert. Die emotionale Sprache deckt sich mit dem postulierten Ziel, „aus Fakten Gefühle“ zu machen, indem „Tatsachen als menschliche Geschichten“ erzählt werden. Praktisch alle Beschreibungen lassen sich unter ein Narrativ in Richtung „Jahrzehntelang geschuftet und trotzdem reicht die Rente nicht!“ fassen: „45 Jahre ehrliche Arbeit.“ „Und trotzdem muss [die Rentnerin] (70) jeden Cent umdrehen: „Ich gehe oft zur ‚Tafel‘, kaufe Kosmetik bei Aldi.“ Bei Douglas war sie noch nie. [Die Rentnerin] weinte, die Tränen liefen ihr übers Gesicht, als sie von ihrem Schicksal erzählte. „Dabei würde ich gerne wissen, wie es da aussieht und wie es da riecht“.“

Zunehmend spielen bei den Artikeln auch die steigenden Wohnkosten eine Rolle, beispielsweise bei einer Witwe, die „33 Jahre geschuftet hat“ und der nach einer „saftigen Mieterhöhung“ droht, aus ihrer vertrauten Umgebung wegziehen zu müssen. Da sich dem Artikel ebenfalls entnehmen lässt, dass es sich um eine 100qm Wohnung in Großstadtlage handelt, ist die Situation normativ möglicherweise nicht so einfach zu beurteilen.

Bei der Beschreibung der Schicksale geht es mehrheitlich um Frauen, die „jahrzehntelang jeden Morgen zur Arbeit“ gegangen sind, nebenher oder zwischenzeitlich Kinder großgezogen haben, nun „bei der Tafel um Nahrung bitten müssen“ und sich für ihre Situation „schämen“. Teilweise sind die Beschreibungen der Schicksale in die Diskussion aktueller Rentenreformvorschläge eingebunden: Bei der Grundrente „gehe [es] um Respekt vor der Lebensleistung“.

Wenn das Wort „Altersarmut“ verwendet wird, handelt es sich in der überwiegenden Mehrheit der identifizierten Berichte weniger um die Beschreibung der aktuellen Situation als um die „drohende Altersarmut“, zu erwartende „Mager-Renten“, „massive Rentenlücken“ und Beschreibungen der großen Sorge, „im Alter nicht mit dem Geld auszukommen“. In einer zukunftsgerichteten Version zahlen die Artikel für die jetzige Erwerbsbevölkerung im niedrigen Lohnbereich und mit geringen Rentenanwartschaften auf ein ähnliches Narrativ ein wie die obigen Artikel, im Sinne, „wer arbeitet, sollte (später) mehr bekommen als bei der Grundsicherung“. Selten wird ein möglicher Generationenkonflikt zwischen der jetzigen und künftigen Finanzierung der Renten thematisiert,⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Allerdings wird in einigen Berichten ein anderer Konflikt thematisiert, indem auf die unterschiedliche Situation von Rentnern gegenüber Pensionären oder Polit-Rentnern hingewiesen wird, beispielsweise mit den Worten „Berliner Bezirksfürsten sind gut versorgt“.

sondern eher die aktuelle Situation mit einer zukünftigen Verschlechterung verbunden, wie beispielsweise in einem aktuellen Artikel, der die steigende Zahl älterer Menschen bei Tafeln mit der Prognose „Altersarmut wird uns überrollen“ verbindet.

Die „tapferen“ Kranken

Die wenigen Artikel, die nach vorgenommener Filterung die Kategorie Kranke im Sozialstaat abbilden sind entsprechend dem positiven Gesamt-Sentimentwert mehr als doppelt so häufig positiv wie negativ intoniert und fügen sich in die europäische sozialstaatliche Wertehierarchie. Besonders eindrücklich lesen sich die unter dem Slogan „Bild-Kämpft“ veröffentlichten Artikel, die darstellen wie sich die Bild-Redaktion (erfolgreich) für erkrankte Leser einsetzt. Für einen Krebskranken (61) der „kraftraubend mit der Krankenkasse kämpft“ wurde ebenso die zwischenzeitlich unterbrochene Fortzahlung des Krankengeldes erwirkt wie für die „verzweifelte“ Herzinfarktpatientin Nicole E. (45), die zudem ihren Urlaubsanspruch zurückerhält. Auch Karin (60) und Michael H. (66) wurden die über 3.000 Euro für ihre „Traumreise“, die sie aufgrund einer Verletzung nicht antreten konnten, erstattet. Ähnlich intoniert ist die Geschichte über die „tapfere Marie“, die deutsche Meisterin im Paratriathlon, die ein Förderbudget beantragt, um Sportmanagement studieren zu können. Der Landkreis wies die Kosten-Aufstellung zurück und „forderte weitere Bedarfs-Nachweise. WEGEN 20 EURO!“. Die Familie bezeichnet sich selbst als „finanziell und mental“ am Ende. Erst als die Bild-Redaktion sich einschaltet, zeigt sich der Landkreis-Sprecher einsichtig. Die emotionalen Artikel zielen auf Mitgefühl und Solidarität mit den Protagonisten ab und untermauern die Legitimation der Ansprüche.

Hierzu passt auch, dass negativ intonierte Artikel sich nicht auf die Erkrankten selbst als Protagonisten beziehen, sondern vielmehr deren Vulnerabilität beschreiben. So wird beispielsweise eine Anklage beschrieben, nach der ein Vater seinen Sohn um 170.000 Euro Hilfgelder „betrügt“, indem er die gezahlten Mittel für sich selbst „kassiert“. Artikel, in denen Kranke selbst unanständiges Verhalten vorgeworfen oder auf illegitime Ansprüche hingewiesen wird, gibt es praktisch keine. Eine Ausnahme stellt „der BILD-Bericht über Gefälligkeits-Krankschreibungen von völlig Gesunden“ dar. Interessanterweise richtet sich jedoch selbst hier die Kritik weniger an diejenigen, die „krankgefeiert [haben], ohne krank gewesen zu sein“. An den Pranger gestellt werden eher die Ärzte: „In neun von zehn Fällen reichte es für eine Krankschreibung aus, dem Arzt ganz offen zu sagen: ‘Ich will blaumachen!’“

Die „frechen“ Arbeitslosen

Wie der niedrige Gesamt-Sentimentwert bereits andeutet, identifiziert auch die qualitative Auswertung in der Kategorie Arbeitslose mehr als doppelt so viele negative wie positive Artikel. Arbeitslose werden als „Sozialschmarotzer“, „Hartz IV-Schnarcher“, „Hartz-IV Abzocker“, „Hartz-IV-Betrüger“ oder als inkompetent beschrieben („Können Hartz-IV-Empfänger nicht mit Geld

umgehen?“). Plakativ für *den faulen Arbeitslosen* greift die Redaktion regelmäßig auf die Kategorie „Deutschlands frechster Arbeitsloser“ zurück. Dieser bezieht „seit 36 Jahren Stütze“ und wird mit den Worten zitiert „Wer arbeitet, ist doch dumm“. Deutlich wird eine Linie zwischen der hart arbeitenden Bevölkerung und den müßigen, untätigen Leistungsempfängern gezogen. Immer wieder werden Forderungen rezipiert, die Hartz-IV-Empfängern vorwerfen, diese würden nicht ausreichend zur Gesellschaft beitragen: Besser sollten diese auf „Häufchen-Streife“ (Hundekot beseitigen) gehen, „Schnee schippen“ oder sich als „Ein-Euro-Flut-Schrubber“ (bei Überflutungen) einbringen.

Ähnlich aburteilend fasst eine Bild-Kolumne die Positionierung der Zeitung gegenüber „Hartz-Betrug“ zusammen: „ein Schlag ins Gesicht für jeden ehrlichen Bürger, der morgens um sechs Uhr aufsteht, um zur Arbeit zu fahren!“. Die Vermischung der Themen Sozialleistungsbezug und Kriminalität sind dabei unverkennbar. Besonders negativ liest sich der Artikel, in dem eine „Hartz-IV-Betrügerin“, die „Serbin Natascha M. (30)“, als „Rauschgift Dealerin“ Geld „hinzu“ verdient. Über eine Hartz-IV Empfängerin, die ein Vermögen von 37.000 nicht deklariert hatte, wird geurteilt: „Vorsorge fürs Alter, dreist aus Steuergeldern finanziert“. Auch gibt es zahlreiche Artikel über kriminelle Hartz-IV Bezieher, die mit „illegalen Gruppensex Parties“, als „Puff-Chef“ oder „Zuhälter“ sowie in der organisierten Kriminalität nebenbei Geld verdienen.

Positive Berichte lassen sich in der Kategorie Arbeitslose mit 44 von 315 Artikeln durchaus als Rarität einordnen. Zwar wird die Debatte um die vom Verfassungsgericht angemahnte Erhöhung der Hartz-IV Sätze rezipiert, wobei durchaus auch Forderungen nach einer Verlängerung des Arbeitslosengeldes aufgegriffen werden. Diese Artikel verharren aber zumeist auf der politikbeschreibenden Ebene und argumentieren nicht anhand der sonst so prominenten emotionalen Einzelfallbeispiele. Auch in der Frage, ob Hartz-IV-Empfänger ein Weihnachtsgeld bekommen sollen, wird sichtlich die Gegenseite gestützt, die die entsprechende Forderung abtut und für „völlig naiv“ oder „völligen Quatsch“ hält.

Positiv besetzte, emotional beschriebene Einzelfallbeispiele erzählen insbesondere von hart arbeitenden Hinzuverdienern, die sich trotz niedrigem Mehrverdienst abmühen: „Viele arbeiten, obwohl es sich fast gar nicht lohnt. Sie sind „Aufstocker“. Aufstocker schufteten „wie die Kölnerin Simone L. (39)“ für einen Zuverdienst von „nur 2,25 Euro pro Stunde“, müssen dafür vermeintlich aber vor dem Amt „nicht für jeden Pfennig Rechenschaft ablegen“. In diese Erzählung passt auch die Geschichte von „Udo, dem rollenden Wirtschaftswunder“, einem ehemaligen Arbeitslosen, der sich auch von 600 erfolglosen Bewerbungen nicht hat unterkriegen lassen und sich nun erfolgreich selbstständig gemacht hat.

Artikel über Arbeitslose, in denen deren Situation als mitgefühlserregend oder ungerecht beschrieben wird – immerhin liegt die Armutsgefährdungsquote bei 64,3 Prozent – fehlen praktisch gänzlich.

Konsequent in diese Richtung gehen die Artikel nur dann, wenn über Hartz-IV-Bezug in Familien mit Kindern berichtet wird („Ich habe keine 251 Euro fürs Kind“) – dies gilt auch dann, wenn die Artikel vornehmlich Statistiken beschreiben („Die traurige Wahrheit über Armut in Deutschland - 1,7 Mio. Kinder leben von Hartz IV!“).

Die „hochmotivierten“ Geflüchteten und „kassierenden“ „Armutsmigranten“

Bereits die Analyse der Gesamt-Sentimentwerte hat darauf hingedeutet, dass die Berichterstattung der Bild-Zeitung über Zugewanderte im Kontext des Sozialstaats positiver ausfällt als für andere Gruppen und nicht die vermutete Deservingness-Hierarchie widerspiegelt. Dieser Befund ist insofern nachzuvollziehen, da sich die Bild-Berichterstattung im Beobachtungszeitraum in 191 der 220 Artikel mit dem Thema Flüchtlingsmigration auseinandergesetzt hat. Insbesondere die „Willkommenskultur“ in den Jahren 2015 und 2016 wurde durch die Zeitung maßgeblich und medienwirksam mitgetragen: Zu ihrer 25-Jahre-Wiedervereinigungsausgabe titelte sie beispielsweise: „Fluchtpunkt Deutschland – 25 Jahre nach der Wiedervereinigung stehen wir vor einer neuen epochalen Aufgabe. Weil das heutige Deutschland weltoffen, freundlich und hilfsbereit ist“.

In der Unterkategorie Geflüchtete findet sich eine hohe Anzahl an positiv intonierten Berichten, die beispielsweise nachzeichnen, wie Geflüchtete verlorengangene Portemonnaies und Schecks zurückgebracht haben. Zwischen Juli 2015 und September 2017 sind eine Reihe von Artikeln veröffentlicht, die zum Verwechseln ähnliche Geschichten wiedergeben. Betont wird dabei sowohl die prekäre Lage der aufrichtigen Finder als auch der „Respekt vor soviel Ehrlichkeit“, den die Handlungen dem Leser abnötigen – auch da einige Geflüchtete explizit auf einen Finderlohn verzichten. Durch eine Charakterisierung der Protagonisten als „Kriegsflüchtlinge“, die etwa aus der „Hölle von Homs“ stammen, wird dieser Eindruck noch verstärkt. Wohlwollend und vielfältig beschreibt die Bild-Zeitung auch private Spender oder das Engagement der Wirtschaft für eine verbesserte Integration von Geflüchteten. Unter dem Titel „Wie Flüchtlinge unsere Wirtschaft retten“ werden Geflüchtete als „meist jung und hochmotiviert“ beschrieben.

Dass auch der Bild-Redaktion ihre Rolle im öffentlichen Migrationsdiskurs um Geflüchtete durchaus bewusst ist, zeigt das Beispiel eines Bams-Artikels über eine „zehnköpfige Flüchtlingsfamilie“, die vermeintlich monatlich 7.300 Euro „kassiert“. Nachdem dieser klar negativ wertende Artikel in den sozialen Medien für Furore gesorgt hatte, wurde er rückwirkend umtituliert in „Bekam Flüchtlingsfamilie 7300 Euro im Monat?“. Zudem wurden zwei weitere, einordnende Meldungen veröffentlicht, die einerseits beschreiben, dass die tatsächliche Auszahlung an die Familie lediglich knapp 3.000 Euro betrug und die sich darüber hinaus entschieden gegen „Hetzer im Netz“ wenden, deren strafrechtliche Verfolgung klar beschrieben und befürwortet wird.

Der Großteil der 30 negativ intonierter Berichterstattung richtet sich zudem nicht gegen die Gruppe der Geflüchteten selbst, sondern vielmehr um Kostenverschwendung beispielsweise bei der Errichtung von Unterkünften („100 000 Euro für Luxus-Plumpsklos“), die nach der Flüchtlingsmigration der Jahre 2015 und 2016 leer stehen („Stadt beheizt leere Flüchtlingszelte“). Auch der Ärger um die notwendig gewordene Verlegung eines Fußballplatzes aus „Schallschutzgründen“ („Stadt verballert 350 000 Euro für Bolzplatz-Irrsinn“) richtet sich mehr gegen die Behörden als gegen die Gruppe der Geflüchteten. Ähnlich liest sich der Artikel über einen „jungen Syrer“, der „mit Erlaubnis des Regierungspräsidiums Kassel mit einem Taxi von Neustadt über Kassel nach Darmstadt [gefahren ist] – für 400 Euro!“ . Artikel, die Geflüchtete negativ oder als „undeserving“ portraituren, gibt es wenige.

Wesentlich kritischer fällt die Berichterstattung in unserer Auswahl gegenüber nicht-Geflüchteten Zugewanderten aus. In den 29 Artikeln werden fast ausschließlich Zugewanderte aus osteuropäischen Ländern wie Bulgarien und Rumänien oder dem Balkan portraituret. Ganze 22 Berichte aus dieser Unterkategorie lassen sich als eindeutig negativ einordnen. Die Protagonisten werden hier pauschal als „Armutszuwanderer“ tituliert. Besonders negativ intoniert sind zudem Artikel, die sich mit „Sozialmissbrauch“ Kindergeldbezug aus dem Ausland beschäftigen („Organisierter Betrug bei unserem Kindergeld“). Hierzu greift die Zeitung auf Einzelfallbeispiele wie den Bulgaren „Ricky“ zurück, der aufgrund der hohen Sozialleistungen befindet: „Deshalb ist Deutschland für mich das beste Land“. „Die Politik tut nichts! Gar nichts!“ ist eine „bittere [Bild-]Wahrheit“ zu diesem Themenkomplex. Befüttert werden die Artikel mit den Zitaten etablierter Politiker wie dem damaligen SPD-Parteivorsitzenden Sigmar Gabriel, der wie folgt zitiert wird: „Es gebe in manchen deutschen Großstädten ganze Straßenzüge mit Schrottimmobilien, in denen Migranten nur aus einem Grund wohnten: «Weil sie für ihre Kinder, die gar nicht in Deutschland leben, Kindergeld auf deutschem Niveau beziehen.»“ In einem weiteren Artikel sinniert der Bayerische Innenminister Joachim Herrmann über die sozialstaatlichen Ansprüche von Immigranten aus dem Balkan: „Wir müssen uns fragen, ob sich der deutsche Sozialstaat die jetzige Großzügigkeit noch leisten kann?“ Weitere Artikel, die Betrugsfälle von Aufenthaltstiteln thematisieren, reihen sich mit einer ähnlich saloppen Sprache in die obigen Beschreibungen ein: So wird der Gemüsehändler Mehmet T., dem vorgeworfen wird, sich für illegale Aufenthaltsgenehmigungen oder Einbürgerungsurkunden bezahlt gelassen zu haben, nur „der freundliche Gurken-Mehmet“ genannt.

Deutlich seriöser lesen sich die prägnanten Berichte, in denen Positivbeispiele angeführt werden. Diese betonen die Bedeutung von Immigranten für die deutsche Wirtschaft und zur Linderung des Fachkräfteengpasses und stellen beispielsweise Zugewanderte vor, deren Unternehmen einen Wirtschaftspreis gewonnen hat. Auf einen dieser nüchtern positiven Artikel kommen jedoch fast fünf negative Artikel, die Ansprüche nicht-Geflüchteter Ausländer pauschal abwerten.

6. ZUSAMMENFASSUNG UND DISKUSSION

Befragungsdaten offenbaren eine Diskrepanz zwischen der empfundenen Legitimität sozialstaatlicher Ansprüche bedürftiger Gruppen und dem Ausmaß deren tatsächlicher Bedürftigkeit. So werden Arbeitslose und Menschen mit Migrationserfahrung ganz im Sinne eines rechten „Wohlfahrtspopulismus“ (Koster et al., 2013), dem auch breiten Teilen der AfD anhängen (Stahl, 2019), als wesentlich weniger „deserving“ empfunden – obwohl sie eine deutlich höhere Armutsgefährdung aufweisen – als Rentner oder erwerbstätige Bevölkerungsgruppen (Goerres et al., 2018).

Der vorliegende Artikel geht der Frage nach, inwiefern diese Entkoppelung von Bedürftigkeit und wahrgenommener Legitimität durch die Verwendung einer zwar subjektivierenden aber doch konsistenten Erzählstruktur im öffentlichen Diskurs verstärkt wird. Eine quantitative Sentiment-Analyse von 838 Bild-Online Artikeln mit Ungleichheits- oder Armutsbezug zeigt, dass Deutschlands auflagenstärkste Tageszeitung die Wertehierarchie des Sozialstaates für die Gruppen Alte, Kranke und Arbeitslose in ihren Texten weitgehend widerspiegelt und so ihrer selbsterklärten Rolle als „Seismograf der deutschen Befindlichkeiten“ (BILDblog, 2008) gerecht wird. Eine bemerkenswerte Ambivalenz zeigt sich bei der Analyse von Artikeln, die sozialstaatliche Fragen im Kontext der Zuwanderung nach Deutschland diskutieren. In Zeiten der starken Fluchtmigration thematisiert der Großteil dieser Artikel Geflüchtete und deren Situation, Verhalten und Auswirkungen auf die deutsche Wirtschaft und den Wohlfahrtsstaat. Auf den ersten Blick mag es der Wertehierarchie zu widersprechen scheinen, dass Berichte über Geflüchtete besonders positiv intoniert sind und die Protagonisten als durchweg legitim bedürftig portraitiert werden. Es ist daher bedeutsam zu erwähnen, dass (Kriegs-)Geflüchtete eine besondere Gruppe innerhalb der Wertehierarchie darstellen. Obwohl die breite Mehrzahl der Deutschen diese Zuwanderungsgruppe als Risiko für den Sozialstaat betrachtet und Restriktionen bei der Beschäftigungsaufnahme sowie Vorrangprüfung die Erwerbchancen deutlich mindern, wird die Zuwanderung von Geflüchteten doch wesentlich stärker begrüßt als die von „Wirtschaftsmigranten“, die – wenn aus der EU stammend – unmittelbar einer Erwerbstätigkeit nachgehen können. Artikel über letztere Gruppe nutzen eine wesentlich kritischere Wortwahl als solche, die Geflüchtete im Sozialstaat portraituren. Der Vorwurf, die Bild-Zeitung sei eine „Vorfeldorganisation der AfD“ (Salmen, 2018), die etwa durchweg wohlfahrtschauvinistische Narrative in die Bevölkerung trägt, lässt sich auf Basis der analysierten Artikel mit Blick auf die Gruppe der Geflüchteten im Beobachtungszeitraum zwar nicht bestätigen. Hinsichtlich (Langzeit-)Arbeitsloser sowie Immigranten aus Osteuropa hingegen werden die weit über die AfD-Anhängerschaft geteilten abwertenden Narrativ hingegen potenziell verstärkt.

Die qualitative Textanalyse bestätigt viele Befunde der Sentimentanalyse und zeigt, dass die Bild-Zeitung deutlich ihrem Anspruch folgt, aus Fakten Gefühle zu machen, einzelfallbezogen und hoch emotionalisierend. Mit Blick auf bestimmte Themenfelder kann zumindest die Bild-Zeitung somit den

Vorwurf ausräumen, dass die mediale Berichterstattung zu Armut und Prekariat an emotionalen Einzelfallbeispielen vermissen ließe (Smith Ochoa, 2019). Beinahe durchweg stärkt sie dabei ein Narrativ der Leistungsgerechtigkeit, nach dem diejenigen, die sich anstrengen, „mehr“ haben (sollten) als diejenigen, die sich augenscheinlich nicht anstrengen – letztere werden hingegen schnell despektierlich als „freche“ „Sozialschmarotzer“ abgetan. Altersarmut wird gerade dann in besonderem Maße als ungerecht dargestellt, wenn die Betroffenen viele Jahre „hart“ gearbeitet haben. Als besonders interessant erweist sich die ambivalente Art und Weise wie über Zugewanderte berichtet wird. Auf der einen Seite stehen die Geflüchteten, die trotz hoher individueller wie institutioneller Hürden zur Erwerbsintegration als „hochmotiviert“ und „ehrlich“ dargestellt werden. Insbesondere die Einzelfallbeschreibungen dieser Artikel sind fast durchweg positiv intoniert; Kritik wird praktisch exklusiv gegenüber Dritten oder den entstehenden Kosten formuliert. Auf der anderen Seite werden „Armutsmigranten“ wohlfahrtsschauvinistisch diffamiert, die vermeintlich nach Deutschland kommen, um sozialstaatliche Leistungen „auszunutzen“. Im betrachteten Zeitraum konzentrieren sich dieserart negative Berichte auf Zugewanderte aus Bulgarien und Rumänien, die ganz am unteren Ende der Bild-Online Wertehierarchie eingeordnet werden. Die qualitative Auswertung deckt somit noch deutlichere Unterschiede in der Deservingness Darstellung von Geflüchteten und nicht-Geflüchteten auf. Besonders abwertend werden Immigranten aus Osteuropa portraitiert, wobei allerdings auf die grundsätzlich geringe Anzahl an Artikeln verwiesen werden muss. Dabei knüpft die Bild-Zeitung in der Stigmatisierung von Arbeitslosen an die bekannten Kampagnen gegen „Florida-Rolf“ im Jahr 2003 und Karibik-Klaus im Jahr 2006 an. Weder die Umsetzung der Agenda-Reformen noch der historische Abbau der Arbeitslosigkeit haben etwas an den eher abwertenden Erzählungen gegenüber Arbeitslosen verändert. Die Bild-Zeitung bleibt ihrer „wohlfahrtspopulistischen“ (Koster et al., 2013) Erzählung mit Blick auf vermeintlich selbstverschuldete arbeitslose Menschen treu. Offen für die weitere Forschung bleibt, ob die sehr emotionalen und einzelfallbezogenen Darstellungen möglicherweise die empirisch beobachteten substanziellen Überschätzungen der Arbeitslosigkeit (Diermeier and Niehues, 2019) und die Fehleinschätzungen von Armutsrisiken über den Lebenszyklus begünstigen.⁹⁹ Eindeutig zeigt sich – mit der erklärbaren Ausnahme der Geflüchteten – wie die Bild-Berichterstattung der verbreitete Wertehierarchie ein Sprachrohr bietet.

Die Politik steht mit der auch durch die Bild-Zeitung geförderten Stimmung in der Bevölkerung vor einer großen Herausforderung, läuft sie doch Gefahr, politische Vorhaben zu begünstigen, durch die einige vulnerable Gruppen noch weiter abgehängt werden könnten. Die Narrative begünstigen vor allem Vorstöße, die Leistungsgerechtigkeit und Alterssicherung kombinieren und unterstreichen damit

⁹⁹ Eine Befragung für den aktuellen Armuts- und Reichtumsbericht zeigt, dass die meisten Menschen das höchste Armutsrisiko in der Bevölkerung ab 65 Jahren vermuten, wengleich die Empirie das höchste Armutsrisiko bei jungen Menschen verortet (Adriaans et al., 2020).

die Popularität aktueller sozialpolitischer Alterssicherungsreformen wie beispielsweise der Mütterrente, der Rente mit 63 sowie der Grundrente. Mit dem Versprechen „wer hart arbeitet soll mehr haben“ lässt sich auch die Umsetzung des Mindestlohns sowie Diskussionen um die Verlängerung des Arbeitslosengelds I begründen – sozialpolitisch motivierte Reformen und Reformvorschläge, die Menschen in Arbeit gegenüber Arbeitslosen belohnen. Die in den Debatten dominierenden Narrative sowie die damit einhergehenden Reformen gehen zum einen mit dem Risiko einher, eine „fleißige“ in-Group von einer „faulen“ „out-Group“ abzuspalten, die damit einer noch größeren Stigmatisierung ausgesetzt wird. Da die genannten Reformen nicht vorrangig am Kriterium der Bedürftigkeit ausgerichtet sind, eignen sie sich ebenso nur bedingt, um zielgenau Niedrigeinkommensrisiken und soziale Unterschiede zu reduzieren.

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Appendix 4

Contradictory welfare conditioning – differing welfare support for natives versus immigrants¹⁰⁰

Matthias Diermeier, Judith Niehues and Joel Reinecke¹⁰¹

The New Liberal Dilemma predicts that European universal welfare states lose support among natives due to large immigration numbers. This paper contributes to the debate regarding the validity of the argument posited by the New Liberal Dilemma by examining the contradictory combination of support for a popular welfare state reform, Universal Basic Income (UBI), and conditionality for immigrants' access to the welfare state in 20 European countries. Even though UBI is unconditional, two thirds of UBI supporters want to impose significant conditions on immigrants' access to the welfare state and thus exhibit contradictory and chauvinistic welfare state preferences. UBI supporters consist of different groups of respondents that are chauvinist. Nativists hold strong anti-immigration attitudes and want to exclude immigrants entirely from welfare benefits, while reciprocity chauvinists are willing to grant immigrants' access to the welfare state once immigrants prove themselves to be deserving of benefits by paying taxes for at least a year. In contrast to the welfare magnet hypothesis, inconsistent and chauvinist preferences among UBI supporters are least common in rich European countries with large welfare states. On the macro-level, our findings are independent of countries' engagement with communism and the share of foreign-born people.

¹⁰⁰ References to further material in the manuscript refer to supplemental online appendix here: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/suppl/10.1080/09692290.2020.1780294?scroll=top>

¹⁰¹ The following article is the accepted manuscript of: Diermeier, M., Niehues, J., Reinecke, J., 2020, Contradictory welfare conditioning – differing welfare support for natives versus immigrants. *Review of International Political Economy* 28(6), 1677-1704. It is deposited under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

1. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH PUZZLE

Some people are perceived as less deserving recipients of welfare benefits than others (van Oorschot, 2006). Once a lower level of deservingness is related to race, ethnicity or nationality this deservingness hierarchy is called *welfare chauvinism*. Such cases are commonly defined as support for a ‘system of social protection for those who belong to the ethnically defined community’ (Kitschelt, 1997, p. 22) or as ‘welfare for us not for them’ (Alesina and Glaesner, 2004, p. 134).

The ‘New Liberal Dilemma’ (NLD) identifies possible social, economic, and political challenges associated with socially heterogeneous societies (Newton, 2007). Some researchers argue that an open society that supports immigration can only be maintained once welfare provision is limited to some subset of the population, revealing the inherent trade-off between migration and redistribution (Goodhart, 2004). Discussions regarding the NLD often identify welfare chauvinism as one of the consequences of social heterogeneity, suggesting that welfare chauvinism is an example of how migration decreases support for large and universal welfare states. If redistributive preferences are dependent on the level of cultural homogeneity of a society, then support of the welfare state in the ethnically homogeneous societies of Europe (relative to the USA) is potentially threatened by increasing migration numbers (Spies, 2018). The empirical literature on the matter presents conflicting results. Some scholars find evidence that higher levels of migration are associated with lower support for the welfare state (Reeskens and van Oorschot, 2012; Alesina et al., 2019). However, there is also evidence that the effect is rather small or non-existent (Mau and Burkhardt, 2009; Brady and Finnigan, 2014; Kulin et al., 2016; Auspurg et al., 2019).

In this context, the expanding prominence of populism on the political right and the welfare policies of radical right political parties are especially interesting. One of the striking similarities between the programmatic positioning of different PRRPs with respect to economic policy is a support for welfare chauvinistic policies that aim to exclude immigrants from the welfare state (Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2016; Lefkofridi and Michel, 2017; Otjes et al., 2018). The fact that negative migration attitudes and support for authoritarianism are closely linked to welfare chauvinistic preferences is one reason why the policies of PRRPs are compelling to their electorate (van der Waal et al., 2010; Mewes and Mau, 2012; Spies, 2018). The distribution of economic philosophies held by PRRPs varies widely, ranging from redistributive to neoliberal. However, welfare chauvinism seems to be the economic common ground shared by most PRRPs. The incidence of this commonality appears independent from the actual share of migration in the respective country (Rooduijn, 2018). This finding gives the NLD debate a new perspective. Increased ethnic heterogeneity might not decrease redistribution preferences per se, but rather give rise to a welfare chauvinistic subgroup of the population that favours redistribution and disapproves of migration. The following research question intends to tackle

the welfare-migration relationship from this novel perspective: *Why do people who favour universal redistribution intent to condition the access of migrants to the welfare state?*

To explain welfare chauvinism in European countries and its interrelation with general welfare preferences, we tie the current debate to a specific welfare policy with explicit universal and unconditional character: *Universal Basic Income* (UBI). In an UBI scheme, the government replaces many social programs with a monthly income which is funded by taxes with the intent to guarantee everyone a basic standard of living. The amount of money people receive from an UBI scheme is identical regardless of employment status and does not depend on any other pre-conditions. Supporters of UBI clearly favour a universal alternative to the current welfare state. We evaluate the degree to which UBI supporters oppose immigrants' immediate access to welfare. We call such cases *contradictory and inconsistent welfare conditioning* because they provide examples of individuals who wish to condition the provision of an unconditional welfare program. Thus, we are neither interested in the classic NLD migration-redistribution relationship nor in welfare chauvinism per se. Rather, we attempt to identify the nuances of welfare state conditioning regarding immigrants with respect to the support for a universal redistribution platform. By uncovering this relationship, we provide an example of how general support for welfare state policies can remain high despite discriminatory preferences regarding the welfare eligibility of immigrants.

On the micro-level, we find that support for UBI is high. More than half of the observed population supports the introduction of a universal basic income scheme. UBI support is particularly strong among respondents from lower socio-economic strata with strong philosophical preferences for redistribution. However, nearly 80 percent of UBI supporters in Europe prefer to condition the provision of social benefits to immigrants, while two thirds of UBI supporters even favour significant conditions. The level of conditionality depends heavily on the negative perceptions of the cultural and economic effects of immigration. Already among the lowest level of conditionality, a slight difference in the cultural perception of immigration can be identified as a dividing line. Notably, support for a complete exclusion of immigrants from the welfare state is heavily dependent on both the negative perception of immigration in the native culture and economy. In contrast, UBI supporters who would allow immigrants to access welfare once they have proven themselves to be deserving of benefits by paying taxes exhibit fewer negative attitudes towards immigration. Such a comparatively weaker characteristic of inconsistent chauvinism is driven by philosophical preferences for meritocracy and opposition to egalitarianism. We argue that the discriminatory provision of welfare to immigrants follows a rationale of reciprocity that requires immigrants to signal that they will not put a strain on the welfare state. In contrast to our expectations, economic deprivation plays less of a role in differentiating the degree of chauvinism among UBI supporters.

Support for UBI differs significantly on the country level. In countries where UBI is most favoured, people support the strongest form of welfare provision conditionality for immigrants. Also, welfare chauvinism seems to be inversely dependent on a country's economic prosperity and the size of its welfare state among UBI supporters. No strong evidence can be provided for the 'welfare magnet' hypothesis which implies that natives in richer countries with more extensive welfare states prefer to condition immigrants' access to welfare.

Our results have considerable implications for the 'New Liberal Dilemma' debate. It seems that the conditioning of welfare state provisions is much more common than expected – even among supporters of a universal welfare state. A large majority of UBI supporters prefers to condition welfare access for immigrants. In theory, the identified phenomenon could represent the preliminary stage to a broader loss in welfare state support. However, it seems more likely that welfare state support is not the primary question of concern. Instead of generally decreasing, redistributive preferences might become even more discriminatory, paving the way for a two-tier welfare state with conditional welfare access for immigrants.

We start with a review of the relevant literature and the generation of our hypotheses. Then we present our data and empirical approach, followed by a discussion of our results. The last section concludes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Public discussion about the consequences of migration plays an important role in the construction of social policy. Migration draws the attention of critics from both sides of the political spectrum. Traditional migration critics from the populist right reinforce their well-known concerns about the presumable cultural and economic downsides of migration. Recently, US president Donald Trump justified stricter migration rules by directly referring to the economic cost of immigration for natives: "I am tired of seeing our taxpayer paying for people to come into the country and immediately go onto welfare and various other things" (The White House, 2019). These opinions have been supported by the Supreme Court of the US, as indicated by the issuance of an unsigned order that seeks to halt most asylum applications for migrants travelling over the States' border with Mexico. Also, left leaning politicians and scholars have become more cautious regarding welfare issues and migration. David Goodhart (2004) summarizes the emerging doubts among social progressives that migration might be incompatible with large scale redistribution as the 'Progressive's Dilemma'. Academics continue to study the connection between migration and welfare preferences, an issue that has become known as the 'New Liberal Dilemma' (Newton, 2007).

Most European scholars who argue for a connection between migration and welfare preferences begin with a discussion of the ethnically homogenous roots of European societies that accompanied the design of large welfare states.¹⁰² These homogenous roots are then compared to the recent ethnic diversification that has occurred as a result of increasing rates of immigration to Europe. Ethnic diversification as a result of immigration is a phenomenon that predates the surge of refugee migration in 2015. Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland all ranked among the top-ten destinations of total permanent migration within the OECD (OECD 2015). In absolute numbers, the United States is the only country that attracts more permanent immigrants than Germany.

Alesina and Glaesner (2004) famously conclude: 'Europe's new immigrant-based heterogeneity may eventually push the continent toward more American levels of redistribution' (Alesina and Glaesner, 2004, p. 175). Indeed, Larsen (2011) shows that the same opposition to welfare spending that non-natives could profit from can be found in the USA (towards African-Americans) and in European countries (towards non-Western immigrants). Additionally, a growing literature suggests that anti-immigration attitudes also trigger a general critique of welfare in Europe (Finseraas, 2008; Mau and Burkhardt, 2009; Schmidt and Spies, 2014). Some contributions identify a relationship between increased immigration and lower redistribution preferences in both the US and Europe (Reeskens and van Oorschot, 2012; Spies, 2018; Alesina et al., 2019). However, the academic scholarship is not unanimous. Soroka et al. (2016) show that countries with large immigrant populations do not reduce their welfare expenditures, but only increase spending more slowly than low-migration countries. Gaston and Rajaguru (2013) even identify an increase in welfare spending due to migration. Many scholars are critical and find little or no evidence that immigration reduces welfare state preferences in Europe (Mau and Burkhardt, 2009; Brady and Finnigan, 2014; Kulin et al., 2016; Auspurg et al., 2019). The New Liberal Dilemma in Europe remains an empirical puzzle.

More research needs to be carried out to identify the channels through which migration and anti-immigration attitudes affect the welfare state. Experimental evidence from social psychology has revealed that people are willing to discriminate towards a randomly assigned in-group (Tajfel, 1970). In addition to being biased towards their in-group, people also develop significant resentments towards the out-group. In order to punish out-group members, experiment participants are willing to sacrifice redistribution to in-group members (Tajfel et al., 1971). Ethnic distinctions are most commonly applied to define in-group out-group differences (Brewer, 1979), explaining the fear held

¹⁰² See Baldwin (1990) for the argument that ethnic homogeneity reduced the opposition against universally organised welfare in the UK and Scandinavian countries.

by policy makers and scholars regarding the fragility of European welfare states in times of high immigration numbers.

It is well documented that immigrants are viewed by natives as members of an out-group that potentially threatens the social, economic, and political norms of a given country or political region. In the United States, natives often view immigrants as an unwanted source of competition for economic resources. These negative opinions of immigrants are exacerbated by ethnic prejudice (Esses et al., 2001). In Europe, people not only greatly overestimate the total number of immigrants in their countries but they also inaccurately view immigrants as more culturally distant and economically weaker relative to natives than indicated by empirical studies (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2009; Alesina et al., 2018). Despite an academic consensus that immigrants are considered an out-group by natives, such a consensus does not exist regarding the effect of immigration on aggregate preferences for redistribution.

The lack of clarity regarding the effect of immigration on welfare preferences in the academic literature suggests that the true effect of immigration on welfare preferences is more nuanced than a simple shift of aggregate welfare preferences. The source of nuance appears to be associated with the different treatments that different groups of needy people receive in welfare states. In Europe, elderly people are seen as most deserving of welfare assistance, followed by the sick and disabled, the unemployed, and lastly immigrants (van Oorschot, 2006). Because people view groups as deserving different degrees of welfare support, it is possible that preferences for redistribution conditional on the welfare recipient vary significantly, a variance that is hidden in studies of aggregated preferences (Goldschmidt, 2015; Soroka et al., 2016; Spies, 2018). Such an observation opens the possible incidence of welfare chauvinism.

Reeskens and van Oorschot (2012) find that European countries have chauvinistic preferences with respect to welfare. The literature offers two explanations for chauvinistic preferences in Europe. The first explanation supposes that chauvinistic preferences are the result of a perception that immigrants introduce unwanted economic competition that threatens the ability of natives to survive on their current form of employment (Scheve, Kenneth, Slaughter, Matthew, 1999; Malchow-Møller et al., 2008). The second explanation of chauvinistic preferences offered by the literature suggests that the cultural diversity of immigrants relative to natives threatens to compromise the traditional culture of natives. The perception of a cultural threat caused by immigration is disproportionately held by natives with lower levels of education. Natives who perceive that immigrants are compromising their traditional way of life exhibit chauvinistic preferences with respect to welfare to conserve a culture that they consider fragile (Houtman, 2003; Achterberg and Houtman, 2009; van der Waal et al., 2010). Banting et al. (2020) argue that in Canada, natives' support for immigrants to access welfare depends

on natives' perceptions of how committed migrants are to national 'membership'. Such a perceived membership condition is explicitly unrelated to economic contributions. In contrast, Mewes and Mau (2012) show that both explanations are strongly interrelated and find evidence for economic and cultural explanations of welfare chauvinism.

Regardless of motivation, the manifestation of chauvinistic preferences with respect to welfare in policy discussions has the effect of restricting the population that has access to social benefit programs. Reeskens and van Oorschot (2012) find that natives prefer to provide welfare benefits to immigrants reciprocally. Reciprocal welfare provision restricts the extension of social benefits to individuals who have economically contributed to the welfare system through employment and tax payments. The tendency for natives to condition welfare provision based on reciprocity has concrete implications for policy. Soroka et al. (2016) finds that funding for non-contributory pensions is reduced in countries that experience an increase in immigration. Policies that provide unconditional benefits to individuals tend to decrease in popularity as the population of individuals who are commonly perceived as economically unproductive increases. This phenomenon potentially has implications for other unconditional welfare programs which are gaining popularity in the social policy community. Perhaps the most significant unconditional welfare program which could interact with preferences for reciprocity and migration is UBI. In an experimental setting, Bay and Pedersen (2006) find that support for UBI can be undermined by activating anti-immigration attitudes.

UBI represents a promising object of study as it has become a seriously proposed welfare state reform in Scandinavian countries with universal redistribution schemes, Bismarckian contribution-based welfare states of Western Europe, and is a popular welfare state reform in several post-communist countries (Lee, 2018; Vlandas, 2019). The claim that UBI can be understood "as a radical extension of the commitment made by the Scandinavian welfare states to secure the economic well-being of all its residents" (Bay and Pedersen, 2006, p. 432) is reflected in high approval by potential welfare recipients. UBI support is particularly high among politically left leaning individuals who are in low socioeconomic positions and have relied on social benefits in the past (Vlandas, 2019). One interpretation of these findings is that people in the lower socioeconomic strata like UBI because they expect to profit from the policy. However, whether this is true depends on the design of the current welfare system as well as on the presumed level of unconditional UBI transfers.

A lively academic and political debate has evolved around the design and implementation of an unconditional redistribution policy (van Parijs, 2013; Wispelaere and Stirton, 2013). In Switzerland an UBI scheme was admitted (and voted down) in a constitutional referendum (Bundeskanzlei Schweiz, 2019), while in Finland a targeted basic income experiment is carried out by a conservative government

(Kangas et al., 2019). All over Europe, UBI has become ‘far more than just a philosophical pipe dream’ (van Parijs, 2013, p. 175) and constitutes a popular alternative to current welfare state designs.

3. EMPIRICAL PUZZLE AND HYPOTHESES

Most respondents of the European Social Survey (ESS) Round 8 in 2016 favour the introduction of an unconditional basic income – with support ranging from 33 percent in Norway to 80 percent in Latvia.

Due to the radical changes that UBI would cause by replacing current welfare systems, the support for such a reform can be understood as preferences for a profoundly more universal welfare system: ‘popular reactions to basic income can be interpreted as an indicator of support for universalistic welfare policies and the associated redistributive aspirations’ (Bay and Pedersen, 2006, p. 432). The low support in welfare states that are already universal qualifies this interpretation and stresses the importance of the predominant welfare system when evaluating support for a UBI reform (Lee, 2018).

Although questions relating to cultural or migration-related conflicts are rarely discussed in the context of UBI, even the fiercest supporters of UBI admit that a conflict between cultural diversity and UBI may exist that might only be overcome by coupling eligibility with ‘mild conditionality such as work for a voluntary organization’ (van Parijs, 2013, pp. 179-180). In the ESS, universal basic income is polled without making the potential conflict line explicit:

- “The government pays everyone a monthly income to cover essential living costs. It replaces many other social benefits.
- The purpose is to guarantee everyone a minimum standard of living.
- Everyone receives the same amount regardless of whether they are working or not.
- People also keep the money they earn from work or other sources.
- This scheme is paid for by taxes.” (ESS, 2016)

In fact, the definition of “everyone” is dependent on the interpretation of respondents. Clearly tourists, transients passing through a country, or people living in other countries are unlikely to be understood as eligible for welfare and UBI. The judgement of UBI eligibility for permanent immigrants, however, is much less obvious. It is exactly this ambiguity that the present contribution tries to unravel: Who do respondents consider worthy of receiving universal basic income?

Figure 4.1: Welfare conditioning among UBI supporter
 Share of UBI supporters who agree that immigrants have access to welfare state benefits



Source: European Social Survey Round 8, ESS (2016)

In contrast to the expectation that supporters of a universal and explicitly unconditional policy favour unconditional access to the welfare state for ‘everyone’, in Figure 4.1 we find evidence for significant welfare conditioning among UBI supporters regarding immigrants. Of the large share of UBI supporters, between 75 percent (in Sweden) and 99 percent (in Hungary) favour some sort of conditionality for immigrants’ access to the welfare state. The mildest welfare conditionality of offering benefits ‘after one year, whether or not have worked’ is only present in a small group of 12 percent of UBI supporters. 42 percent of the respondents insist on at least some reciprocal conditionality and agree that immigrants should obtain access to social benefits once they have ‘worked and paid taxes for at least one year’ – although UBI eligibility is defined to be unconditional relative to employment status. An even stricter 27 percent of respondents would support immigrants’ access to the welfare state only ‘once they become a citizen’, and 8 percent of UBI supporters want immigrants to be entirely excluded from the welfare state. Simultaneously favouring unconditional social benefit programs, such as UBI, and the conditional provision of welfare to subsets of the population, such as immigrants, is a philosophical inconsistency that is exhibited by a large portion of the individuals surveyed in the ESS 8.

We consider four hypotheses that attempt to identify why some respondents who favour UBI also favour welfare conditioning for immigrants. These hypotheses are split into two sets. Hypotheses 1,2, and 3 identify reasons for chauvinistic welfare preferences that are driven by individual characteristics

of respondents. Additionally, Hypothesis 4 identifies reasons for chauvinistic welfare preferences that are driven by contextual characteristics of individual countries.

Hypothesis 1: Economic Self-Interest

In line with the rational choice theory, we expect people with low socioeconomic status to favour UBI because it provides them with additional resources or relieves financial constraints. However, these same people compete with immigrants for scarce welfare and do not favour the extension of UBI to immigrants (Campbell, 1965). Wealthy people who generally approve of UBI for philosophical reasons might not approve an unlimited eligibility expansion to migrants because they must pay for a disproportionate amount of the benefits. Due to these conflicting expectations, we expect income to play a minor role when it comes to preferences for a chauvinistic conditioning of welfare, once preferences for UBI are controlled for.

Hypothesis 2: Philosophical Pragmatism

Welfare preferences can be expected to be strongly driven by social justice norms. People with egalitarian justice norms are expected to predominantly support UBI. What is more, they are expected to impose lower welfare conditionality as they hold a preference for 'true' universalism. On the other hand, supporters of meritocracy are willing to accept large income differences to reward efforts and thus are expected to oppose UBI. However, it seems likely that the subgroup of UBI supporters who support meritocracy is prone to support welfare chauvinism. This is the case if they underestimate immigrants' socioeconomic status and perceive them as threats to the sustainability of the current welfare system in line with Alesina et al. (2018).

Even among UBI supporters there might be natives who judge people in the current system to have proven their deservingness. In other words, natives could be generally and implicitly considered as deserving under a country-specific social contract. Diversity introduces a complexity of culture that is not present in homogenous societies and is a potential short-run liability to natives as adjusting to new cultural norms introduced by foreigners requires effort. This does not necessarily hold for immigrants (Bruner, 2015). Benefits should be extended to immigrants only if they prove that they can be productive members of society under the current social contract. Thus, supporters of meritocracy who favour UBI are expected to require some form of reciprocity from immigrants.

Hypothesis 3: Nativism

People with low income favour UBI because they expect it provides them with additional resources. People with egalitarian justice norms also favour UBI. However, some people dislike the idea of extending benefits to immigrants because they believe immigrants constitute an out-group and pose a potential threat to the maintenance of the culture in a country (Tajfel, 1970; Semyonov and Raijman,

2006). Such a sort of nativism could be present in all social strata of society independent of peoples' socioeconomic status and preferences for justice.

Hypothesis 4: Welfare Magnet

People favour UBI because they profit from it and because it promotes egalitarian values they like. However, large welfare states that offer unconditional benefits to immigrants encourage immigration levels that could be economically unsustainable. Countries with this quality have been characterised as 'Welfare Magnets' (Borjas, 1999).¹⁰³ Countries that spend a large portion of tax funds on social security are expected to be relatively more chauvinistic because the native, taxpaying population in these countries have a larger vested interest in limiting the payment of social benefits to individuals who have actually paid into the system (Senik et al., 2009; Kulin et al., 2016).

4. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

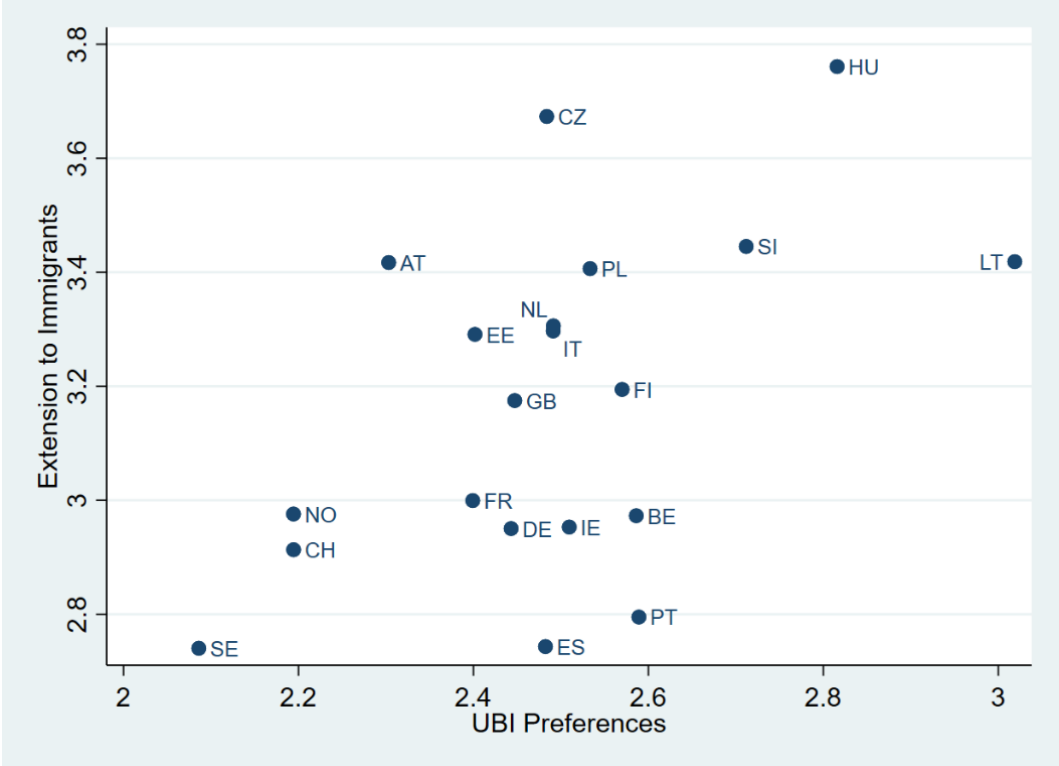
We use the European Social Survey Round 8 (ESS8) data to study inconsistent and chauvinistic preferences with respect to the conditional provision of unconditional welfare programs.¹⁰⁴ We use a single round of the European Social Survey data because each ESS round is an independent cross-section rather than a repeated panel survey. While this limits our ability to analyse the evolution of preferences over time, we still use the ESS8 because of its unique descriptive power on the topic of welfare preferences. The ESS8 is one of the only datasets to contain comparative survey data on the individual level for welfare preferences in many European countries. The sample includes 27,509 respondents from 20 European countries.

Although no single ESS variable combines a question of migration and UBI, in Figure 4.1 we illustrate the two variables from the ESS8 we use to analyse inconsistent and chauvinistic welfare state preferences: support for UBI and conditionality of immigrants' access to the welfare state. Support for an unconditional and universal basic income to replace existing social benefits is measured on an ordinal four-point scale from 'strongly against' (1), 'against' (2), 'favour' (3) to 'strongly in favour' (4) using the variable 'basinc'. For the question 'when should immigrants obtain rights to social benefits/services' the ESS8 offers the following five answers: 'immediately' (1), 'after a year, whether or not have worked' (2), 'after worked and paid taxes at least a year' (3), 'once they have become a citizen' (4), 'they should never get the same rights' (5). These responses are encoded in the variable 'imsclbn'.

¹⁰³ See Agersnap et al. (2019) for a current example of support for the welfare magnet hypothesis.

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data/download.html?r=8>.

Figure 4.2: Welfare conditioning to immigrants and UBI support



Source: European Social Survey Round 8, ESS (2016)

Figure 4.2 reveals the cross-country differences in the support for UBI and the extension of welfare benefits to immigrants. On the four-point UBI support scale Lithuania scores the highest (2.98) and Sweden the lowest (2.11). Whereas more than 60 percent of Lithuanian respondents favour the introduction of an unconditional basic income scheme, the same welfare reform is supported by less than 40 percent of Swedish respondents. At the same time, respondents from Iceland, Sweden and Spain favour the most unconditional access of immigrants to the welfare state. The strongest conditioning is favoured in Hungary where most respondents would not even grant immigrants access to the welfare state ‘after having worked and paid taxes for a year’.

Since the main focus of our contribution is not an elaboration on UBI support but the explanation of chauvinistic and inconsistent welfare preferences among UBI supporters, we restrict the sample to respondents who ‘support’ or ‘strongly support’ UBI resulting in 14,210 observations for our empirical analysis. The combination of UBI support and immigrants’ welfare access enables the identification of inconsistent welfare state conditioning due to chauvinism. As the ESS UBI definition explicitly relies on unconditionality – ‘everyone receives the same amount regardless of whether or not they are working’ (ESS 2016) – any conditioning of benefits for immigrants contradicts UBI support and unmasks a degree of chauvinistic discrimination as it is revealed that the definition of ‘everyone’ is implicitly restricted to ‘everyone native’. This is not the case for UBI supporters who would grant immigrants ‘immediate’ welfare access. Also, the group of respondents that would allow immigrants welfare eligibility after a proof of one-year residency can hardly be considered chauvinistic. Arguably this light condition tries

to exclude tourists and transients from welfare. However, it does not demand any sort of further cultural commitment that could be interpreted as a 'membership condition' after Banting et al. (2020). Clearly, respondents who support UBI but prefer to condition welfare benefits to immigrants who have 'worked and paid taxes' for a certain time-period can be considered inconsistent and chauvinistic. Supporters of such a reciprocity conditioning favour a two-tier welfare state system with universal redistribution for natives and immigrants who have proven their economic value. In this system, immigrants who fail to contribute to the economy of their host country are not considered eligible for benefits. Supporting UBI but excluding immigrants until they are naturalized can be interpreted as equally inconsistent and chauvinistic. Given the strict rules for naturalization in most European countries, the conditionality of citizenship is probably stricter than the conditionality imposed by "one-year reciprocity". The resulting universal welfare state would be exclusively accessible for naturalized citizens. Finally, the most exclusive universal welfare system is favoured by UBI supporters who want to entirely exclude immigrants from the welfare state. In such a system, only natives would be entitled to benefits.

We conclude that respondents hold inconsistent chauvinistic preferences if they favour universal basic income, an unconditional social policy by design, but view immigrants as less deserving of social benefits, thus restricting the provision of 'unconditional' welfare state benefits to citizens or natives. We identify chauvinistic respondents using the following binary variable. Respondents that support UBI, as indicated by responses of 'favour' or 'strongly favour' to the UBI question and who also prefer to limit the extension of social benefits to immigrants, as indicated by responses that immigrants should receive benefits 'after [having] worked and paid taxes at least a year', 'once they have become a citizen', or 'they should never get the same rights', are considered chauvinistic with respect to social benefits and are assigned an index value of 1. Respondents that exhibit these preferences favour an unconditional social benefit scheme while also preferring to significantly restrict the ability of immigrants to receive benefits, thus classifying them as chauvinistic under the definition provided above. We compare this group of inconsistent chauvinists with respondents who favour UBI but would not introduce any hard condition for immigrants to receive benefits and only grant access on the condition that immigrants have stayed in the country for a certain time period. This non-chauvinist group is assigned an index value of 0. Note that this measure of chauvinism is rather general and encompasses several degrees of chauvinism which are not uniform in severity. For example, someone who is willing to extend benefits to immigrants after they have worked and paid taxes for a year is relatively less chauvinistic than someone who entirely refuses to extend benefits to immigrants. We recognize and address this nuance in our empirical analyses. We refer to this chauvinism variable as the 'Chauvinism Indicator'.

On the individual level we control for demographic characteristics of respondents, including gender, age, and familial immigration status. Respondents are defined as being a member of an immigrant family if either of their parents were born outside of the country from which the respondent is answering the survey. These data come from the ESS8. Our study considers the incidence of chauvinism in several different European countries. Thus, we include several contextual controls to avoid obtaining results that are biased by international differences in chauvinistic preferences. We use the ESS8 data to control for the respondent's country of origin and whether the respondent's country of origin is a post-communist state. We use Eurostat data to control for logarithm of Gross Domestic Product per capita (GDP), social spending as a percent of GDP, and the percent of the population that is foreign-born. We use OECD data to control for the percent of tax revenues financed by social security contributions as a proxy for the 'non-universal' share of welfare state benefits.

We also test for the effect of respondents' preferences on the Chauvinism Indicator using variables from the ESS8. We extract variables for respondents' subjective justice preferences, attitudes towards immigrants, and perceptions of socioeconomic status. To evaluate the effect of subjective justice norms on the Chauvinism Indicator, we measure each respondent's preferences for egalitarianism and support for meritocracy. We define egalitarianism as a social preference for equality of outcomes as measured by respondents' opinions of the statement "For a society to be fair, differences in people's standard of living should be small". We define support for meritocracy as a social preference for a system that rewards effort as measured by respondents' opinions regarding the statement "Large differences in people's incomes are acceptable to properly reward differences in talents and efforts." Each justice norm is measured on a scale of 1 to 4, or from strongly disagree to strongly agree. To evaluate the effect of immigration preferences on the Chauvinism Indicator, we measure respondents' opinions regarding the economic and cultural effects of immigration. The impact of perceptions regarding the economic effects of immigration are measured by responses to the question "Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]'s economy that people come to live here from other countries?" The impact of perceptions regarding the cultural effects of immigration are measured by responses to the question "would you say that [country]'s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?" Both measures of perceptions of immigrants are measured on scales of 0 to 10, where 0 represents a view that immigrants undermine economic wellbeing and native culture and 10 represents a view that immigrants enhance economic wellbeing and native culture. The impact of perceptions of socioeconomic status are measured using respondents' comfortability with their current income and current employment status. Satisfaction with current income is measured on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 indicates that a respondent finds it very difficult to be comfortable on their current income while 4 indicates that a respondent is very comfortable on their current income. Perceptions of current employment security are measured by

responses to the question “how likely it is that during the next 12 months you will be unemployed and looking for work for at least four consecutive weeks?” Responses to this question range on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 indicates that a respondent feels that it is very likely that they will be unemployed in the next 12 months while 4 indicates that a respondent feels that it is very unlikely they will be unemployed in the next 12 months.

To test our first set of hypotheses, we will run logistic regression models with the Chauvinism Indicator as a binary dependent variable and multinomial logistic regression models to further exploit the variation within the Chauvinism Indicator. To test the welfare magnet hypothesis, we add macroeconomic control variables into a multi-level random effect environment. We apply the ESS post-stratification weights to reduce sampling and non-response errors and cluster standard errors on the country level.

5. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

To give an overview over our two main variables of interest, we begin with an examination of the impact of individual-level independent variables on UBI support and the conditions that respondents would independently put on immigrants to access welfare. We continue our individual-level analysis with a reduced sample of UBI supporters by only considering the effects of the same independent variables on the Chauvinism Indicator and indices created using more restrictive definitions of chauvinism relative to the Chauvinism Indicator. This serves as a robustness check to the results from our analysis of the Chauvinism Indicator and improves the precision of our analysis. The individual-level analyses enable us to comment on the validity of Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. Finally, we examine the impact of contextual variables on the Chauvinism Indicator. While offering another opportunity to test the robustness of our individual-level results, our contextual analysis also considers the effect of macro-variables on the Chauvinism Indicator, enabling us to comment on the validity of Hypothesis 4.

5.1 Individual-level effects

Before reducing our sample to only include UBI supporters, Table 4.1 depicts the characteristics that go along with welfare conditioning for foreigners and UBI support. With regard to the isolated effects, Table 4.1 column 1 presents the results from an ordered logit regression regarding the different levels of welfare conditionality for immigrants from “immediately” (1) to “never” (5) as dependent variables.¹⁰⁵ Table 4.1 column 2 presents an ordered logit with UBI support from “strongly against” to

¹⁰⁵ See Appendix Table 1 for the descriptive statistics of UBI supporters, non-UBI supporters, as well as chauvinistic and non-chauvinistic UBI supporters.

“strongly in favour” as the dependent variable. Both models include robust and clustered standard errors on the country level and country fixed effects. Comparing the two regressions reveals the fundamental differences between respondents who support UBI and respondents who would favour a stronger conditionality regarding immigrants’ access to welfare. *Ceteris paribus*, stronger welfare conditionality for immigrants are associated with negative attitudes towards immigrants’ cultural and economic impact on the respective country. The opposite is the case for UBI supporters who view immigrants positively in both dimensions – albeit less strongly. Similarly opposing effects are shown regarding the philosophical preferences for egalitarianism and meritocracy. Whereas UBI support is strongly associated with preferences for egalitarianism and with a rejection of meritocracy, welfare conditioning for immigrants is favoured among respondents with preferences for meritocracy and refusal of egalitarianism.

The socio-economic controls show the signs expected from the literature. UBI support is most present among respondents with lower income and lower perceived incomes. What is more, age has a hump shaped effect on UBI support, while men as well as respondents with a familial immigration status support universal welfare system reform. On the other hand, *ceteris paribus*, respondents with lower education, men, natives, and older people favour a welfare system that conditions the provision of benefits.

The fact that UBI opponents are immigration sceptics for economic and cultural reasons could be analysed in the light of Goodhart’s (2004) NLD claim that migration scepticism goes along with an opposition to universal welfare programs. The following empirical analysis, however, goes in a different direction and focuses on the role of welfare conditionality of immigrants for the subgroup of UBI supporters, which accounts for more than half of the people polled in ESS8. This subgroup of 14,210 people consists of comparatively poorer people who – on average – endorse immigrants and egalitarianism and oppose meritocracy. These people tend to favour redistribution and migration. Within this subgroup, a large majority of 79 percent of UBI supporters favour some conditions for the provision of welfare to immigrants. With this established, we now investigate the characteristics of this implicit type of welfare chauvinism.

Table 4.1: Ordered logit analysis of immigration conditionality and UBI support¹⁰⁶

VARIABLES	(1) Immigrant Conditionality	(2) UBI Support
Cultural Benefit of Immigration	-0.139*** (0.010)	0.033*** (0.011)
Economic Benefit of Immigration	-0.148*** (0.012)	0.044*** (0.009)
Egalitarianism	-0.088*** (0.022)	0.305*** (0.032)
Meritocracy	0.055** (0.024)	-0.077*** (0.023)
Perception of Income	-0.048 (0.035)	-0.142*** (0.028)
Perception of Employment Security	0.012 (0.020)	-0.024* (0.014)
Income	0.013 (0.014)	-0.059** (0.024)
Education	-0.072*** (0.015)	0.000 (0.019)
Employment = 1, Unemployed	-0.071 (0.083)	0.164 (0.110)
Employment = 2, Retired	0.024 (0.038)	0.017 (0.073)
Employment = 3, Student	-0.065 (0.078)	-0.083 (0.073)
Employment = 4, Other	-0.018 (0.073)	0.065 (0.042)
Gender of Respondent (Female)	-0.083*** (0.030)	-0.070** (0.033)
Familial Immigration Status	-0.417*** (0.080)	0.118** (0.051)
Age of Respondent	0.011** (0.005)	-0.021*** (0.005)
Age squared	-0.000 (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)
Country fixed effects	✓	✓
Observations	27,509	27,509

Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at country level

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

¹⁰⁶ See Appendix Table 2 for standardized coefficients.

In order to test this research question as a first step Table 4.2 presents five logit model specifications to identify the effect of individual-level explanatory variables on the Chauvinism Indicator for UBI supporters. The respondents' countries of origin are controlled for but not displayed in each model.

Table 4.2 starts with an analysis of the effect of respondents' social and economic characteristics on the Chauvinism Indicator. Gender is insignificant, revealing that among UBI supporters and given the controlled socio-economic characteristics and philosophical preferences, women are as likely as men to be chauvinistic. Education is statistically significant ($\alpha=0.01$), indicating that more educated people are less likely to be chauvinistic with respect to welfare preferences. In contrast, the effect of income is statistically significant and positive in several specifications, revealing that richer UBI supporters are relatively more chauvinistic. However, the impact of respondents' perception of how comfortably they can live with their income on the Chauvinism Indicator is clearly negative and large in size – revealing that respondent's perception of their economic situation might matter more than their actual situation. Respondents' employment status is mostly insignificant with the exception of students who are less chauvinistic. Interestingly, this effect is cancelled out after adding the perceived cultural benefits of immigration which indicates that students are particularly positive about the cultural impact of migration. Unemployment or perceived employment security remain insignificant.

Regarding the philosophical redistribution preferences, egalitarian respondents are significantly less likely to be chauvinistic than non-egalitarian respondents, while meritocratic respondents are significantly more likely to be chauvinistic than non-meritocratic respondents. Both effects are comparable in size and statistically significant ($\alpha=0.01$) in all specifications. The more favourably a respondent views the economic impact of immigrants, the less likely they are to be chauvinists. Likewise, the more favourably a respondent views the cultural impact of immigrants, the less likely they are to be chauvinist. Both perceptions of the economic and cultural impacts of immigrants are significant, indicating that chauvinism is driven by perceptions of the welfare deservingness of an out-group comprised of immigrants, in agreement with sociological theory.

Table 4.2 offers qualified support for Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 1 supposes that chauvinistic tendencies are related to socio-economic positions. Richer people might oppose migration for the fear of further costs and poorer people for the competition of scarce resources. For the evaluation of Hypothesis 1 in the subsample of UBI supporters we recognize that this group is generally less affluent and also perceives its income situation less favourably than other possible subsamples. The regression analysis in Table 4.2 reveals that higher income is related to chauvinistic preferences with respect to welfare provision in several specifications. In contrast, respondents who perceive their income situation as rather comfortably turn out to be less chauvinistic. Hence, if respondents perceive themselves as economically vulnerable (regardless the reality of such vulnerabilities), then they tend to be more

chauvinistic than respondents who feel more secure. Additionally, respondents who view immigrants as economic threats also tend to be more chauvinistic. This supports the notion that some respondents are welfare chauvinists because they fear that immigrants will be economically harmful, either to themselves or the economic institutions they rely on.

Table 4.2. Logit analysis of Chauvinism Indicator

VARIABLES	(1) Socioeconomic Status	(2) Perception of Socioeconomic Status	(3) Justice	(4) Economic Consequences	(5) Cultural Consequences
Cultural Benefit of Immigration					-0.180*** (0.018)
Economic Benefit of Immigration				-0.274*** (0.026)	-0.171*** (0.025)
Egalitarianism			-0.189*** (0.039)	-0.162*** (0.040)	-0.148*** (0.039)
Meritocracy			0.203*** (0.027)	0.198*** (0.027)	0.186*** (0.027)
Perception of Income		-0.161*** (0.049)	-0.187*** (0.050)	-0.113** (0.052)	-0.092* (0.053)
Perception of Employment Security		0.001 (0.030)	-0.009 (0.028)	-0.012 (0.026)	-0.009 (0.027)
Income	0.007 (0.018)	0.047** (0.021)	0.031 (0.023)	0.047** (0.022)	0.040** (0.020)
Education	-0.244*** (0.026)	-0.232*** (0.026)	-0.226*** (0.024)	-0.110*** (0.025)	-0.075*** (0.025)
Employment = 1, Unemployed	-0.109 (0.121)	-0.187* (0.112)	-0.203* (0.115)	-0.194 (0.119)	-0.192 (0.125)
Employment = 2, Retired	-0.043 (0.090)	-0.051 (0.091)	-0.055 (0.095)	-0.091 (0.098)	-0.098 (0.096)
Employment = 3, Student	-0.357*** (0.135)	-0.357*** (0.138)	-0.362*** (0.138)	-0.252** (0.124)	-0.177 (0.129)
Employment = 4, Other	-0.082 (0.086)	-0.112 (0.079)	-0.137* (0.079)	-0.182** (0.078)	-0.203*** (0.077)
Gender of Respondent (Female)	-0.049 (0.053)	-0.051 (0.052)	-0.017 (0.049)	-0.093* (0.050)	-0.068 (0.048)
Familial Immigration Status	-0.492*** (0.112)	-0.504*** (0.112)	-0.542*** (0.112)	-0.434*** (0.111)	-0.424*** (0.109)
Age of Respondent	0.016* (0.008)	0.010 (0.009)	0.015 (0.009)	0.010 (0.009)	0.011 (0.009)
Age squared	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000

	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant	1.302*** (0.180)	1.812*** (0.239)	1.973*** (0.257)	3.187*** (0.269)	3.442*** (0.305)
Country fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	14,210	14,210	14,210	14,210	14,210

Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at country level

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4.2 offers support for Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 2 supposes welfare chauvinism to be rather absent for egalitarians and present for supporters of the idea of meritocracy. Indeed, respondents with preferences for meritocracy are more likely to favour UBI with significant conditioning for immigrants, while the opposite effect can be found with regards to supporters of egalitarianism. Additionally, respondents who believe immigrants have a negative economic impact tend to be more chauvinistic. Respondents who identify as supporters of meritocracy define welfare deservingness as something that is earned, a notion we refer to as reciprocity. These UBI supporters are more likely to place restrictions on who is to receive welfare benefits, thus categorizing them as chauvinists. While the channels through which this preference for reciprocity affects chauvinist preferences are not precisely defined within this model specification, we explicitly identify the impact of reciprocity in further analysis. Hypothesis 2 is supported. Subjective justice norms and fears regarding the economic burden of immigrants appear to significantly impact a respondent's likelihood of being chauvinistic. However, more evidence is needed to precisely identify the role of reciprocity in these preferences.

Table 4.2 offers support for Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3 supposes that inconsistent, chauvinistic welfare preferences are motivated by an ethnic prejudice against immigrants. We argue that the model specification number 5 in Table 4.2 tests for the effect of ethnic prejudice on respondents' tendency to be welfare chauvinists. In this model, we add a control for how respondents perceive the cultural effect of immigrants. The existence of respondents that believe immigrants have a negative cultural effect on the destination country suggests that the ethnic and cultural identity of immigrants threatens to 'crowd out' the ethnic and cultural identity of natives. It appears respondents with these preferences view immigrants as a threat to their traditional way of life. Our model reveals that respondents who view immigrants as posing a cultural threat are more likely to exhibit inconsistent and chauvinistic preferences with respect to the provision of welfare than individuals who do not view immigrants as posing a cultural threat. This suggests that respondents who view immigrants as a cultural threat believe that one way to punish immigrants is to reduce their ability to access social benefits despite simultaneously acknowledging the merits of and philosophical necessity for social welfare programs like UBI.

Table 4.3: Count of chauvinists per index classification

Chauvinism Indicator			
		Extreme Chauvinism Indicator	1,135
Chauvinist	11,081	Citizenship Indicator	3,934
		Reciprocity Indicator	6,012
Not Chauvinist	3,129	Membership Indicator	1499
		Unconditionality Indicator	1630

We argue that respondents hold inconsistent and chauvinistic views if they support UBI but also demand significant conditions for immigrants to access welfare benefits. We previously noted that the Chauvinism Indicator hides the hierarchical structure behind respondents' degree of chauvinism. We now unmask this ordinal structure to determine whether the results from Table 4.2 hold for all categories of chauvinism separately. There are three individual categories of chauvinism that emerge from the decomposition of our Chauvinism Indicator. We generate new indices for each category of chauvinism and additionally split the non-chauvinist groups into an 'Unconditionality Indicator' ('immediate access') and a 'Membership Indicator'¹⁰⁷ (access 'after one-year'): The 'Reciprocity Indicator' determines whether a respondent supports UBI and favours conditioning immigrants' welfare entitlements to requiring them to have 'worked and paid taxes at least a year'. The 'Citizenship Indicator' determines whether a UBI supporter would allow immigrants access to the welfare state only 'once they have become a citizen'. The 'Extreme Chauvinism Indicator' identifies respondents who support UBI but favour the total exclusion of immigrants from the welfare state. Table 4.3 displays the number of respondents classified as chauvinists per each Chauvinism Indicator.

Table 4.3 tests whether our results from Table 4.2 hold under these more nuanced definitions of chauvinism in a multinomial logit model. The full model specification from Table 4.2 column 5 is used as a comparison for the decompositions of the Chauvinism Indicator in Table 4.4. The base category for the multinomial specification is the Unconditionality Indicator.

¹⁰⁷ Note that the one year 'membership condition' is a rather weak one that does not include any sort of cultural adaptation signalling.

Table 4.4. Multinomial logit analysis of disaggregated Chauvinism Indicator¹⁰⁸
 Baseline: Unconditionality Indicator

VARIABLES	(1) Membership	(2) Reciprocity	(3) Citizenship	(4) Extreme Chauvinists
Cultural Benefit of Immigration	-0.113*** (0.027)	-0.230*** (0.027)	-0.230*** (0.023)	-0.446*** (0.030)
Economic Benefit of Immigration	-0.068* (0.037)	-0.183*** (0.036)	-0.219*** (0.035)	-0.430*** (0.041)
Egalitarianism	-0.023 (0.054)	-0.175*** (0.049)	-0.133*** (0.050)	-0.149* (0.084)
Meritocracy	0.138** (0.064)	0.282*** (0.054)	0.247*** (0.054)	0.125 (0.079)
Perception of Income	0.156** (0.074)	-0.000 (0.060)	-0.010 (0.066)	-0.075 (0.083)
Perception of Employment Security	0.039 (0.043)	-0.007 (0.041)	0.050 (0.043)	-0.039 (0.058)
Income [#]	-0.016 (0.048)	0.031 (0.038)	0.031 (0.040)	-0.004 (0.065)
Education [#]	-0.010 (0.044)	-0.067* (0.037)	-0.090* (0.046)	-0.288*** (0.061)
Employment = 1, Unemployed	0.095 (0.230)	-0.211 (0.160)	-0.021 (0.157)	-0.230 (0.166)
Employment = 2, Retired	0.202 (0.138)	-0.042 (0.139)	0.156 (0.152)	-0.281** (0.143)
Employment = 3, Student	0.036 (0.160)	-0.116 (0.202)	-0.193 (0.168)	-0.967*** (0.292)
Employment = 4, Other	-0.069 (0.090)	-0.322*** (0.080)	-0.078 (0.094)	-0.343* (0.196)
Gender of Respondent (Female)	-0.082 (0.096)	-0.081 (0.074)	-0.146** (0.067)	-0.240*** (0.062)
Familial Immigration Status	-0.291** (0.135)	-0.474*** (0.152)	-0.752*** (0.172)	-0.866*** (0.221)
Age of Respondent	-0.010 (0.010)	0.009 (0.013)	-0.003 (0.012)	0.004 (0.014)
Age squared	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Constant	0.739 (0.512)	3.686*** (0.501)	3.492*** (0.443)	5.929*** (0.562)
Country fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓

¹⁰⁸ See Appendix Table 4 for standardized coefficients.

Observations	14,210	14,210	14,210	14,210
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Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at country level

variable standardized

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4.4 reveals that the effects observed in Table 4.2 are not uniform across the indices constructed from the disaggregated Chauvinism Indicator. The decomposed chauvinism indices reveal significant differences between the various effects at play and their strength. In fact, the impact of cultural and economic anti-immigration attitudes on the aggregated Chauvinism Indicator is strongly driven by respondents who prefer to exclude immigrants entirely from the welfare state. The respective standardized coefficients for the Extreme Chauvinism Indicator are three times as large as the opposing impact of education. Also, the impact of lower education and male gender on a higher degree of chauvinism stems from the strong support among low educated and male respondents to never allow immigrants to access benefits or to access welfare only after naturalization.

Interestingly, the cultural and economic immigration attitudes subsequently increase in importance from the Membership Indicator to the Extreme Chauvinism Indicator. Both variables keep a negative sign for all specifications. The gradual increase in effect size, however, is remarkable: The standardized coefficient of the cultural (economic) perception of immigrants is twice (three times) as large for the Reciprocity and Citizenship Indicator as for the Membership indicator and doubles again for the extreme chauvinists. In line with our expectations, the Membership Indicator for the economic migration perception variable is not statistically distinguishable at a ($p<0.05$) level, stressing the proximity between respondents who believe welfare should be given on the basis of membership and those who believe welfare should be given unconditionally. As expected, the meritocracy effect and opposition to egalitarianism is strongest for the reciprocity group and irrelevant for extreme chauvinists.

Disaggregating the Chauvinism Indicator into a set of more nuanced indices improves the precision of our analysis. This exercise suggests that the results gleaned from Table 4.2 cannot be generally applied to all respondents who condition the provision of unconditional social benefits for immigrants. Rather, the validity of our hypotheses is both limited to and strengthened for the subsets of chauvinists represented by each disaggregated index. The implications of the disaggregation of the Chauvinism Indicator for our individual-level hypotheses are outlined below.

Table 4.4 column 1 shows evidence for the proximity between respondents who would grant 'immediate' access to welfare and those who simply wait for one year of residence. In line with Banting et al. (2020), the latter condition can be understood as a very broad membership condition. Although

slight differences between the two groups exist – such as the impact of meritocratic preferences – these differences are comparably small relative to other categories. We conclude that the combination of the Unconditionality Indicator and Membership Indicator constitutes a reasonable control group for our Chauvinism Indicator.

The largest subgroup of chauvinists, those captured by the Reciprocity Indicator, exhibits preferences that support Hypothesis 2. Disaggregating the Chauvinism Indicator has revealed that the philosophical preferences for redistribution have a large impact on chauvinistic welfare preferences. The more a respondent favours meritocracy and opposes egalitarianism, the more likely they are to refuse to grant immigrants benefits until they prove they can be economically productive and contributors to the welfare state through the payment of taxes. This group favours UBI under the condition of reciprocity, as indicated by meritocratic beliefs. It is possible that they believe the current society can sustain an unconditional welfare state. However, immigrants have not yet proven that it is financially safe to extend the social contract to them. In this sense it would be ‘rational’ to limit the provision of benefits for immigrants until they signal their economic value and ‘earn’ the right to receive social benefits.

The subgroup of chauvinists captured by the Citizenship Indicator is ideologically located between reciprocity respondents and the extreme chauvinists. Native men who oppose the provision of benefits to immigrants due to their potential cultural and economic harm drive citizenship group affiliation. Similar to – although less strongly than – the reciprocity respondents, favouring meritocracy and opposing egalitarianism increases the probability that a respondent demands a citizenship condition. In this sense, the fact that this group would strictly limit welfare to only natives and naturalized immigrants can be interpreted as a mixture of the tough membership condition and nativist exclusion restriction.

Finally, the extreme group of chauvinists, captured by the Extreme Chauvinism Indicator, is comprised of respondents who are openly nativist. Extreme chauvinism is driven by low education and being a native man. Thus, extreme chauvinists represent the essence of PRRP supporters (Mudde, 2007). This groups’ chauvinism is primarily driven by a perception that immigrants impose economic and cultural harms on their countries of residence. Individuals in this group punish immigrants that they believe threaten their cultural stability by limiting the access immigrants have to social benefits. The preferences of extreme chauvinists strongly support Hypothesis 3. Interestingly, income is unrelated with any sort of chauvinist affiliation that would support Hypothesis 1. Additionally, philosophical preferences for redistribution remain insignificant, showing the strength of nativism among the extreme chauvinists. No matter how their ideal depiction of a welfare state looks like, they would ‘never’ want to share benefits with immigrants.

5.2 Contextual-level effects

The contextual analysis illustrated by Table 4.5 serves two purposes. The first purpose is to verify that the individual-level effects on the Chauvinism Indicator are robust with respect to models that include macro-level variables. The second purpose is to evaluate the effect of contextual-level variables on the Chauvinism Indicator and to test the validity of Hypothesis 4, the Welfare Magnet Hypothesis. The importance of the macroeconomic environment for understanding a country's political economy has recently been stressed by Blyth and Matthijs (2017).

As a country fixed effect model controls the entirety of macroeconomic features and does not allow for the identification of more specific effects, for a more granular analysis we shift from a fixed effect to a random slope model specification. Table 4.5 presents 6 specifications of a multilevel logit model with random slopes and clustered standard errors at the country level. Each model contains 20 country clusters. Due to the small size of the country sample, our model has limited cross-country variance. Due to the difficulties in controlling for country-specific culture or political institutions, our model inevitably faces omitted variable bias. We proceed with our macro-analysis with due caution.

Table 4.5 column 1 reveals that the individual-level results represented by our preferred model specification in Table 4.2 column 5 are comparable to our baseline random slope model without including additional contextual-controls.¹⁰⁹

National income and social spending as a percent of national income are both statistically significant and negatively correlated with chauvinist welfare preferences even after controlling for further macroeconomic variables such as the share of social security contributions, the share of foreign born population or a post-communist indicator. From Figure 4.2 and in line with findings by Alesina and Fuchs-Schündlein (2007) it can be inferred that welfare conditioning and UBI support are particularly present in countries with a post-communist past that today contain a low share of immigrants. Nevertheless, among the large group of UBI supporters within post-communist countries with a low share of immigrants our regression outputs show no specifically strict welfare conditionality for immigrants.

¹⁰⁹ The individual effects observed with respect to the Reciprocity Indicator, the Citizenship Indicator, and the Extreme Chauvinism Indicator from Table 4.3 are also reproduced after adding contextual controls.

Table 4.5: Multilevel Logit analysis of Chauvinism Indicator, random intercept on the country level¹¹⁰

VARIABLES	(1) Baseline	(2) National Income	(3) Social Spending	(4) Taxes spent on Social Spending	(5) Foreign Population	(6) Post Communist
Post Communist Indicator						0.045 (0.254)
Foreign Population (%)					-0.000 (0.010)	-0.001 (0.012)
Social security contributions as % of total taxation, 2016				-0.006 (0.014)	-0.006 (0.014)	-0.007 (0.015)
Social Spending (% of GDP)			-0.036*** (0.009)	-0.035*** (0.009)	-0.035*** (0.010)	-0.034** (0.013)
log(National Income (GDP))		-0.775*** (0.281)	-0.746*** (0.211)	-0.829*** (0.298)	-0.826*** (0.305)	-0.790** (0.377)
Cultural Benefit of Immigration [#]	-0.177*** (0.020)	-0.177*** (0.020)	-0.176*** (0.021)	-0.176*** (0.020)	-0.176*** (0.020)	-0.176*** (0.020)
Economic Benefit of Immigration [#]	-0.170*** (0.025)	-0.169*** (0.025)	-0.170*** (0.025)	-0.170*** (0.025)	-0.170*** (0.025)	-0.170*** (0.025)
Egalitarianism [#]	-0.159*** (0.036)	-0.159*** (0.036)	-0.159*** (0.036)	-0.159*** (0.036)	-0.159*** (0.036)	-0.159*** (0.036)
Meritocracy [#]	0.181*** (0.025)	0.182*** (0.026)	0.180*** (0.025)	0.180*** (0.025)	0.180*** (0.025)	0.180*** (0.025)
Perception of Income [#]	-0.109** (0.050)	-0.103** (0.050)	-0.102** (0.049)	-0.102** (0.049)	-0.102** (0.049)	-0.102** (0.049)
Perception of Employment Security [#]	-0.014 (0.022)	-0.012 (0.022)	-0.012 (0.022)	-0.012 (0.022)	-0.012 (0.022)	-0.012 (0.022)
Income [#]	0.045** (0.019)	0.042** (0.019)	0.042** (0.019)	0.042** (0.019)	0.042** (0.019)	0.042** (0.019)
Education [#]	-0.074*** (0.020)	-0.073*** (0.020)	-0.073*** (0.020)	-0.073*** (0.020)	-0.073*** (0.020)	-0.073*** (0.020)
Employment = 1, Unemployed	-0.245** (0.122)	-0.241** (0.122)	-0.237* (0.122)	-0.237* (0.122)	-0.237* (0.122)	-0.237* (0.122)
Employment = 2, Retired	-0.125 (0.093)	-0.125 (0.093)	-0.122 (0.094)	-0.121 (0.093)	-0.121 (0.093)	-0.121 (0.093)
Employment = 3, Student	-0.237** (0.101)	-0.237** (0.100)	-0.237** (0.100)	-0.237** (0.100)	-0.237** (0.100)	-0.237** (0.101)
Employment = 4, Other	-0.260*** (0.073)	-0.255*** (0.073)	-0.253*** (0.073)	-0.253*** (0.073)	-0.253*** (0.073)	-0.253*** (0.073)
	-0.076	-0.077	-0.078	-0.077	-0.077	-0.077

¹¹⁰ See Appendix Table 5 for standardized coefficients.

Gender of Respondent (Female)	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.050)
Familial Immigration Status	-0.398*** (0.115)	-0.391*** (0.114)	-0.392*** (0.114)	-0.392*** (0.114)	-0.392*** (0.114)	-0.392*** (0.115)
Age of Respondent	0.009 (0.008)	0.009 (0.008)	0.008 (0.008)	0.008 (0.008)	0.008 (0.008)	0.008 (0.008)
Age squared	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Constant	3.729*** (0.292)	11.943*** (3.001)	12.457*** (2.390)	13.519*** (3.525)	13.494*** (3.469)	13.087*** (4.201)
Random Intercept	0.147** (0.057)	0.105*** (0.035)	0.073** (0.028)	0.072*** (0.027)	0.072*** (0.027)	0.072*** (0.027)
Observations	14,210	14,210	14,210	14,210	14,210	14,210
Number of groups	20	20	20	20	20	20

Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at country level

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

What is more, in line with Schmitt and Teney (2019) chauvinism prevails in countries with large welfare states, independent of the share of foreign-born population. This finding provides evidence against an iteration of the New Liberal Dilemma that identifies cultural heterogeneity as a source of societal instability. These findings do not, however, eliminate the possibility of a New Liberal Dilemma motivated by economic or political factors.

The results from Table 4.5 provide evidence against the Welfare Magnet Hypothesis (Hypothesis 4). The Welfare Magnet Hypothesis supposes that individuals in large welfare states are chauvinists because they fear that the provision of substantial social benefits will attract large numbers of immigrants, overburdening the welfare state and threatening the ability of natives to benefit from programs such as UBI. If Hypothesis 4 was valid, then social spending as a percent of GDP, our measure of the welfare state, would significantly increase chauvinism in a country. In contrast to this expectation, social spending as a percent of GDP significantly lowers the chances of chauvinism in a country. This suggests that the generosity of welfare states corresponds with the generosity of the individuals residing in welfare states, indicating that chauvinist preferences are not positively correlated with the size of the welfare state, providing evidence against the Welfare Magnet Hypothesis. The share of social security contributions, a proxy for a country's cultural and historical preferences for non-universal benefits, does not alter the likelihood that a respondent holds inconsistent preferences. Furthermore, the addition of the statistically insignificant post-communist control leaves the highly significant effect of welfare state size on the Chauvinism Indicator unaffected, further reinforcing the argument against Hypothesis 4. Respondents who are chauvinists do not justify

their chauvinism as necessary to prevent the overburdening of the welfare state by a large uptick in immigration numbers. Instead, respondents' welfare chauvinism is particularly present in poorer countries with a smaller welfare state.

6. CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION

The New Liberal Dilemma questions the compatibility of high levels of welfare spending and increasing rates of immigration. Having experienced a large influx of immigrants, scholars expect the traditionally redistributive European welfare states to come under pressure as soon as support for redistribution among natives decreases. Although anti-immigration attitudes were effectively mobilized by the populist radical right, very few of these parties have proposed radical cutbacks in welfare spending. Instead, the New Liberal Dilemma is materializing through support for conditioning benefits for immigrants while containing a large and redistributive welfare state for natives. The NLD debate should therefore shift to preferences for a two-tier welfare state that significantly disadvantages immigrants against natives.

Numerous academic contributions attempt to understand the incidence of *welfare chauvinism* by contrasting general welfare preferences with chauvinist preferences. We contribute to this body of literature by refining the scope within which welfare conditioning is analysed. Instead of using general welfare preferences as a proxy to measure chauvinist preferences, we study the discrepancy between preferences for UBI and welfare provision to immigrants. Researching the chauvinist tendencies of respondents who support *unconditional* basic income enhances our understanding of why some individuals prefer large unconditional welfare that does not cater to immigrants. We argue that support for an unconditional alternative to the current welfare state in combination with significant conditionality for immigrants' access to benefits is both inconsistent and chauvinistic.

Exploiting ESS 8 data and analysing 20 European countries, we find that UBI support is particularly prominent among respondents with negative views on migration, egalitarian preferences for justice and with a perceived deprived socioeconomic position. On the other hand, general welfare conditioning is popular among respondents who hold negative migration attitudes, support meritocracy, and oppose egalitarianism. Surprisingly, there is still an overwhelming majority of UBI supporters that supports significant conditioning of immigrants' access to welfare. In fact, respondents reveal that they understand UBI not as a redistribution for 'everyone' but rather as a redistribution for a specific group. By constructing a Chauvinism Indicator, we show that among UBI supporters, people who oppose migration for cultural or economic reasons, support meritocracy, and oppose egalitarianism have higher chances to hold inconsistent and chauvinistic preferences.

By splitting the welfare chauvinism indicator into more nuanced indicators, we refine our analysis and account for the conditionality hierarchy that ranges from totally excluding immigrants from welfare benefits to allowing access after having resided in a country ‘for a year, whether or not having worked’. The refined analysis reveals that extreme chauvinism is driven by a group of nativists with strong cultural and economic anti-immigration sentiment. This sentiment gradually diminishes with the degree of chauvinism among UBI supporters. Philosophical redistribution preferences do not matter for the welfare preferences of the extreme chauvinist. In contrast, a large group of UBI supporters demands reciprocity to access welfare for immigrants. Philosophical preferences such as opposition to egalitarianism and support for meritocracy are key for reciprocity chauvinists – preferences regarding cultural and economic immigration matters much less. In line with this groups’ reciprocal preferences for justice, immigrants must ‘earn’ their right to access welfare benefits – something that the current society is apparently already worthy of. In this sense, the reciprocity chauvinists follow an economic ‘rationale’, in contrast to the nativist extreme chauvinists.

Finally, we test the welfare magnet hypothesis by adding contextual macro-level variables to our preferred regression model. In contrast to our expectations, citizens of richer countries with larger welfare states are less supportive of adopting a radical unconditional alternative (UBI) to the current system and hold more favourable views on immigrants’ welfare access. Thus, our indicator shows the lowest degree of inconsistency and chauvinism in Scandinavian countries and takes the highest values in eastern European economies. We interpret these results as strong evidence against the hypothesis that welfare chauvinism primarily affects rich universal welfare states. What is more, the absence of an effect from foreign-born population and post-communist heritage reveals that a certain political background or the presence of foreigners per se do not generally drive chauvinism among the group of UBI supporters.

We conclude that the threat to the welfare state posed by the New Liberal Dilemma needs to be analysed through an angle neglected by much of the literature. Rather than jeopardizing the continuation of unconditional welfare redistribution, welfare chauvinism instead manifests itself among the majority of UBI supporters who favour conditioning of unconditional benefits for immigrants. Interestingly, only a small share of respondents with inconsistent and chauvinistic attitudes is driven by a xenophobic nativism. The larger share of chauvinist beliefs can be attributed to philosophical preferences for justice. A large group demands proof that immigrants will become contributors to and not only beneficiaries of the welfare state. Hence, addressing welfare chauvinism will only be successful when carried out in a twofold way. Firstly, credibly stressing the potentially underestimated employment opportunities of immigrants to relieve the negative sentiment regarding immigration that is a key for chauvinism. Secondly, strengthening the reciprocal character of welfare

for immigrants has the potential to foster the support for unconditional welfare and simplify the integration of immigrants into the welfare state, a stance that agrees with Reeskens and van Oorschot (2012). The latter could be addressed by the introduction of a visible commitment to the native society. Whereas Banting et al.'s (2019) half-hearted reference to a military service in this regard might create more problems than it can solve, van Parijs proposition of a "compulsory civil service" (2013, p. 180) seems to be worthwhile to revisit. Convincing the group of nativists to reconsider their views on the provision of welfare benefits to immigrants seems very difficult and may only work through long-run efforts to educate individuals about the true effects of immigration on the welfare state, a view emphasized by Mewes and Mau (2012) and Banting et al. (2020).

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Appendix 5

One for one and none for all – The Radical Right in the European Parliament¹¹¹

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The radical right in Europe seemed to be on an unprecedented rise. In the run-up to the European Parliament elections in 2019, a newly founded ‘super-faction’ profoundly scared established politicians. In contrast to the widespread fear of a consolidated right-wing, this contribution carves out that the radical right’s policy congruence in the European Parliament is limited due to internal division primarily caused by the parties’ nativist core ideology. Splitting the radical right into its Eastern and Western European offshoots, reveals a significant economic nativism that systemically prevents comprehensive interregional cooperation. What is more, despite common authoritarian grounds with foreign powers such as China and Russia and their significant advance on influencing the European radical right, nativism divides the radical right also in their stance on foreign autocracies. Whereas economic nativism triggers an opposition against China within the Western European radical right, political nativism in the East obviates cooperation between European right-wingers regarding Russia.

¹¹¹ References to further material in the manuscript refer to supplemental online appendix here:
<https://www.lse.ac.uk/european-institute/Assets/Documents/LEQS-Discussion-Papers/LEQSPaper167.pdf>.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Of all party families present in the European Parliament (EP), the radical right has faced the largest difficulties to build transnational cooperation. Not only did established parties actively try to suppress their advances, also did radical right parties of different nations themselves come across significant ideological conflict: The difficulties of the radical right in the EP “to form parliamentary groups are indicative of the primacy of nationalisms which undermine any potential for ideological alliances” (Fieschi, 2000, p. 518). What is more, McDonnell and Werner (2018) explain the lack of a single radical right EP faction as a result of an effective *cordon sanitaire* as parties shy away from ties to disreputable partners that would cushion electoral aspirations at home. Such a focus on national vote-seeking fundamentally distinguishes the radical right from members of other EP party families who primarily thrive for policy congruence (McElroy and Benoit, 2010).

In contrast to this divisive nationalism and vote seeking egoism, Startin (2010) spearheads that on top of “tactical necessity” (p. 431) a “shared ideological conviction” (p. 436) around national identity and anti-immigration resentment pulls the radical right together. As an example for the radical right’s taste for cooperation, he quotes at the time Front National leader and founder of the extraparliamentary radical right association *Euronat* Jean-Marie Le Pen: “The Nationalist phenomenon cannot be and will not be restricted to an island, cooperation is essential to achieve freedom and our common goals” (Startin, 2010, p. 437). And indeed in line with their typical chameleonic behaviour (Taggart, 2004), the Austrian Freedom Party and the Italian Lega Norte have recently been found to move between the lines and cooperate with hard and moderate eurocritics alike (Heinisch et al., 2020), conveying the notion of a potentially unified radical right – despite all differences.

Having said that, it is no wonder that during the run-up to the EP election in 2019 commentators were going haywire as reports spread about party leaders such as Matteo Salvini, Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders and other right-wingers from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Estonia, Czech Republic and Bulgaria gathering in Milan 2019 and announcing the foundation of a ‘super-faction’ in the European Parliament. Finally, it seemed, would the radical right become the “driving force in the politization of Europe in the electoral arena” (Dolezal and Hellström, 2016), combine electoral power and bring their policies to the European heartlands in Brussels.

In the end, right-wing parties did win more votes in 2019 than in 2014, however, they were only able to increase their vote share from 21 to 23 percent, whereas the Greens and the liberal group (including Macron’s *En Marche*) increased their combined vote shares from 16 percent to 24,3 percent. The newly founded ‘super-faction’ *Identity and Democracy* secured only 73 of the 751 seats in the parliament – three more than its predecessor *ENF* – and remained entirely insignificant in the election

of Ursula von der Leyen as the new European Commission president. However, Eastern European populists from Poland (ECR) and Hungary (EPP) presumably lent von der Leyen decisive support.

We take this most recent antagonism of radical right rise and failure to cooperate as a motivation to review the radical right's behaviour in the European Parliament. By analysing roll-call-votes in the legislative period 2014-2019, this contribution seeks to assess the congruence of the radical right in the EP in comparison to other party families. Building up on the literature, discussing the difficulties and motivations for the radical right's cooperation in the EP, we zoom in on the parties' nativist and authoritarian core ideology. We argue that their common 'thin ideology' (Mudde, 2007) fails to bind the parties together as nativist based egoisms trigger strong geographically centred dividing lines.

The remainder of this article offers a literature review on specific characteristics of European right-wing parties and their relationship with foreign authoritarian powers from Russia and the People's Republic of China. A third section introduces our data and empirical strategy followed by a discussion of our results in the fourth section. The final section concludes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: EUROPE'S RIGHT-WING GIANT – A MEDUSA

2.1 Nativism: the radical right's dividing line

Although functionally equivalent, the radical right is a vivid group of parties that has always been in flux and until today faces significant differences in their electorates, policy supply and organizational structures (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2018). From an issue perspective, only their opposition to immigration really serves as an unequivocal positional melting pot in the European Parliament. Correspondingly, the increased refugee migration after 2015 mostly directed through Eastern and to Northern- and Western-Europe united parties on the right end of the political spectrum (Hutter and Kriesi, 2019). In contrast, already the varieties of radical right parties' positioning on euroscepticism serves as an example of the divisive potential that an at first sight uniting issue might develop (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2004; Startin, 2010).

What is more, it might come as a surprise that in contrast to its skyrocketing electoral success of similarly shaped parties all over Europe, the radical right's similarities are much more inexplicit than those of other party families. In general, Taggart (2004) argues that populism is ideologically flexible, lacks "core values" and "tends to be highly chameleonic" (Taggart, 2004, p. 275). More specifically, Mudde (2007) identifies that popular radical right parties merely follow a 'thin ideology' that consists of three main characteristics: First, *populism* is marked by a stylized division of the society into a corrupt elite and the pure peoples' will (*'volonté générale'*) that they putatively represent. Second, *authoritarianism* characterises the attraction of a worldview based on law and order or discipline.

Lastly, *nativism* represents the populist radical right's (PRRP) main dogma and is centred around a xenophobic nationalism that disapproves any interference with national authority from abroad or supra-national. Combining these characteristics into a joint concept, the rise of the mono-cultural nation state can be carved out as the main goal of radical right-wing parties (Mudde, 2007).

Although such a 'thin ideology' allows to identify certain common policy goals and anti-EU narratives (Startin, 2010), in contrast to other party families that are founded around an internationalist history (social democrats or socialist parties) or issues that need interventions on the global level (such as environmental parties), the radical right has much less '*natural*' reason for cooperation. In fact, once the nativist based "primacy of nationalism" (Fieschi, 2000, p. 518), is echoed in 'my nation first' type of policies, transnational cooperation is fundamentally challenged. Indisputably, the radical right is particularly prone to such nativist reflex. Whereas in the end a group of right-wing parties might agree on closing borders or even on their different perspectives on the EU (Heinisch et al., 2020), when it comes to burden sharing or questions of mutual responsibility, right-wing coalitions become inherently instable.

Hypothesis 1: Due to their prominent nativist ideology, the radical right in the European Parliament is more divided than other political factions.

2.2 Economic nativism: the East-West divide among the European radical right

The European radical right is built on common grounds (Mudde, 2007) insofar as the Eastern European radical right behaves "contextually distinctive and functionally equivalent" (Pytlas, 2018b) to its Western counterpart. Western and Eastern PRRPs form a party family defined after Mudde's (2007) definition of a 'thin ideology' and can be compared and analysed in a pan-European context, however, with contextual specificities taken into account.

Nevertheless, it has been argued that the political systems in Eastern and Western Europe differ so significantly that also right-wing parties in the neighbouring regions remain incomparable as particularly the societal and economic transformations in Eastern European countries challenged the young democracies (Thieme, 2005). In addition the civil societies continue to face a post-communist legacy that triggers low trust and general scepticism regarding political parties (Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2011) – favourable breeding grounds for anti-system parties.

Clearly, many systemic differences exist between the long-run established party systems that have been organized over time-invariant cleavage structures in the West (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967), and the disruptively established democracies after the fall of the iron curtain in the East. Because Eastern European PRRPs' extreme socio-cultural positioning was in fact not too distant from established

competitors and due to the high salience of socio-cultural issues (Pytlas, 2018a), PRRPs in the East are generally considered to have been more influential – even if electorally less successful – than in the West (Mudde, 2007). Also on the economic end, Buščíková (2018) finds that right-wing parties in Eastern Europe hold rather left-wing economic positionings. Those include support for stronger state interventions, protectionism and a taste for social spending (Buščíková, 2018). On the contrary, Western European PRRPs are traditionally leaning towards a neoliberal policy stance (see the ‘winning formula’ developed by Kitschelt and McGann (1995)). Today, some members of the party family such as the German AfD or the Austrian FPÖ still follow a rather neoliberal economic stance (Diermeier, 2020; Rathgeb, 2021), albeit others have abandoned such an economic agenda as a response to a more diverse and working class centred electorate (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Rooduijn, 2018). Interestingly, during the recent economic and financial crisis, even formerly unsuspecting issues such as monetary interventions by the ECB have been politicized by the Western European radical right who pushed monetary policy in line with the national economic interest into the realm of the European political and public arena (Hobolt, 2015). As an example of Western European ECB protest, Arzheimer (2015) describes the eurosceptic emergence of the German AfD.

Regarding the positioning on European integration, it should be noted that the radical right in Western and Eastern Europe has significantly different interests. The fact that North-Western European countries are net contributors to the EU budget leads to nativist parties’ natural interest of restricting the national contributions. In contrast, nationalist parties in Eastern European countries that are net-recipients of EU funds have an interest in larger cohesion or regional development funding. Houghton and Rybar (2009) even claim that following a strict *economic nativism* “politicians in these net-recipient states tend to see the EU as a ‘cash cow’ to be milked” (p. 550). In fact, in Bulgaria, Rumania, Lithuania, Hungary, Latvia, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland the share of public gross fixed capital formation funded by the EU fluctuates within the impressive range of 55 to 75 percent. In most Western economies it is negligible (Busch and Diermeier, 2019). The interest in EU funding is expected to be particularly strong if nativist parties hold government offices. This again is particularly frequent in Eastern European countries.¹¹³

The conflicting interests within the radical right show the divisive power that nativism can unfold between Western and Eastern European representatives of the party family. What is more, as the controversies seem to be centred around common financial and economic concerns, we believe it is a specific *economic nativism* that separates the party family geographically.

¹¹³ In the election year 2014 this is the case only for Fidesz (HU, since 2010), the Party Order and Justice (LT since 2012), the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania – Christian Families Alliance (LT since 2012) and the National Alliance "All For Latvia!" (LV since 2014). In 2015, additional radical right parties such as the Polish PiS and the Finnish True Fins entered their respective governments.

Hypothesis 2: On EU economic policies and particularly regional development funding, economic nativism divides the radical right between Western and Eastern Europe.

2.3 Authoritarianism and political nativism: the European radical right and authoritarian states

Recalling Mudde (2007), PRRPs across Europe share common authoritarian values, must constantly distinguish themselves from the established parties and simultaneously acquire new allies. The result is an alliance between the radical right and foreign authoritarian regimes, especially from China and Russia. Both sides gain from this collaboration: Authoritarian regimes can establish their narratives, promote their governance systems and undermine the EU's unity, not only through their own channels but also via (democratically elected) populist parties; PRRPs gain 'global legitimacy' from being acknowledged and courted by these countries.

That explains why foreign influence operations have steadily grown since 2014. The COVID-19 pandemic illustrates this again: Initial nationalistic responses by EU member states and a lack of coordination among EU institutions allowed authoritarian governments to instrumentalize the crisis for geopolitical ambitions through disinformation and propaganda. China and Russia are currently engaged in a '*global battle of narratives*' (Borrell, 2020). Chinese official and private actors have been very active in reframing the narrative of the virus outbreak and are promoting Chinese 'politics of generosity' (Borrell, 2020) or 'mask' and 'vaccine diplomacy'. However, nowadays policy makers are more alert: The European External Action Service (EEAS) and leading Members of the European Parliament (with the important exception of PRRP representatives) have openly raised concerns "about current disinformation and propaganda efforts coming especially from China and Russia", which were clearly aimed "to undermine the EU and sow mistrust among the local population and European neighbours towards the EU, its democratic values and institutions" (European Parliament, 2020).

The natural alliance? Right-wing attitudes towards Russia

"A vote for populists is a vote for Putin" (Verhofstadt, 2019), warned Guy Verhofstadt, liberal ALDE party leader in the European Parliament, just a few days before the EP elections 2019. Russia has a long history of influence operations in Europe and its hybrid toolbox ranges from economic pressure, cyber-attacks and political assassinations to mis-/disinformation campaigns and propaganda through state media (Russia Today, Sputnik), or academic/civil organizations. It is constantly "adapting to the targeted country's local circumstances, narratives and audiences" (Bentzen, 2018, p. 3). Accordingly, Russia has spun a wide network to parliamentarians across Europe and within the European Parliament, including several cooperation agreements and so-called 'friendship groups' (Nielsen, 2018).

After Russia's unlawful annexation of Crimea, its covert war in Eastern Ukraine and its accountability for shooting down the civilian Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, however, the EU implemented – alongside the USA – sectoral sanctions that went far beyond expectations. Confronted with a rather unified EU, “Moscow began to strongly court Europe's far-right in official channels in 2014” (Weiss, 2020, p. 7) and Russian officials, as well as President Putin, hosted delegations of right-wing leaders, including Italian politician Salvini. Shortly after, Italian Northern League and Austrian FPÖ started to condemn sanctions and justified Russian aggression. This loose linkage soon led to formal cooperation agreements between the 'United Russia' government party and both FPÖ (2016) and Northern League (2017). Similarly, right-wing leaders from Germany, France and Hungary cozied up to Russia and publicly called for an end of EU sanctions, legitimated Russia's annexation of Crimea or - in the case of Viktor Orbán - even suspended energy supplies to Ukraine in 2014 (Klasa et al., 2019). Although the populists' view on sanctions ultimately did not challenge the EU's foreign policy - as neither Italy nor Austria or Hungary vetoed the renewal of sanctions in the European Council - it certainly caused dissent among EU member states according to Weiss (2020).

Contrary to the Western radical right, for historical reasons several Eastern European countries hold strong resentments against the aggressive Russian foreign policies. Famously, Jarosław Kaczyński, the leader of the Polish right-wing populists, blames Russia for the plane crash in Smolensk in 2010 where his brother and Poland's president at the time died (Przybylski, 2018). Russia has an ongoing interest in destabilizing unity and democratic institutions in the Eastern member states. It has led cyber-attacks in Estonia and has become more assertive. The European Parliament counts 998 disinformation cases attributed to Russia by October 2019, compared to 434 cases in the previous year 2018 (European Parliament, 2019a). To counter disinformation attacks, the East-Stratcom task-force was established within the EEAS in 2015 (EEAS, 2018). Nonetheless, in the respective countries, especially the Baltics, the Russian aggressions on Europe's Eastern borders can hardly be condoned – particularly not by nativist politicians.

In fact, the scepticism of several Eastern European radical right parties in the face of Russia's aggressions uncovers a second variety of nativism: Besides *economic nativism* (see Chapter 2.2), and in line with Mudde's (2007) definition, we coin the strict focus on sovereignty from foreign powers as *political nativism*. Rooted in the several Eastern European countries' historical experiences, in these nations *political nativism* is expected to be particularly influential in determining the radical rights' voting behaviour on Russia. In contrast, Western right-wing parties are likely to admire Russia's strength.

Hypothesis 3: While united in their support for authoritarian governance, political nativism divides the radical right in their stance towards Russia in Western admirers and Eastern sceptics.

Right-wing allegiance to Beijing? Chinese influence and regional differences

As China's economy expands and matures, it has gained more and more 'economic gunpowder' (Norris, 2016, p. 63) to turn its growing wealth into power and influence. Under Xi Jinping, Chinese (economic) statecraft employs a broad toolkit of economic 'carrots and sticks' (Ferchen, 2016, p. 3), involving numerous governmental and commercial actors in ministries, private- and State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs), as well as banks (Reilly, 2013, p. 4). Multiple cases prove how China uses boycotts, public 'naming-and-shaming' campaigns, as well as blunt threats, when foreign officials or companies criticize China regarding human rights, territorial claims or engage with disputed leaders, such as the Dalai Lama (i.e. Fuchs and Klann (2013)). Assessing China's 'authoritarian advance' in the EU between 2015 to 2017, Benner et al. (2018, p. 21) declare that "EU institutions have also not been immune to Chinese political pressure". Whereas Benner et al. (2018, p. 22) claim that "the EP has not toned down its criticism of Chinese human right shortcomings in response", assuming that "EU institutions might be more able to play hardball in relations with China than individual EU member states", other authors argue that self-censorship among European policymakers has become no exception. However, no research has thoroughly evaluated the nexus between China and the radical right in the European Parliament to date.

Even though Chinese influence operations have long occurred under the radar, China did not suddenly show up on Europe's doorstep: Already since the 2008 global financial crisis, China has continuously expanded its economic and political presence (Godement and Vasselier, 2017). One example that sent shock waves through EU policy circles was Greece's reluctance in the European Council to support a resolution on the South China Sea arbitration in 2016. The coalition of left- and right-wing populists from Greece and right-wing populists from Hungary blocked a more ambitious text by the EEAS. While the final text noted China's legal defeat and called for a peaceful resolution in line with international law, it carefully avoided criticizing Beijing, reflecting that the EU was unable to speak with one voice (Emmott, 2016). Furthermore, with growing investment ties and the Chinese take-over of the Port of Piraeus, Greece objected to 'unconstructive criticism' (Emmot and Koutantou, 2017) of human rights abuses in China and the Tsipras-government prevented a united EU position at the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2017 (Duchâtel and Sheldon-Duplaix, 2016; Godement and Vasselier, 2017, p. 50). Comparable tit-for-tat methods have been observed in the context of Chinese 'Dollar Diplomacy' to shape voting behaviour at the UN General Assembly (Bentzen, 2018), or in the form of so-called 'Debt Trap Diplomacy' along the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (Chellaney, 2017; Brautigam, 2020).¹¹⁴ For China, economic 'win-win' deals seem to pay off twice: economically and politically.

¹¹⁴ However, the use of economic means 'to buy votes' or to promote favourable public statements is not unique to China (Taylor, 2010).

However, a critical debate about 'China's foreign influence operations in Western liberal democracies' (Grieger, 2018) has only recently emerged in Europe - predominantly in the Western member states. China's 'sharp power' toolkit also includes non-economic, more subtle "unorthodox means to co-opt political elites, academia, think-tanks and media to support CCP policy goals, and to silence criticism on sensitive topics" (Grieger, 2018, p. 1). It has adapted to the specifics of the supranational EU institutions, i.e. by establishing the 'EU-China friendship group' in the European Parliament. Termed by Nielsen, 2018), as the 'backdoor for pariah regimes', friendship groups are loosely organized, circumvent public and parliamentary scrutiny and offer foreign actors a significant lobbying foothold inside the parliament. Initiated in 2006, the group and its approximately 45 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have no formal mandate in representing the EU abroad, yet members have been courted by China and were invited to numerous consultations with high-ranking CCP officials and diplomats (Yang Yanyi, 2014; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2017; Martin and Crawford, 2019; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2019). While it is difficult to assess the direct impact on MEPs attitudes, several members of the friendship group have spoken out publicly in favour of China (Zahradil, 2018-2020; Lulu, 2019, 10ff; Xinhua, 2019). They have repeatedly defended China's BRI and dismissed Western criticism by arguing that China is a responsible stakeholder instead of "an aggressive colonial power" (Xinhua, 2019). Left alone, this is not overly problematic. However, these pro-Chinese statements have been portrayed by Chinese state media as official EU views (China Daily, 2014; Xinhua, 2019). Thus, Lulu (2019) argues that the group is a tool of extraterritorial influence and "effectively functions as a proxy for CCP propaganda". Lately the group has received greater scrutiny. After critical media reports about the controversial group evolved in November 2020, the EU-China Friendship Group has been (temporarily) suspended by its Chair, Czech MEP Jan Zahradil, from 1st December onwards. MEP Zahradil reported the decision while defending the group during a hearing on 25th January of the EP's Special Committee on Foreign Influence, which was explicitly created to uncover foreign interference in all democratic processes in the EU (Cerulus, 2021). Likewise, China has strengthened its overseas influence by making the party-led 'United Front Work Department' and the CCPs 'International Liaison Department' (ILD), China's 'magic weapons' (Brady, 2017; Thomas, 2020) in mobilising Chinese expatriates and in shaping a positive CCP-narrative abroad.

Despite the Chinese advances on the European radical right and shared authoritarian themes, one cannot expect a united pro-Chinese faction among the radical right. Many Western European right-wing parties represent an electorate that has presumably suffered economically from the rise of China through import competition. In fact, the radical right in Western Europe is particularly successful in regions that have lost competitiveness and thus suffered the most from cheap Chinese imports: causal effects of import competition on right-wing election successes have been proven for Germany (Dippel

et al., 2016), France (Malgouyres, 2017) and other Western European countries (Colantone and Stanig, 2018). As these presumable 'losers of globalization' demand stronger state interventions, they support protectionist trade policies 'normally' known from the populist left (van der Waal and Koster, 2018). Thus, *economic nativism* among the Western right-wing is expected to negatively influence its voting behaviour towards China. Opposite, Eastern member states have been less vulnerable to Chinese competition due to a lower level of unit labour costs. Besides, Eastern European countries have so far received the smallest share of Chinese FDI, accounting for only 1.5 percent of all Chinese investment in the EU between 2000 and 2018 (Hanemann et al., 2019). Accordingly, following their *economic nativism*, the region is expected to be 'hungry' for Chinese investments and eager to intensify economic cooperation. This should be reflected in the Eastern radical right's voting behaviour.

Additionally, differing public opinion towards China in the East and West might further impact the voting behaviour. Here, the two-level game between European and national levels could play a role: McDonnell and Werner (2018) have shown that radical right party members have favoured national "respectability" calculations when joining alliance strategies, allying in the EP with more moderate mainstream parties "to gain respectability in the eyes of national publics and/or prospective coalition partners" (p. 13). In the case of China, this might not be the intention, but the radical right parties can be expected to join alliances that reflect the regional differences in economic business models. The goal is to signal to their national voters that they understand their economic interests which depend on geography rather than party family colour. Thus, even with authoritarianism as the binding link between the radical right, *economic nativism* is expected to split the radical right on China, ultimately indicating that the PRRPs might opt for national interests instead of policy congruence.

Hypothesis 4: Despite common authoritarian grounds, economic nativism splits the radical right on China between Western parties who putatively represent the 'losers of globalization' and those in the East who see China as an economic and political partner.

3. MATERIAL AND METHOD

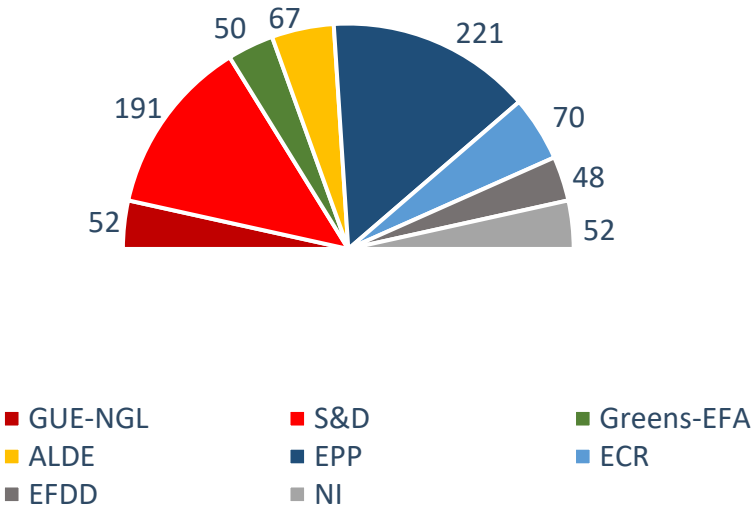
To assess the voting behaviour of radical right-wing parties this paper draws on data from VoteWatch¹¹⁵ Europe on voting records of Members of the European Parliament (MEP). The analysis considers final votes as well as separate votes on amendments, paragraphs and reports during the legislative term 2014-2019. All roll-call-votes in the EP plenary are included. These are obligatory for

¹¹⁵ See: <https://www.votewatch.eu/>.

all final votes on legislations since 2014 and enable the individual link between a MEP and their voting behaviour.¹¹⁶

At the start of the legislative term 2014, national parties formed seven factional groups.¹¹⁷ Figure 5.1 shows the allocation of the 751 seats in the European Parliament (EP) per political group after the 2014 European Elections. In 2015, an additional right-wing faction was created, the Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF), by national parties who were formerly part of the ‘Non-Inscrits’(NI) and ECR, mainly consisting of France’s National Front and Italy’s Northern League.

Figure 5.1: Allocation of European Parliament Seats after the 2014 European Elections



Source: Own depiction based on European Parliament (2014)

National parties in our analysis are characterized as radical right by their membership to Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF) or Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD). Parties are added to the radical right if they are classified as eurosceptic right by Hobolt (2015), resulting in the inclusion of 13 further parties in our classification who are members of the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) or European People’s Party (EPP).¹¹⁸ In line with our research focus on authoritarianism and

¹¹⁶ Hence, roll-call-votes give the number of votes for and against each single vote as well as abstention votes for every national party and their corresponding MEPs.
¹¹⁷ The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), the European People’s Party (EPP), Greens-European Free Alliance (Greens-EFA), European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), European United Left – Nordic Green Left (GUE-NGL), the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) and a group of MEPs with no attachment to any faction, the Non-Inscrits (NI).
¹¹⁸ These national parties are the Alternative for Germany (ECR), Danish People’s Party (ECR), Fidesz (EPP), Croatian Party of Rights (ECR), National Alliance "All For Latvia!" – "For Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK" (ECR), New Majority (NOVA) (ECR), Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (ECR), Finns Party (ECR), Right Wing of the Republic (ECR), Law and Justice (ECR), Freedom and Solidarity (ECR), Reformed Political Party (ECR), IMRO – Bulgarian National Movement (ECR) and the Slovenian Democratic Party (EPP).

nativism such a selection goes beyond the populist core in the radical right. According to this classification the radical right in 2014, at the start of the legislative term contains 130 MEPs.¹¹⁹

As our aim is to study the division of the radical right between Western and Eastern Europe, the right-wing parties are further divided along the former iron curtain line (Appendix Table 1). Parties that were identified as radical right but officially belong to a faction such as ECR or EPP were excluded from their official faction to avoid overlapping in our analysis. In total, 293 votes on a variety of issues are considered during the legislative term (Table 5.1). Special focus is put on EU policy areas regarding votes on trade agreements, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), as well as relations with Russia and the People's Republic of China. While the EP is a co-legislator on trade agreements with the Council and thus holds a certain amount of legislative power on those policies, the power on foreign and security issues lies exclusively within the Council and to some degree the European Commission's competencies. However, the European Parliament can influence negotiations by adopting resolutions and issuing recommendations on sanctions, the state of the WTO or foreign current events in line with TEU Article 36. A resolution passed by the EP's Plenary cannot (anymore) be ignored by the other EU institutions.

Similarly, broader policy areas concerning selective internal issues are considered such as votes regarding the European Central Bank, Banking Union and Capital Union. As the EP adopts a resolution on the annual report on monetary policy presented by the European Central Bank (ECB) every year (European Parliament, 2019b) the EP's votes regarding that resolution can be interpreted as a direct assessment of the ECB's work. Concerning the EP's own budgetary affairs, even though it shares its budgetary authority with the Council, it adopts and monitors the implementation of the general budget and discharges. Therefore, all votes during the legislative term regarding the general budget are included. In addition, all votes during the legislative term concerning regional development, as well as employment and social affairs are analysed.

In order to deconstruct the division of Western and Eastern European right-wing national parties on the specific subjects, a congruence index is created. The index takes the highest share of voters in a political group that is either for or against a resolution. The congruence index thus provides a measure of unity ranging from total dissent (= 0.5) to complete agreement (= 1).

¹¹⁹ For simplification, the single MP from the neo-fascist antidemocratic radical party Greece's Golden Dawn that would solely represent the Southern European radical right is excluded from our classification. As we follow Manow (2018) in classifying the Italian PRRP Northern League as a 'Western European' right-wing party (and not as a Southern European party) due to its disproportional success in Northern Italy.

Table 5.1: Overview of the selective topics

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF VOTES	SELECTIVE TOPICS
RUSSIA	13	All votes
P.R. CHINA	11	All votes
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	23	CETA, TTIP, Trade negotiations and agreements with Japan, Colombia, Peru, Australia, New Zealand and Korea
ECONOMIC AND MONETARY AFFAIRS	14	Capital Union, Banking Union and European Central Bank
EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS	70	All votes
BUDGET AND BUDGETARY CONTROL	77	General Budget
(REGIONAL) DEVELOPMENT	85	All votes

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Exploiting the data described above, Figure 5.2 pictures the party family cohesion among 293 economic votes in the legislative period between 2014 and 2019. The congruence index takes 1 if all parliamentarians of a party family vote equivalently and 0.5 if all parliamentarians of a party family are equally divided in their votes. The index takes the average over the cohesion in the 293 votes, respectively by party family.

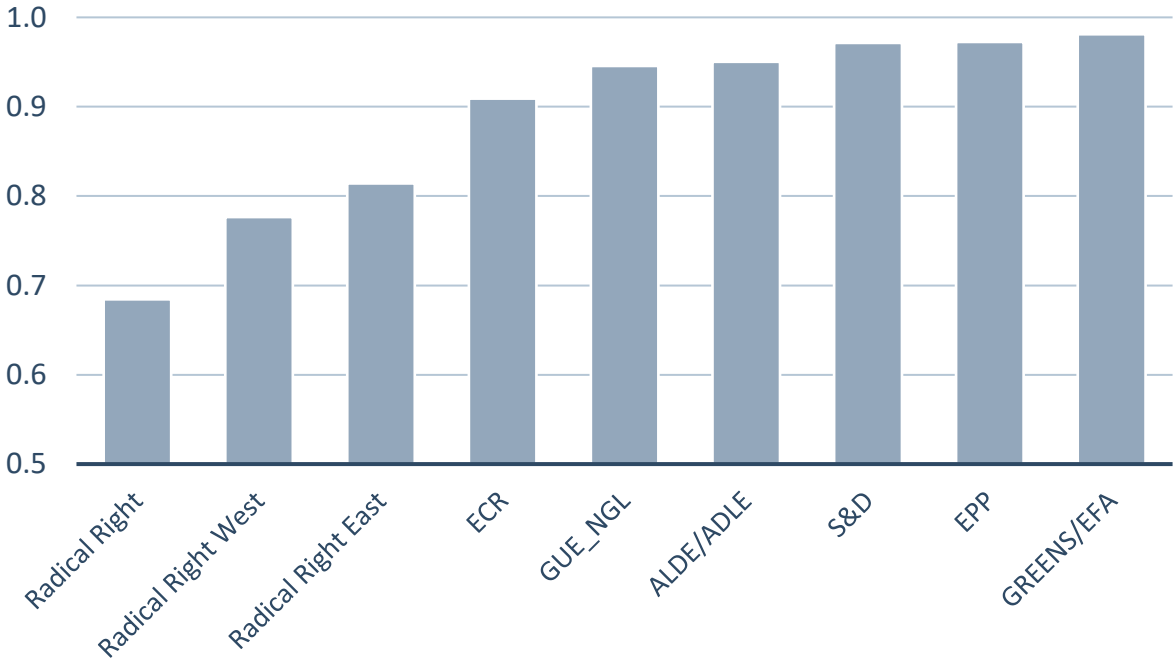
Confirming Hypothesis 1, the radical right in the European Parliament is much more divided than the other factions. Whereas all other party families score between 0.91 (ECR excluding PiS) and 0.98 (Greens /EFA), the congruence for the right-wing party family lays at 0.69 and thus closer to complete division than to complete congruence.¹²⁰ Interestingly, separating the radical right geographically between Western and Eastern Europe reveals a significantly higher congruence of 0.78 in the West and 0.81 in the East.

Although even after dividing the radical right geographically, congruence remains significantly lower than among other party families, the increase in regional right-wing congruence matches with the discussed topic specific dividing lines that are particularly present among nativist parties. A topic-specific analysis gives further insights into radical rights' geographical division (see Table 5.2). The right-wing shows the lowest congruence among 0.63 and 0.67 on the economic questions concerning regional development, international trade, China and Russia – whereas the congruence among all other factions lies above 0.9 for all topics. Eastern European radical right parties agree on economic questions regarding China (0.94) and international trade (0.9), Western European radical right parties

¹²⁰ This result also holds if the right-wing factions ENF or ECR are considered separately.

agree on Economic and Monetary Affairs (0.92). Unfortunately, the index only represents a useful tool to measure topic specific congruence but remains silent on the actual party families' positioning, motivating an in-depth qualitative analysis.

Figure 5.2: Congruence Index on all votes, European Parliament 2014-2019



Source: own depiction based on VoteWatch Europe (2019)

Table 5.2: Congruence Index on topic-specific votes

	Radical Right	Radical East	Right West	Average other factions
China	0.67	0.94	0.72	0.95
Russia	0.66	0.84	0.82	0.92
International Trade	0.63	0.90	0.72	0.92
Economic and Monetary Affairs	0.74	0.75	0.92	0.93
Employment and Social Affairs	0.69	0.85	0.75	0.91
Budget	0.71	0.75	0.81	0.94
Budgetary Control	0.75	0.66	0.82	0.95
Regional Development	0.63	0.88	0.77	0.92
Development	0.66	0.83	0.73	0.93
ALL	0.68	0.81	0.77	0.93

4.1 Economic and monetary affairs: A melting pot for the Western European right-wing

On the EU level, the major economic decisions during the legislative period between 2014 and 2019 dealt with the repercussions and lessons from the financial and sovereign debt crisis. In general, the trade-off between risk sharing and risk control has been at the core of the political controversies. The importance of quantitative easing measures taken by the European Central Bank in containing the crisis in several member states has led to a strong politicization of monetary policy within the Eurozone (Kriesi and Grande, 2016). Several North-Western right-wingers argued that for the sake of rescuing endangered economies, the ECB undermined financial stability and hence economic prosperity (Arzheimer, 2015; Hobolt, 2015). In general, nativist parties in the affluent economies in Western Europe have a genuine interest in pronouncing the dangers of risk sharing and advocating stricter risk control. Until today, this trend is reflected in Western radical right opposition of mutualized debt instruments such as the so called 'Corona-Bonds'.

This common opposition to European risk sharing measures is reflected in the unique unanimity of the Western European radical right in the resolutions on economic and monetary affairs. In comparison with the Eastern European right-wing, the Western European radical right shows stronger disapproval in every single resolution in this category. First, these parties rather than their Eastern European counterparts oppose the ECB and their legitimacy in interfering with national authorities. Second, they oppose the European Banking Union that amongst others includes the delegation of banking regulation to the European Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM). Third, Western right-wingers strongly disapprove the building of a Capital Markets Union that aims at improving access to finance for SME companies that is targeted for Southern and Eastern markets.

Eastern European radical right parties might have less interest in opposing a strengthening of European institutions regarding monetary and financial affairs than the radical right in the West for different reasons. First, several Eastern European countries have not adopted the Euro as a currency and are simply not affected by ECB decisions or the SSM's supervision over systemically relevant banks in the Eurozone. Second, in the frequent case that Eastern European governments, firms or households hold Euro denominated debt, however, they did profit from a looser monetary policy in the Eurozone. Third, measures to improve financing conditions for small and medium sized companies have been explicitly directed at easing the distressed banking system in Eastern European economies. Although such measures would mean a further strengthening of EU institutions, they are in line with *economic nativism*.

4.2 Regional development: The European cash cow

For questions of (regional) development¹²¹ the nativist character of the radical right from 'net recipients' and 'net creditor' countries could represent a potential spirit of discord. Indeed, Table 5.2 reveals a stark division within the right-wing party family – with the Eastern radical right showing a stronger agreement on regional development issues. What is more, also in this category most resolutions are rather approved by the radical right from the East, however, there is a few motions that find higher approval rates among the Western European radical right.

This is due to the oftentimes regionally targeted nature of the respective resolutions. The strongest difference between the two groups in terms of higher support by Eastern right-wing parties emerges in resolutions on the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP), investments for jobs and growth, acceleration of implementation of cohesion policy, the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and other resolutions targeted at regional cohesion. In line with the notion that Eastern European countries are net recipients of EU funds and their right-wing parties consider the EU a 'cash cow' (Houghton and Rybar, 2009, p. 550), the Eastern nativists rather agree on most resolutions in this category. In contrast, they rather oppose the few motions directed at Western economies. This holds for resolutions that allow a country like France to apply dock dues exemptions for products from their overseas territories, allowances for specific reduced rates of tax or special cohesion strategies for insular regions. Thus, confirming Hypothesis 2, in economic questions and particularly when it comes to the distribution of the EU funds, a 'natural' *economic nationalist* dividing line between the East and the West can be carved out withing the radical right in line with regionally opposing interests.

4.3 A bad deal? Authoritarian regimes' impact on votes in the European Parliament

Given the overwhelming anecdotal evidence of foreign influence operations, the key question is whether authoritarian regimes have already been successful in influencing MEPs' votes in the European Parliament and are ultimately shaping EU policy.

Friend or Foe – The radical right's voting regarding Russia

The congruence for the right-wing party family on votes related to (economic) relations with Russia (0.66) lays significantly below the average of other factions (0.92). However, dividing the radical right geographically, shows remarkably higher congruence scores for the East (0.84) and the West (0.82).

Confirming Hypothesis 3, the voting behaviour in the EP indicates a division among the radical right between Western parties that admire Russia's strength – and those in the East that are afraid of

¹²¹ For the sake of clarity, this section discusses both qualitatively equivalent topics development and regional development.

Russia's aggressive foreign policy stance – often related to historical experience and geographic proximity. Due to *political nativism*, the Eastern radical right votes relatively contra-Russia compared to their Western colleagues. They are more likely to support resolutions that criticize Russia's foreign policy actions and violations of international law. Opposite, Western right-wing parties are more likely to endorse cooperation with Russia, i.e. in the economy or in science and technology.

Most notably are the votes related to the war in Ukraine and Russia's unlawful annexation of Crimea, Russia's engagement in Syria and Libya, as well as the situation of political prisoners and Russian opposition leaders such as Alexei Nawalny and Oleg Sentsov. Most Eastern right-wing MEPs supported the European Parliament resolution on the state of EU-Russia political relations, which directly criticized "Russian interference aimed at influencing elections and referenda and stoking tensions in European societies", as well as the "Kremlin support for anti-EU parties and far-right movements" (European Parliament, 2019d, p. 4). Their Western colleagues were less supportive of the critical resolution, proving the lacking cohesion among the radical right in the European Parliament. While authoritarian values can be regarded as a binding link, in its relations with Russia, *political nativism* among the Eastern right-wing dominates authoritarian commonalities, as well as the economic rationale. This ultimately limits cooperation among the European radical right. The East is willing to forego economic opportunities, whereas their Western counterparts are attracted by Russia's authoritarian governance and hope to profit from (economic) cooperation.

The far East - China's intent to send a 'Trojan horse'

Despite China's growing influence within the European Parliament, a united pro-China faction among the right-wing party family has yet to be established. Once again, the radical right is extremely divided: 0.67 congruence on economic relations with China. Besides votes on international trade and Russia, this is the lowest level of unity. A different picture is revealed after separating Eastern and Western Europe, with congruence increasing sharply to near unanimity (0.94) among Eastern right-wing parties and to 0.72 for their Western counterparts. Thus, the Eastern radical right's congruence is almost equivalent to the average unity of other factions (0.95).

However, the congruence scores remain silent on what the party families agree or disagree on. Assessing all 11 resolution votes, one can attribute a slightly more positive voting behaviour to the Eastern right-wing party family, compared to a relatively more critical attitude towards China by their Western colleagues. Eastern right-wing populists are more prone to support EU-China cooperation and coordination i.e. in the fields of security (Europol, organized crime, cyber security), trade and investment (trade facilitation, WTO Dispute Settlement, investment treaty) and infrastructure (BRI), than Western right-wing delegates. Therefore, Chinese 'sharp power' seems somewhat successful in shaping a positive narrative among Eastern right-wing parties, in dividing MEPs, and most importantly

in translating its influence operations into pro-China votes in the EP. At first sight, this evidence confirms Hypothesis 4, arguing that the geographical division is rooted in *economic nativism* and occurs among parties who portray themselves as representatives of the 'losers of globalization' and those in Eastern Europe who instead see China as a strategic economic and political partner. Accordingly, the radical right's nativist economic interests seem to dominate the *political nativism* in the case of China.

However, comparing all 11 votes related to China between 2014 – 2019, two topics stick out and present a puzzle:

China Market Economy Status: To grant or not to grant? That is the question

On 11 December 2016, some provisions of Section 15 of China's Protocol of Accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) (2001), which deal with the issue of dumping, were going to expire. Section 15 allows importing WTO members to decide - under national law - whether China is a market economy. The EU had labelled China a non-market economy (NME) in 2009. Granting or not granting market economy status (MES) has significant consequences regarding price comparability, subsidies and protective measures against dumped products (Barone et al., 2016). While the request for MES was initially introduced as a technical issue, the vagueness of the legal text, pressure from inside and outside of the EU and conflicting interpretations of what would happen after the WTO provisions expire, made it a political tipping point. The European Parliament did not grant MES and adopted with great majority by 546 votes to 28, with 77 abstentions, a joint resolution, tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE and Greens/EFA groups, emphasizing that "China is not a market economy and that the five criteria established by the EU to define market economies have not yet been fulfilled" (European Parliament, 2016a).

Here, the data indicates that the Eastern right-wing MEPs have voted relatively more in favour of the joint resolution (thus, against granting the MES), compared to their Western counterparts. This is puzzling at first, given that one would expect Western right-wing parties to be more critical towards granting China the MES. The Western radical right claims to represent voters that have suffered from Chinese competition in the global economy which presumably led to deindustrialization and job losses in Western-Europe. However, a closer look at their voting behaviour does not necessarily undermine Hypothesis 4. First, the absolute number of votes shows no significant difference: Western right-wing (For: 41/Against: 11/Abstentions: 33), Eastern right-wing (For: 35/Against: 4/Abstentions: 6). Overall, more Western than Eastern radical right members voted for the resolution. Second, the lower support in favour of the joint motion for resolution might lie in strategic considerations rather than the content itself. Notably, the right-wing party family had previously tabled two resolutions which had not gathered sufficient support. However, like the joint resolution, both motions criticized China's state-led economic model and denied the MES. The ENF group's text, introduced by leading Western radical

right members i.e. Le Pen or Salvini, called on the EU Commission to withhold MES and to improve trade defence instruments, warning that granting MES would have detrimental effects on EU manufacturing jobs and economic growth (European Parliament, 2016b). Similarly, the EFDD Group, urged the Commission to withhold MES and to leave the ‘burden of proof’ to China (European Parliament, 2016c). Both right-wing motions, which were strongly supported by Western PRRPs, did not pass, with the other parties mainly abstaining from the votes. Instead of then voting for the joint resolution, a greater share of the right-wing members in return abstained or voted against. This should be regarded as a protest against the other, more moderate parties and their lack of support, rather than an opposition against the content of the joint resolution (which was in line with the *economic nationalist* argument), given that the right-wing’s motions did not differ substantially from the final text adopted.

Framework for the screening of foreign direct investments (FDI) into the EU

The second vote of special importance was on a legislative resolution for Regulation 2019/452 of the European Parliament and the Council, on establishing a framework for screening FDI from third countries into the EU. On 14 February 2019, the text was adopted with great majority by 500 votes to 49, with 56 abstentions (Grieger, 2019). The framework, which became fully operational on 11th October 2020, enables the screening of FDI on the grounds of (national) security or public order. The EU Commission can issue opinions, yet member states keep responsibility for their national security and are not limited in deciding whether to screen or block a particular investment on that basis (European Parliament, 2019c). Nonetheless, the framework was an important step towards better policy coordination. Until then, the EU had neither a single centralised FDI screening mechanism, nor a formal coordination system among member states and the EU Commission in place. When the legislative process started in 2017, only 13 of the 28 member states had already set-up their own national security FDI reviews. Even more, the lack of coherent FDI regulations and legal definitions, allowed member states to employ varying policies but also prevented “Member States from leveraging their collective bargaining power” (Grieger, 2017, 6f.). And compared to other industrialized countries, EU member states had been reluctant to block foreign takeovers in practice (Grieger, 2017: 8–10).

The legislative initiative and increased scrutiny over FDI started after a sea-change in EU-China investment relations, the introduction of the ‘Made in China 2025’ industrial strategy (in 2015) and a surge of high-profile takeovers in strategic sectors, most prominently the acquisition of German robotics manufacturer KUKA by Chinese Midea in 2016. These developments alarmed member states (especially in Western Europe), business and public alike and provoked a policy shift. Even though EU officials emphasized the neutrality of the measure and China was not mentioned in the legislative text, China’s “recent acquisitions of key European firms were clearly in the minds” (Stanzel, 2017) of the

policymakers. As a side effect, the debate and legislative process incentivized policy action, increasing the number of national screening mechanisms to 16 by the time the EP adopted the legislation (Grieger, 2019).

The overwhelming majority for the framework also included votes from the radical right. Recalling Hypothesis 4, Western right-wing parties presumably draft policies in favour of voters who have been hit harder by Chinese competition. In line with *economic nativism* and referencing the 'China shock' thesis, one would expect greater support for an investment screening mechanism from the Western right-wing, who fear increased competition from China and worry about the transfer of knowledge or (manufacturing) jobs to the East. Opposite, Eastern member states have been less targeted by Chinese investments and were not so vulnerable to Chinese competition due to a lower level of unit labour costs. Naturally following their *economic nativism*, the Eastern member states could be expected to be 'hungry' for Chinese FDI and only barely inclined to restrict investments.

Contrary to these assumptions, the data shows that Eastern right-wing parties voted relatively more in favour of establishing the FDI screening mechanism, compared to the Western ones. However, as with the vote on the Market Economy Status, the analysis of the absolute votes makes the difference less significant. Overall, more Western right-wing members (For: 39, Against: 23, Abstentions: 24) voted for the regulation than MEPs from the Eastern right-wing parties (For: 35, Against: 4, Abstentions: 1). Besides, the voting behaviour needs to be reviewed by considering that most Western countries already had national screening mechanisms at the time of the EU legislation. Thus, an EU coordination mechanism might have been regarded by the Western radical right as an unnecessary tool at best, but rather as another attempt of the EU Commission to amass more competences that initially belonged to member states. As shown before, the transmission of national competences to EU institutions has always been a red flag for the nativist radical right in the West, ultimately provoking their opposition. This confirms once again our overarching hypothesis that the nativist core ideology of the radical right is restraining transnational cooperation in the EP. Even though Western right-wing parties were aware of the value an EU coordinated FDI screening mechanism could have to limit strategic takeovers and possible deindustrialization – as manifold motions and remarks in the parliamentary debates prove – they still voted (relatively more) against the resolution and thus against their *economic nativism* in the final vote. On the contrary, most Eastern countries did not have their own national screening mechanisms in place. Thus, an EU coordination mechanism seemed to be an easy way to address the topic and to make sure that the EU could be blamed in case of repercussions from foreign investors. Here, one can argue that this action remains in line with their *economic nativism*.

5. CONCLUSION – NATIVISTS’ DIFFICULTIES TO COOPERATE

The rise of the radical right in European Parliament elections terrified politicians, journalists, and political commentators. In contrast to this fear, in line with former findings (Fieschi, 2000) the analysis of the legislative period of the EP between 2014 and 2019 reveals the deep divisions between radical right-wing parties. In fact, right-wing voting behaviour comes closer to complete division than to the relative unanimity that the other party families manage to achieve. Although the right-wing divide is reduced considerably once the parties are split up geographically in their Western and Eastern European components, even this set-up reveals that a much stronger division prevails within the radical right than among the other factions.

Particularly once their national economic interests are concerned, the radical right finds it difficult to rally around a common flag. A regional-specific exception to this rule is the common interest of the radical right in post-communist countries to profit from EU development funding. The parliamentarians’ understanding of the Union’s development programs resembles “a ‘cash cow’ to be milked” (Haughton and Rybar, 2009, p. 550). However, such a perspective objects the economic interests of their Western European counterparts who unanimously disapprove resolutions that strengthen the European level regarding monetary and financial competencies or institutions. Given the regional differences in economic business models and the unwillingness to strive for transnational cooperation, *economic nativism* is a major barrier for comprehensive right-wing cooperation.

Additionally, we follow up on the importance of the right-wing’s common *authoritarian grounds* that they share with different foreign powers and that might pave the way for the radical right becoming a ‘Trojan horse’ of authoritarians from Russia and China in the European Parliament. We find that despite a massive authoritarian advance a united pro-China or pro-Russia faction among the European radical right has yet to be established. Russia and China have been only partially successful in influencing right-wing politicians in the European Parliament. We argue that different forms of *nativism* can incentivise or disincentivise authoritarian forces from within and outside Europe to rally together and join forces against the EU.

First, turning away from the authoritarian advance causes economic opportunity costs and goes against the radical rights’ *economic nativism*. This holds particularly regarding looming investments from China in Eastern Europe. Here, the far east great power is endorsed as a potential trigger for economic stimulus even if it comes at the cost of a certain political dependency. In this sense economic interests dominate the nativists’ hunger for full sovereignty that we coin *political nativism*. The opposite is true for the Western European radical right. For having lost a certain share of their industry to global competition and offshoring, Western European right-wingers rather oppose China and

Chinese investments in their *economic nativism*. However, the two specific votes on granting China the MES and on establishing an FDI screening mechanism illustrate the complexity with regard to voting behaviour towards China and partially limit this interpretation. Here, further research is necessary to clarify the *economic- and political nativism*, as well as conflicts between the two that promote or restrain support for China among the radical right.

Second and for historical experiences the right-wing from Eastern Europe is rather critical in European Parliament votes on Russia despite the costs stemming from economic sanctions amongst others. Hence in this case, *political nativism* clearly dominates the East's economic rationale. Again, the opposite is true among the radical right in the West where Russia's political control is less feared, and its authoritarian occurrence is rather admired. In the case of Russia, *political nativism* in the East is the major dividing element within the radical right. Hence, despite common authoritarian grounds, *political nativism* hinders foreign powers to strategically employ the radical rights' representatives in parliamentary.

Finally, this paper shows that the radical right party family in the European Parliament functions differently from all other factional groups. Whereas established parties in the EP form political factions as the greatest common denominator that still allows policy congruence (McElroy and Benoit, 2010), above all, radical right parties vouch for national interests – not policy congruence. Hence, despite all common goals and tactical aspirations, their nativist backbone hinders effective cooperation – even in its negative occurrence to blockade policy proposals from established factions. Anyways, it remains an open question whether the radical right's electorate even expects policy congruence from their representatives at the cost of compromise and alliance building. Having said that, it does not come as a surprise that until today the radical right failed to form a 'super faction'. And even if it will merge in the future, it can be expected to fail achieving congruence on crucial votes.

What is more, this contribution clarifies that nativism can take an economic as well as a political course. In the interdependent and complex world politicians face today, *economic* and *political nativism* might first not always be as obvious and second not in line with each other. Where no historically grown aversion against an authoritarian power exists, *economic nativism* might incentivise right-wing parliamentarians to engage with foreign powers even at the cost of losing political sovereignty. Hence, depending on the generosity of authoritarians' funding and the radical right's nativist cost-benefit calculation, the radical right might no longer be constrained to a 'Trojan pony' and could instead become a 'Trojan horse' in the European Parliament.

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