

The Electoral Supporter Base of the Alternative for Germany

Dennis C. Spies (contact author)

University of Cologne Cologne Center for Comparative Politics Herbert-Lewin-Str. 2 50931

Köln

Germany

Phone +49 (0)221 470 8811

spies@wiso.uni-koeln.de

Achim Goerres

University of Duisburg-Essen Institute for Political Science

Lotharstraße 65

47057 Duisburg

Germany

Phone +49 (0) 203 379 3615

achim.goerres@uni-due.de

Staffan Kumlin

University of Oslo Department of Political Science Moltke Moes vei 31 0851 OSLO

Norway

Phone +47 (0) 228 41113

staffan.kumlin@stv.uio.no

Abstract

Using data from a recent nationwide survey, we provide the first analysis of the supporter base of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) since the party's split and ideological re-orientation in mid-2015. Hypotheses are derived from the literature on Populist Radical Right Parties (PRRPs) in Western Europe. Our findings indicate that AfD support—despite the party's euro crisis origins and rapid organizational and ideational changes—is by now due to largely the same set of socio-economic, attitudinal and contextual factors proven important for PRRP parties elsewhere. Right-wing political attitudes concerning immigration, political distrust, fears of personal economic decline, as well as gender and socialisation effects are the most relevant explanatory variables. However, some of our findings – the importance of right-wing economic policy preferences, the strong support by certain immigrant groups, and the role of the long-term regional political context – stand out and distinguish the AfD from other Western European PRRPs.

Introduction

Founded in early 2013, the *Alternative for Germany* (AfD) has already become one of the most successful newly founded parties in Germany for decades. While the party narrowly failed to pass the 5% threshold for parliamentary representation in its first *Bundestag* election in 2013, it gained 7.1% of all votes in the European Parliament election of 2014. On the sub national level, AfD candidates have already been elected to 14 out of 16 regional *Länder* parliaments and several local municipalities. Eventually, and notwithstanding serious internal disputes about personal and programmatic strategy, the AfD established itself on the national level gaining 12.6 % of all votes in the federal election of September 2017 – the best result of any party newly entering the *Bundestag* since 1949.

From its start, the nature of AfD has been subject to intense public debate. Starting with its central demand to end Germany's contributions to the EU's financial rescue packages, the party was gradually suspected of advocating radical right-wing positions with regard to questions of immigration and integration, including the closing of German borders to asylum seekers, a ban on mosques, and several repatriation and chauvinist welfare demands (Franzmann, 2016a, 2016b; Lewandowsky, 2015; Berbuir et al., 2015). This eventual combination of Euro-sceptic, anti-immigrant, and culturally conservative positions, combined with a pronounced populist rhetoric, has resulted in harsh verbal reactions from mainstream politicians, including comparisons of the AfD's programmatic with that of National Socialism (*Spiegel Online*, 2016a).

Naturally, the AfD has also raised considerable interest from political scientists. So far, academia has mainly followed the public discourse and paid attention to the programmatic character and development of the party itself, trying to classify it as Euro-sceptic, populist, national-conservative, nativist, radical or even extreme right (Arzheimer, 2015; Berbuir et al., 2015; Franzmann, 2016a; Lewandowsky et al. 2016; Niedermayer, 2015). Importantly, AfD

started with a different leadership and programmatic focus compared to what we observe for the years 2015 and 2016. It arose in the context of the euro crisis and was initially guided by euroskepticism together with market-liberal ideas and leadership. More recently, the party split and changed more clearly in a radical right direction, with an agenda emphasizing above all resistance to immigration in the wake of Germany's "refugee crisis." It now seems clear that the AfD has ended Germany's rare status as a Western European polity lacking a significant Populist Radical Right Party (PRRP).

While these developments in organisation and agenda are well-documented, we know less about the individual level factors behind AfD's electoral support. Only a few studies have addressed this issue (Berbair et al., 2015; Schmitt-Beck, 2014, 2017) and such analyses have been restricted by low numbers of respondents, potential sample bias and – most importantly – by the rapidly changing character of the AfD itself. Thus, we need to know more about whether the factors behind the party's electoral support are by now the same as those demonstrated for PRRPs elsewhere. In the following, we offer the first nationwide analysis of AfD supporters after the split and programmatic re-orientation of the party in mid-2015. From a panel survey in May 2016, we are not only able to identify the socio-economic profile and political motivations of AfD supporters, but also to analyse the impact of contextual variables. Deriving our theoretical expectations from the literature on the voters of PRRPs in Western Europe, we seek to draw a comprehensive picture of AfD supporters and their current motivations.

The next section presents a summary of the short but turbulent history of the AfD since its foundation in 2013. We then summarise the theoretical arguments for the typical drivers of PRRP support in Western Europe, distinguishing between individual and contextual-level explanations. After describing and eventually analyzing our data, we conclude that AfD support can be relatively well explained by variables drawn from the literature on PRRP support in Western

Europe. However, some of our findings – the importance of anti-redistribution economic policy preferences, the strong support by certain immigrant groups, and the role of the long-term regional political context – stand out and distinguish the AfD from other Western European PRRPs. Finally, we discuss the party’s future electoral fortunes in the concluding section.

The AfD from 2013 to 2016

Until very recently and in contrast to many other countries of Western Europe, parties of the far-right have had a difficult time in the German electoral market. Surely, Germany’s 20th century history explains, to a great extent, the low appeal of any right-wing ideology in the mainstream. Not only were the devastating experiences of the Nazi regime still alive in the early years of the German Republic, but also in the following decades Germany’s role in European history, and especially its war crimes, were frequently discussed with a great deal of public attention. Shortly after German reunification, politically motivated assaults on asylum seekers again resulted in debates about the lessons learned from the Nazi era – debates strongly linked to questions of immigration and integration policies. As a result of these intensely fought debates about ways of ‘coming to terms with the past’, any right-wing political party risks being compared with, or equated to, the Nazi ideology – a capital charge in German politics. Because of this extraordinarily critical public climate, openly racist, xenophobic and even nationalistic parties such as the *Republicans*, the *National Democratic Party of Germany*, and the *German People's Union* never managed to enter the national parliament, despite some electoral successes on the sub national level.

It is in this climate that the AfD entered German politics in 2013. However, the early AfD did not draw attention to itself with a political agenda that focused on a set of core radical right issues but with a critical stance on another of German politics’ holy cows: EU membership.

Highly critical of Germany's financial guarantees to Greece and other EU member states during the European financial crisis, the AfD took a stance strictly separating it from any other party represented in the *Bundestag*. It demanded an end to Germany's participation in the Euro and the re-introduction of the *Deutsche Mark*, an end to using taxpayers' money to bail out banks or member states, and finally it demanded the 'orderly dissolution of the Eurozone' (Berbuir et al., 2015; Arzheimer, 2015; Schmitt-Beck, 2014). The main advocate of this political agenda was a newcomer to German politics: Bernd Lucke, a professor of economics with a pronounced market-liberal stance and very present in the German media during the months of the financial crisis in 2013. Together with some former second-ranking Christian Democratic Union (CDU) members, including the national-conservative politician and newspaper publisher Alexander Gauland, Lucke founded the AfD in February 2013. Nearly exclusively focusing on an agenda of soft Euro-scepticism, the party was not only able to win 4.7% of the votes in the *Bundestag* election of 2013, but also 7.4% of the votes in the election for the European Parliament in 2014. By then, Hans-Olaf Henkel, former chairman of the *Federation of German Industries* and another prominent advocate of a more market-liberal German political economy, had also joined the AfD.

Like many other newly founded parties, the AfD was soon plagued by internal disputes about candidates and programmatic decisions. However, in AfD's case these conflicts were fought with great intensity. Internal conflicts had already started in 2014 when the party had to decide which EP faction it wished to join; economic liberals like Lucke and Henkel favoured the conservatives while some sub national leaders favoured a closer alliance with parties such as the *United Kingdom Independence Party* or France's *Front National*. While Lucke decided this debate in his favour, it became very clear that two factions existed inside the AfD: one market-liberal faction with Euro-scepticism as its dominant issue, and one national-conservative faction, increasingly focusing on the issue of immigration (Franzmann, 2016a; Lewandowsky, 2015;

Berbuir et al., 2015). After the election to the EP in May 2014, the national-conservative group gained influence and the AfD was able to enter two additional sub national parliaments with campaigns focusing on this new agenda (Franzmann, 2016a).

The question of how to position the AfD with regard to the issue of immigration, and the internal disputes about the exceptional status of founder Bernd Lucke inside the AfD, culminated in the party congress of July 2015. Before this meeting, Lucke publicly urged AfD members not to follow a strategy characterised by ‘system-critical, fundamentally oppositional and nationalistic’ demands, and to stick to the much more moderate party platforms formulated for the last *Bundestag* and EP elections (*Zeit Online*, 2015). However, Lucke clearly lost the election to the AfD’s federal spokesman against national-conservative candidate Frauke Petry. As a reaction to this, within two weeks Lucke declared his split from the AfD and founded the *Alliance for Progress and Renewal* (ALFA) as a splinter group of the AfD. The factional dispute was thus solved in favour of the national conservatives.

Many observers saw the AfD as being paralysed by these internal divisions and by the separation of ALFA, but such forecasts soon proved to be wrong. While ALFA has recently played the role of a splinter party in German politics, since mid-2015 the AfD has been able to rapidly increase its supporter base, especially – but by no means exclusively – in Eastern Germany. Since July 2015, the start of the German ‘refugee crisis’, the party’s popularity rose from 3% to 11% in national surveys and was able to enter several sub national parliaments, with vote shares between 5.5% (Bremen) and 24.3% (Saxony-Anhalt). This electoral increase was accompanied by a further radicalisation of the AfD, including the recent statement of AfD chairman Jörg Meuthen to break with the consensus not to cooperate with the extreme right

National Democratic Party (NPD)¹ in the event of being elected to the parliament of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (*Spiegel Online*, 2016b).

Understanding the nature of AfD

As this short history of the AfD illustrates, the party started as a Euro-sceptic and market-liberal, single-issue party in 2013 but very quickly developed a programme that focuses closely on the topics of immigration and asylum rights. At both of these stages of its development, the party has been described as following a populist approach to politics, dividing the world into the common people versus either a bureaucratic and undemocratic political elite residing in Brussels and Berlin, or into German nationals versus immigrants and asylum seekers (Berbuir et al., 2015; Lewandowsky, 2015).

This more recent mix of national, anti-immigrant and populist appeal is not new to Western European politics and has motivated an encompassing literature (see the reviews in: Van der Brug & Fennema, 2007; Kitschelt, 2007; Arzheimer, 2009) on who votes for ‘populist’ (Mudde, 2007), ‘radical right’ (Kitschelt, 1995), ‘extreme right’ (Arzheimer, 2009) or ‘anti-immigrant’ (Van der Brug et al., 2005) parties.² The previous section described how the AfD itself has made decisive moves in the direction of this party family. But because of the rapid nature of these still ongoing changes we presently know too little about the individual level

¹ The NPD has just survived its second party ban proceeding before the German Federal Constitutional Court. Although the NPD was regarded as anti-constitutional and related to national socialism, the court was convinced that the party did not have the potential to eliminate democracy in Germany. The application to ban the NPD as a political party was therefore denied (Federal Constitutional Court, 2017).

² Given the diversity of labels for parties in the same family, it should be noted that the discussion about the most suitable term is indeed often ‘a question of labels not of substance’ (Giugni & Koopmans, 2007: 489). We agree with this statement as the use of different labels rarely results in a disagreement over which parties should be regarded as PRRPs – the term we use in this article.

factors that are now driving AfD's electoral support. Are the factors behind the party's electoral support by now the same as those demonstrated for PRRPs elsewhere?

This section, then, discusses the comparative literature on the voters of PRRPs and derives from this literature a series of possible explanatory variables to be examined in the empirical analysis. Specifically, we first identify the socio-economic profile of AfD supporters. Next, we add politically relevant attitudes - anti-immigrant sentiments but also economic policy preferences - and protest motives to this. Finally, we add contextual factors to the list of potential explanations, most prominently immigration, economic conditions, and the long-term regional political context. For each group of explanatory variables, we also summarise the results of previous studies of the AfD's electoral support base.

Socio-economic status and risks

Starting with the individual drivers, earlier studies have stressed that PRRPs draw support from voters with a clearly defined socio-economic profile (Kitschelt, 1995; Betz, 1993). As far as demographics are concerned, time and again research has reported that men are much more likely to support PRRPs than women. Also, the radical right draws disproportionately strong support from voters of younger and older age groups, while it is under-represented among middle-aged voters (for many: Van der Brug et al., 2005).

Regarding social status, previous studies have also claimed that lower social strata are more likely to vote for PRRPs; most prominently, Georg Betz has described the supporters of the radical right as the 'losers of modernity' (Betz, 1994: 25). In this view, PRRP supporters are poorly educated, and either unemployed or at least severely threatened by unemployment and economic decline (Lubbers et al., 2002; Rydgren, 2004; Carter, 2005; Ivarsflaten, 2005). Working in low-skilled, low-paid jobs in the manufacturing sector, or being members of the *petit bourgeoisie* (artisans, small shop-owners and independents), both social groups are in a socio-

economic position very comparable to that of immigrants. Therefore, they are expected to perceive the new arrivals as a threat to their own economic well-being, as they have to compete directly with them over limited resources (Scheve & Slaughter, 2001).

The view that PRRPs are mainly supported by the lower social strata is still very influential in both academia and public discourse. However, recent developments partly call into question this interpretation as many of today's PRRPs are much more successful than their predecessors of the 1990s (Mudde, 2013). With vote shares above 30% for the Swiss People's Party and a neck-and-neck race between the mainstream and the Freedom Party's candidate for the Austrian presidency in 2016, it seems misleading to stress the low social status of PRRP supporters any longer. More recent international comparative studies have already acknowledged these new conditions and report that middle-educated voters are also very much attracted by PRRPs while only a university degree still seems to be a line of educational separation (Rydgren, 2008). With regard to household income, several studies have also claimed that certain high-income natives are especially unwilling to support the redistribution of wealth from natives to foreigners as they might be burdened with the lion's share of this through higher tax contributions (Burgoon et al., 2012).

Turning to previous findings on the role of the socio-economic variables for AfD support, genuine scientific contributions are rare and rely exclusively on data from the AfD's first *Bundestag* election of 2013 (Schmitt-Beck, 2014; Berbuir et al., 2015; Schwarzbözl and Fatke 2016), on the party's first European parliament election of 2014 (Lewandowsky et al. 2015), or on sub-national elections (Schmitt-Beck et al. 2017). Except gender, none of these studies report noteworthy socio-economic effects, but as the AfD recently has undergone significant programmatic changes, the currency of these findings might be questioned. Besides the gender effect, and as indicated by several sub national election results, the only consistent finding is that

the AfD gains more support in the Eastern than in the Western part of Germany. Whether these regional differences in its support can be related to differences in the populations' socio-economic structures, political attitudes or economic and political contexts, is a question repeatedly asked, but so far these regional differences have not been analysed in a sophisticated way.

Policy preferences and protest motives

Besides socio-economic variables, support for PRRPs has mostly been explained by three clusters of politically relevant attitudes: policy preferences with regard to immigration, preferences with regard to the economy, and protest motives. In fact, many authors claim that such attitudes are much more important drivers of PRRP support than socio-economic status (Van der Brug et al., 2005), or they assume that certain social strata are more likely to hold a distinct combination of attitudes, which then explains their support for PRRPs (Kitschelt, 2007).

Starting with immigration, the most consistent finding in PRRP research is that the supporters of the extreme right are very critical of it, especially so if immigration stems from poorer, ethnically different and, most importantly, Muslim countries (Rydgren 2008; Arzheimer 2008; Ceobanu & Escandell 2010). This critique is motivated by both cultural as well as economic concerns about the consequences of immigration for the receiving countries. With regard to cultural motivations, many PRRP supporters seem to be motivated by a mixture of xenophobia, racism and, most importantly, ethno-pluralism – the belief that in order to preserve the unique national cultures of different people, they have to be kept separate (Betz & Johnson, 2004). While Rydgren (2008) convincingly argues that these culturally related attitudes are themselves somehow related, but should be distinguished by their different effects on PRRP

support, for the sake of our interest it seems sufficient to state that PRRP supporters are very critical of any policy that increases the number of immigrants to their country.

While the relevance of immigration-related attitudes is unanimously shared in the PRRP literature, the relevance of economic and social policy preferences is much debated. The lingering question here is whether PRRP supporters are solely motivated by the issue of immigration or if they also hold certain economy-related issue preferences which distinguish them from other voters. Three theoretical positions can be identified. First, most authors argue that economic issues are of little relevance for PRRP supporters or for the parties themselves, which they see motivated mainly by a nationalist ideology (Mudde, 2007: 119). This framing strategy is said to allow PRRPs to raise support from both economic right- and left-leaning voters, as they downplay economic issues in favour of their anti-immigration agenda (Ivarsflaten, 2005). While this is seen as a very promising electoral approach in the short term (Rovny, 2013), in the long term economic issues might become very problematic for PRRPs as their support base is internally divided, especially with regard to class-based questions of taxation and redistribution between poorer and better-off natives (*blinded for review*). Second, earlier contributions pointed out that PRRPs were not interested only in culturally related issues but also in economic questions. One of the most prominent advocates of this view was Herbert Kitschelt (1995), who argued that the electoral success of PRRPs hinged on a combination of nationalism and *laissez-faire* economic policies aiming at less economic redistribution, lower taxation, reduced welfare expenditure and welfare chauvinism (see also Betz, 1994). Third, and in sharp contrast to Kitschelt, several recent studies now present PRRPs as the new working-class parties, showing that these traditionally pro-welfare voters are already the most important group among PRRP supporters in many countries (Aichholzer et al., 2014; Betz, 2002; Ignazi, 2003; Schumacher & Kersbergen, 2016).

While the theoretical assumptions about the economic preferences of PRRP supporters are thus very mixed, some recent studies in comparative political economy have made noteworthy efforts to bring these views together. Theoretically borrowing from comparative welfare state research, three statements can be derived that will also guide our analysis. First, PRRP supporters are surely driven by welfare chauvinist attitudes for both cultural as well as economic reasons – a very consistent finding (Schumacher & Kersbergen, 2016; Ennser-Jedenastik 2016). Second, many PRRP voters will also be highly critical of programmes which they suspect disproportionately benefit immigrants. This argument stems from the US where support for the social assistance parts of the welfare regime are strongly linked to attitudes towards ethnic minorities (Gilens, 1999; Fox, 2004). Not only are recipients of social assistance seen as undeserving, the willingness to redistribute money from the rich white majority to the less well-off minorities via tax-funded welfare programmes is also very limited (Alesina & Glaeser, 2004). While many recent studies report a similar relationship for Western Europe (Senik et al., 2008; Stichnoth & Van der Straeten, 2013) and for Germany in particular (Goldschmidt, 2015; *blinded for review*), we expect AfD supporters to be critical of welfare programmes directed at the lowest social strata. Third, social insurance programmes that protect from so-called life-cycle risks, such as ageing and illness, enjoy much higher support from voters (see Jensen, 2012; Roosma et al., 2013). Life-cycle policies concern groups that Europeans overwhelmingly see as more deserving than the poor and the unemployed (van Oorschot, 2006) and most people generally hope to benefit from these policy areas later in life. Conversely, immigrants are indeed under-represented among the old and the sick (Brücker et al., 2002) and thus any suspicion among ethnic majority citizens that immigrants benefit disproportionately should be much lower for life-cycle policies. Theoretically, there also is reason to expect that the difference between class-redistributive and life-cycle welfare preferences is most pronounced in Germany, as the social insurance

programmes of the conservative welfare regime are known for their limited redistribution between classes (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

Finally, PRRP supporters are seen as generally distrustful of both mainstream politicians and institutions and therefore are attracted by the populist rhetoric of the radical right (Kitschelt, 2002; Lubbers et al., 2002; Van der Brug & Fennema, 2003). Whether this distrust is caused by their belief in the arrogant, corrupt and elitist character of mainstream politicians or simply by the unresponsiveness of the political system towards the distinct policy demands of PRRP supporters, is thereby an open question. This is exemplified by a major debate about the protest motivation of PRRP supporters (see reviews in Arzheimer, 2008; Van der Brug et al., 2000). From one perspective, PRRP supporters are not motivated by substantive policy preferences but by emotional and irrational feelings of dissatisfaction. Their vote for PRRPs is thus ‘a vote against things’ and is used instrumentally to show their discontent for ‘those up there’. The second perspective questions this line of reasoning and points to the distinct policy preferences of PRRP supporters, who make their protest related to their right-wing ideology, as discussed above.. Whatever the relationship is between rational policy and irrational protest motivations, the literature suggests that we include measures of generalised political distrust when analysing support for the PRRPs.

Previous findings on the political attitudes of AfD supporters are burdened by the same problems already discussed in the role of socio-economic factors. However, these findings do seem to fit important assumptions made in the literature about PRRP support. Not only are AfD supporters very critical of the recent immigration and especially the asylum policies of Germany (Schmitt-Beck 2017), they also hold more negative views on immigrants, especially Muslim immigrants, than voters of other parties (Berbair et al., 2015). So far, empirical findings on the economic preferences of AfD voters – beside welfare chauvinism – are lacking. The only

exception here is the study by Schwarzbözl and Fatke (2016), indicating that right-wing economic preferences played a role for AfD support in 2013 when the party offered a very economy-related, Eurosceptic electoral manifesto. Regarding protest motives, AfD voters do not feel represented by the great coalition of established parties led by chancellor Angela Merkel (Schwarzbözl and Fatke 2016) and also distrust German media, especially when it comes to news regarding the misbehavior of asylum seekers (Schmitt-Beck et al. 2017).

Socio-economic and political context

Contextual variables such as a population's ethnic composition and economic conditions are often taken into account to explain variations in PRRP support between countries (Arzheimer, 2009; Golder, 2003) or between regions inside one country (Ford et al., 2012). In order to answer the question of why such variables may be of importance in explaining radical right support, we can build on *group threat theory* and *realistic conflict theory* (Forbes, 1997; Quillian, 1995) on the one hand, and *contact theory* (Allport, 1954) on the other hand.

Starting with the conflict-laden assumptions, group threat theories argue that the in-group of native voters feels superior to the subordinated out-group of immigrants and believes that public resources should be exclusively reserved for in-group members. Immigrants or asylum seekers claiming these formerly exclusive benefits reinforce the economic as well as the cultural threats associated with out-group members, which in turn increases the natives' support for PRRPs in order to restrict inter-ethnic competition. Two kinds of causes are expected to increase group threat and resource conflicts (Quillian, 1995). The first is the size of the subordinated out-group; larger out-groups increase the competition for scarce resources. The second cause is related to economic conditions; the threat that natives associate with increasing numbers of immigrants might be more intense in times of economic hardship simply because competition for public resources is felt more acutely. Furthermore, we might expect multiplicative effects of out-

group size and economic hardship, as both variables should increase how threatened native voters feel when confronted with immigration (Quillian, 1995; Semyonov et al., 2006).

Another popular theory contradicts such conflict-laden assumptions and focuses on natives' prejudices rather than on economic competition: contact theory (Allport, 1954). This theory argues that intense interactions between members of different ethnic groups will reduce prejudice and xenophobia as firsthand information about ethnic out-group members becomes available. On the native voters' side, contact should also reduce both economic and cultural concerns about immigrants. As the chance for personal contact between natives and immigrants is arguably higher in areas with many out-group members, both the proportion of immigrants and asylum seekers of the total population should reduce natives' concerns and thereby also reduce their support for PRRPs. Theoretically, this effect should be independent of the wider economic situation.

Beside economic context, previous studies also have highlighted the relevance of PRRP's Political Opportunity Structures (POS) for their electoral fortunes. The basic idea here is that PRRPs, like all other parties, have to compete for votes and this competition takes place in a specific context, defined by the electoral strategies adopted by mainstream parties and the institutional setting, most importantly the electoral system. While POS-arguments are prominently discussed in cross-national studies on PRRP support (Arzheimer and Carter 2006, van der Brug et al. 2005), such arguments might seem as irrelevant for explaining PRRP support in a cross-sectional, one country perspective. The very reason for this is that variables of national electoral competition do not vary among the sub-national units of analysis.

However, there is one very specific POS-related argument discussed for the German context. Studies addressing the history of minor German Extreme Right Parties during the 1960s and 1990s, repeatedly stress the argument that there are some German regions with a strong

tradition of support for such parties – be it for the *National Democratic Party of Germany*, the *German People's Union*, or the *Republicans*. Ultimately, these regional trajectories have even been connected to the NSDAP strongholds of the 1930s (Falter 1980; Niedermayer 1990; Winkler 1994). While these studies could often not build upon statistical analyses, the continuity argument is also theoretically a bit vague. The common line of reasoning seems to be a socio-structural argument, pointing to the relevance of contextual factors as the dominance of rural-economy, the lack of trade unions, and the number of Protestant voters for the regional success of the political Extreme Right. Translated into our analytical model, the continuity argument might therefore relate to the socio-demographics of individual supporters (e.g. more blue-color workers live in the region), or to socio-demographic contextual effects (e.g. economic conditions). However, and even controlled for these variables, there might still be regions with a more favorable right-wing political climate, either due to the long-term party alignments of voters towards parties of the Extreme Right (and now towards the AfD), or due to long-term social networks as clubs, local politicians, or local church organizations providing a more xenophobic and cultural conservative public climate (see Schwander and Manow 2017). In the tradition of previous research on the Extreme Right in Germany, we will thus account for the regional political context in our analysis of AfD support.

Turning to previous interpretations of the relevance of the socio-economic context for AfD support, conflict, but especially contact arguments, have both been stressed. Regarding economic conditions, many observers claim that the AfD gains disproportionate support in regions with problematic economic conditions (Schmitt-Beck 2014), which, from a national perspective, are often located in the eastern part of Germany (Schmitt-Beck 2017). In contrast to theoretical expectations, however, these are regions with very low numbers of foreigners. Therefore, contact arguments, especially, have been stressed by German media in order to

explain the disproportionately high support for the AfD in Eastern Germany (for many: *FAZ online*, 2016). With regard to the role of the long-term political context, we are not aware of any analyses addressing this argument empirically.

Data and Methods

In order to analyse the support base of the AfD, we make use of an online survey conducted in May 2016 (*blinded for review*) based on a nuanced quota sample from volunteers. This survey was initially designed to analyse the welfare state preferences of Germans and therefore provides very detailed information on the socio-economic profile and the economic attitudes of the more than 2,000 respondents. Another advantage is that all respondents can be located in their postcode area, allowing us to measure our contextual-level variables at this fine-grained level. Moreover, the data were collected as part of a panel survey. While we do not have information about the dependent AfD variable at t1 we can still use the panel structure to regress AfD preferences in May 2016 on all the time-variant independent variables (attitudes) measured in May 2015, when the first wave was carried out. As we shall discuss, this has certain advantages. Moreover, a slight disadvantage is that some well-known drivers of support for extreme right parties are missing, e.g. critique of the EU and religiosity. Also, with regard to policy preferences concerning immigration, we have to rely on support for the idea of political asylum and welfare chauvinism, as we lack more detailed information on preferences with regard to immigration and integration policies. However, as the survey provides the most up-to-date sample for analysing AfD support, the benefits clearly outweigh these limitations.

Starting with the dependent variable *AfD support*, we use an item asking respondents how likely is it that they will ever vote for the AfD party. Respondents could indicate their support on a scale from 0 (not likely at all) to 10 (very likely). They also had the chance to indicate that they

have never heard of this party before.³ This variable was originally developed by van der Eijk et al. (2006). It has several advantages for our analysis: (a) it allows the meaningful statistical analysis of preferences towards a smaller party as almost all respondents give information about themselves and the AfD, (b) The variable can be treated at a metric scale that reflects the idea of individual utilities directly measured rather than estimated by discrete-choice models, (c) respondents find it easier to admit a higher voting propensity for an ideologically more extremist party than admitting to be voting for that party, thus reducing the validity problem associated with social desirability. Altogether, slightly more than 60% of all respondents report that they would never vote for the AfD, a proportion we do not find for any other German party, besides the extreme right NPD with more than 80%. However, about 18% of all respondents chose a value of more than 5, indicating the potential supporter base of the AfD party in mid-2016.

With regard to the variables defining the socio-economic profile of respondents, we include *gender*, *age* (including *age-squared*), as well as formal *education* measured in three categories (low, medium and high). Concerning occupation, we test for the assumption that AfD supporters can mainly be found among *blue-collar* workers and the *self-employed*. The financial situation of respondents is measured by their *personal income* in twelve categories. Other financially relevant variables have been recoded as dummy variables, recording if the respondent currently receives one of three *welfare benefits* (social assistance, unemployment benefits, or a pension), or if he *fears becoming unemployed* or *unable to pay for bare necessities* in the next 12 months. Finally, we control for whether the respondent was *born abroad*, spending his *adolescent*

³ Only 2.5% of the sample chose this option for the AfD, whereas 21.7 % did not know ALFA, the splinter party founded by Bernd Lucke.

years in the former GDR or in Eastern Germany after reunification.⁴ Being born and socialised in Western Germany serves as the reference category.

Turning to political attitudes regarding immigration, we rely on a question asking if the respondent sees the right of political asylum offered to foreigners in Germany to be a ‘good’ or a ‘not good’ idea, or if he has no opinion on this issue. We focus on the ‘not good’ answers (18.4%) and create a dummy variable *against political asylum*. While this is arguably a very restrictive measure of immigration-related sentiments, at the time of the survey questions of asylum were very topical because of the unprecedented inflow of asylum seekers between June 2015 and March 2016.

With regard to economic preferences, we create a variable defining *welfare chauvinism*. For this variable, respondents could indicate when they want to see immigrants being entitled to the same welfare rights as the native population: ‘immediately on arrival’; ‘after one year of residence’; ‘after one year of working and paying taxes’; ‘after becoming German citizens’, or ‘never’. We create two dummies for the last two categories, which together included 35% of all respondents, and use all other answers as the baseline category. General welfare-related preferences are defined by two additional indices: *class-redistributive welfare support*, as measured by the mean answer to two questions asking whether the respondent wants the state to pay more for ‘the poor’ and ‘the unemployed’, and *life-cycle welfare support* which asks related questions about ‘the old’ and ‘the sick’.⁵ We measure the level of political distrust with an item asking respondents for their degree of *trust in the media* and an index resulting from a principal component analysis,

⁴ For these variables, respondents were asked where they spent their schooling period between the ages of 12 and 16.

⁵ We decided not to include respondents’ left- or right-leaning self-placements on our list of political attitudes. This variable is closely related to AfD support, but we see it hiding more than it uncovers, especially with regard to the analysis of PRRP supporters (see also Lubbers et al. 2002).

which records their *trust in political institutions* such as political parties, the federal parliament and government.

In order to account for the socio-economic context, five variables enter the equation. Central for group conflict explanations are the inflow of *asylum seekers during the last month* and during the *last year*, measured by absolute numbers for each 1,000 inhabitants. These two variables measure these short- and medium-term factors on the sub national *Länder* level (for all: Federal Statistical Office, 2017). To account for the economic context, we include the *unemployment rate* (as a percentage of the working-age population) and a *purchase power index* brought in relation to the overall German mean (=100). Both variables and the *share of foreigners* (the measure for long-term immigration) were supplied by a commercial data provider and were measured at the level of postal code areas. Finally, we include the vote share of *Die Republikaner* – a traditional party of the extreme right – in the 1994 federal election (Federal Statistical Office, 1997) to account for the long-term regional political context. This variable is broken down to the level of postal code areas and we chose the 1994 election because today's postal code areas were first introduced in the early 1990s. The descriptions of all variables are provided in the appendix (Table 1).

The regression analysis consists of ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions with robust standard errors to correct for heteroscedasticity. The models are basically 2016 cross-sections, but we also present a model regressing AfD's support in 2016 to lagged independent variables measured in 2015, when the first wave of our panel survey was conducted. As both approaches lead to very comparable results, we see that knowing someone's long established attitudes predict the AfD vote propensity.⁶

⁶ We ran additional analyses with random intercepts for *Bundesland*-groups, also correcting for the low number of level-two variables via Satterthwaite adjustment. All these models showed that

Results

We provide our empirical results in two steps, first presenting the models for AfD support in 2016 (models 1-3), and then presenting a regression of this support data on the individual-level independent variables measured in 2015 (model 4). All models are reported on in Table 1.

Table 1: Results of OLS Regressions

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Individual-level variables				
<i>Socio-economic variables</i>				
Gender (=female)	-0.500*	-0.598*	-0.594*	-0.678*
	(0.002)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Education: low (ref.)				
Education: medium	0.224	0.415	0.432*	0.411
	(0.348)	(0.060)	(0.049)	(0.144)
Education: high	-0.435	0.042	0.111	0.192
	(0.074)	(0.849)	(0.615)	(0.497)
Income	0.087*	0.055	0.053	0.063
	(0.041)	(0.158)	(0.174)	(0.220)
Age in yrs	0.018	-0.019	-0.020	-0.034
	(0.552)	(0.496)	(0.471)	(0.389)
Age ²	-0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.373)	(0.856)	(0.840)	(0.656)
Adolescence: West (ref.)				
Adolescence: abroad	0.913*	0.532	0.600	1.064
	(0.044)	(0.203)	(0.154)	(0.065)
Adolescence: GDR	0.513*	0.236	0.310	-0.014
	(0.035)	(0.276)	(0.198)	(0.964)
Adolescence: East	0.669*	0.457	0.552*	0.539
	(0.008)	(0.059)	(0.039)	(0.091)
Occupation: all other (ref.)				
Occupation: self- employed	-0.163	-0.046	-0.046	0.178
	(0.615)	(0.875)	(0.875)	(0.625)

the residual similarity of the dependent variable is negligible, thus allowing to present the simpler models here. Also, we ran two-stage Heckman selection models to check whether the dynamics that discriminate between those who could never imagine themselves voting for the AfD (a 0 on the dependent variable) and all others are the same as the dynamics that discriminate between 1 and 10 on the dependent variable. These results show that they are, so that the two-stage approach is not necessary.

Occupation:	-0.391	-0.528	-0.503	-1.091*
blue collar	(0.251)	(0.128)	(0.147)	(0.012)
Receives welfare	0.185	0.111	0.181	0.243
benefits	(0.405)	(0.580)	(0.369)	(0.350)
Risk of poverty	0.323*	0.151	0.142	0.274*
	(0.001)	(0.083)	(0.102)	(0.014)
Risk of unemployment	0.248*	0.218*	0.224*	0.109
	(0.014)	(0.027)	(0.022)	(0.369)

Political attitudes

Support for		-0.127*	-0.121*	-0.163*
redistributive welfare		(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.001)
Support for life-cycle welfare		0.093*	0.089	0.066
		(0.047)	(0.058)	(0.270)
Critical of political asylum		1.923*	1.904*	2.067*
		(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Welfare chauvinism: low (ref.)				
Welfare chauvinism: medium		2.038*	1.983*	1.640*
		(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Welfare chauvinism: high		0.842*	0.842*	0.653*
		(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)
Trust in political institutions		-0.254*	-0.255*	-0.218*
		(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)
Trust in the media		-0.140	-0.134	0.136
		(0.191)	(0.209)	(0.380)

Contextual-level variables

Asylum seekers (last month)			0.010	0.096
			(0.980)	(0.828)
Asylum seekers (last year)			0.014	0.010
			(0.717)	(0.823)
Foreign-born population			-0.020	-0.008
			(0.498)	(0.816)
Purchase power			0.014	0.010
			(0.450)	(0.671)
Unemployment rate			-0.010	-0.013*
			(0.076)	(0.044)
Vote share of Republikaner in			0.314*	0.404*
1994			(0.002)	(0.001)
Constant	1.467*	1.956*	2.252*	2.858*
	(0.042)	(0.006)	(0.029)	(0.038)
N	2001	2001	2001	1348
R ²	0.041	0.209	0.217	0.195

OLS regressions with robust standard errors to correct for heteroscedasticity. P values of two-sided test that $\beta = 0$ in parentheses. The asterisk signals p-values $<.05$. The models also include a flag variable for cases where missing income values was imputed with the median. Model 4 contains attitudinal variables in bold that are lagged by one year. Model 4 is only estimated for those who were in both waves.

We start by focusing on the individual-level socio-economic status of AfD supporters (model 1). Here, first of all gender effects are relevant: men support the AfD much more than women – a finding reported for nearly all of Western European PRRPs. Also, political socialisation plays a role in AfD support. Compared with the reference category of people born in Western Germany, people raised in the former GDR (Eastern Germany) are more open to the AfD party, an effect that lessens for people who were socialised in Eastern Germany after reunification. Also, people born outside Germany are far more likely to show AfD support. Immigrants supporting a party known for its anti-immigrant programme might at first seem counterintuitive, but recent analysis indicates that immigrants from Russia and some former states of the Soviet Union – the so-called ‘late re-settlers’- show disproportionately high levels of support for the AfD (see *blinded for review*). While we have no information on the respondents’ country of origin in our data, we strongly expect that AfD support is strongest among the group of Russian-speaking immigrants with German citizenship, as AfD advertises widely among this voter group, for instance with an election manifesto written in Russian.

Besides these gender and socialisation effects, it is hard to come up with a unified picture of AfD support resulting from other socio-economic variables. Neither respondents’ age nor their occupation seem to be factors affecting AfD’s support. Similarly, neither working-class respondents nor the self-employed show a higher probability to vote for the AfD – if anything, the support of blue-collar workers is lower than that of all other occupations. Education just fails to be a significant factor, but AfD support seems to be more concentrated among respondents

with medium- but without university education. Regarding the economic situation of AfD supporters, the findings are mixed. On the one hand, high personal income increases support for the AfD, with neither the unemployed nor respondents receiving social assistance or pensions showing stronger support for the party. Thus, AfD support is not more common among those who are dependent on the welfare state. On the other hand, AfD sympathisers report stronger fears of future economic decline, i.e. they see the risk of becoming unemployed or not being able to pay for the expenses of everyday life. In summary, economic status seems to be playing a role in AfD support, but sympathisers seem to be motivated much more by their fears of social relegation than by their low objective social status. Finally, please note that all individual level socio-demographics together (including risk perceptions) result in an R^2 of only 4.1%. Given the still prominent interpretation to see the rise of the AfD accompanied to political-economic factors (e.g. the support by working-class voters), we have to conclude that even combined such variables are of very limited relevance for predicting AfD support.

In model 2, we include items that account for both policy preferences as well as political distrust in our list of variables. Together, these variables include very strong effects of the propensity to vote for the AfD, boosting the R^2 value to 20.9%. Also, the inclusion of political attitudes renders the effects of being born-abroad and raised in Eastern Germany before or after reunification insignificant, leaving only the perceived risk of becoming unemployed as significantly correlated with AfD support. Let us first look at the direct, and in a way, not very surprising results. Voters who believe that the right to political asylum is a bad idea, and who are medium or strong welfare chauvinists, are much more likely to vote for the AfD. Cultural beliefs expressed as anti-immigrant sentiments are thus powerful predictors for AfD support – a finding resembling findings for PRRP support in other European countries.

Coming to the economic preferences of AfD voters, a more nuanced interpretation is needed. On the one hand, even one year after Bernd Lucke's split from the party, the AfD still has a strong economically conservative base next to its national-traditionalistic core supporters. More precisely, AfD supporters are very critical of class-based redistribution to the poor and to the unemployed – an effect that not only survives all other controls but also belongs to the biggest groups of maximum effects (maximum absolute effect of 1.2) followed by that of political trust (maximum absolute effect of 1.9), the rejection of right to political asylum (1.9) and welfare chauvinism (2.0). Thus, and in contrast to many other PRRPs in Western Europe (Ivarsflaten, 2005), the AfD is not faced with a political support base that is divided over the issue of economic redistribution. On the other hand, life-cycle welfare programmes such as pensions and health care are not criticised by AfD sympathisers. Thus, AfD voters are not generally opponents of the German welfare state but they are hesitant to support only those parts of it which are targeted towards the lowest social strata, many of whom are immigrants and, increasingly, asylum seekers. While these findings are in line with the experiences of race-based welfare support originating from the US-centred literature (Fox, 2004), they point to the need for differentiating between distinct dimensions of welfare support when analysing support for Western European PRRPs – an issue which has received limited empirical interest so far.

Coming to political dissatisfaction, the findings are again in line with theoretical expectations. AfD supporters are far more critical of the governing grand coalition led by Angela Merkel, of the federal parliament and of political parties in general. These effects survive the inclusion of policy preferences and point to an emotionally driven component of AfD support next to sympathy stemming from rational policy interest. However, this is not to say that the vote for the AfD is predominantly driven by insubstantial protest against the political elite. In contrast,

cultural and economically right-wing political attitudes, and a critique of immigration and asylum rights, make up the list of the most relevant individual explanatory variables in mid-2016.

Finally, we add contextual variables to our list of explanations. Controlling for individual level variables, the AfD does not enjoy higher support in better- or worse-off regions. Also, neither the number of asylum seekers nor the number of foreigners is significantly correlated with AfD support. We also tested for several interaction effects between economic conditions and the number of asylum seekers and foreigners, comparing the nested models with and without product terms of the interaction by means of an F-test. This approach yielded no statistical improvement. The only contextual variable playing a role for AfD support in 2016 is the regional history of (extreme) right-wing voting in Germany: the electoral district results of the *Die Republikaner* in the 1994 *Bundestag* election. This variable is highly significant and is positively correlated to AfD support more than two decades later. Thus, there seem to be some local contexts in Germany in which extreme and radical right-wing voting is more common and probably more socially acceptable than in other contexts. This effect is not mediated by the individual-level variables, meaning that it exists on top of them, and can be partially due to the same voters having preferences on the right in 1994 and 2016 and still living in the same area. However, additional analyses (available upon request) demonstrate that the effect is also positive and even stronger for young voters who were not eligible to vote in 1994. Thus, there must be additional mechanisms at work, potentially a local nationalist culture or maybe differences in organizational infrastructure like clubs or churches shaping local political preferences.

To end our empirical analysis, we suggest that cross-sectional models of voting intentions often meet both theoretical and methodologically motivated criticism for ‘explaining attitudes with attitudes’. To address this point, we can make use of the panel design of our survey, regressing the political support for the AfD in 2016 on the individual level variables measured in

May 2015 – that is, before the German refugee crisis that started in July 2015. In this way, we can limit both the effects of media framing and the possibility that AfD support results in more right-wing political attitudes rather than being caused by them. We present the results of this specification in model 4, which is based only on respondents who participated in both phases of the panel surveys, dropping their number from 2.001 to 1.348. In short, model 4 leads to the same basic findings as the cross-sections, i.e. the political and social attitudes measured in 2015 have very comparable effects on AfD support as in 2016. This means that the AfD builds on attitudes that already existed. This does not mean that the party does not change attitudes as well, but the AfD piggy-backs its support on long-term and rather stable political preferences, in particular around cultural and economic conservatism.

Conclusions

Using a recent nationwide survey, we have provided the first analysis of the supporter base of the AfD since the party's split and its ideological re-orientation in mid-2015. Deriving our hypotheses on AfD sympathisers from the comparative literature of PRRPs in Western Europe, our empirical findings strongly indicate that the electoral success of Germany's newest right-wing party is largely due to the same set of socio-economic, attitudinal and contextual factors proven so important to explain the fortunes of PRRPs in other countries. In summary, right-wing political attitudes concerning immigration, political dissatisfaction, fears of personal economic decline, as well as gender and socialisation effects, are the most relevant explanatory variables. Because of this, there is little support for recent interpretations which suggest that the rise of the AfD is the result of political protest against mainstream parties alone. Rather, our analyses strongly suggest that the party has already managed to form a coherent supporter base motivated by both cultural and economically right-wing policy preferences, as well as being supported by

part of the German immigrant population itself. Also, long-term regional legacies of support for far-right parties are decisive for AfD support in 2016. Compared with other Western European PRRPs, these characteristics are rather unusual and we end our discussion by describing the potential of their mid- to long-term impact on the electoral fortunes of the party.

Starting with economic preferences, AfD sympathisers are not only pronounced welfare chauvinists, but they are also highly critical of class-based redistribution via welfare and taxation. Thus, the party does not seem to be plagued by an internally divided electorate with regard to general redistribution. While such divisions seem to be a vulnerability of many PRRPs – especially when those parties enter government – the supporters of the AfD are much more motivated by economic concerns than one might expect when compared with other PRRPs. Given that the AfD started with a very market-liberal programme and high-ranking personnel only five years ago, the role of economic motivations for their supporters might come as little surprise. However, since 2013 the party has more than doubled its electoral base and the main proponents of its market-liberal agenda has left the AfD after severe internal disputes over the issue of immigration. To find that AfD supporters in 2016 are still motivated by right-wing economic preferences therefore is noteworthy. Regarding the long-term prospects of the party, this might become a major electoral advantage. With regard to the party's profile of welfare reform, we expect the AfD to support retrenchment of at least those parts of the German welfare state that address the least well-off. In contrast, our findings do not support the view that the PRRPs would support cuts in the areas of pensions or health care – a pattern comparable to the Swiss context (Afonso & Papadopoulos 2015).

Concerning the support for the AfD of people born abroad, we are not aware of a similar pattern in any other of Western Europe's PRRPs. We strongly believe that this support is from Germany's second largest immigrant group: those people from the former Soviet Union who

entered Germany during the early 1990s and were immediately granted voting rights because of their German descent. So far, these ‘late re-settlers’ have shown extraordinarily high support for the Christian Democrats although they were not directly addressed by this party in its electoral campaigns. Recently, the AfD has put considerable effort into directly addressing this voter group, promising to improve Germany’s relationships towards Russia, which is currently under considerable stress due to the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria. If the AfD succeeds in these efforts – and our data reveals that it is on track to do so – it might be able to align parts of this group of nearly 2.5 million voters by appealing to their ethnic identity.

Finally, our results concerning the role of the long-term regional political context calls for further investigation. While this continuity argument has a long tradition in the German literature on far-right parties, we were surprised to see that the electoral results of the Republicans in 1994 are an important predictor of AfD support in 2016 - even if individual-level variables are controlled for. Indeed, this variable is a much better predictor than both economic conditions and the number of foreigners or asylum seekers living in a region. Revealing the causal mechanism behind this strong correlation is well beyond what our data allows but we could already rule out the possibility that it is due to the same voters who supported the Republicans in 1994 and now support the AfD. This leaves the existence of long-term regional networks providing a favorable opportunity structure for cultural conservative and anti-immigrant parties as the most plausible explanation. How these networks look like, how they function, and which actors are involved, constitutes a promising avenue for further research. The theoretical insights of such studies would also be an asset for the international-comparative discussion on PRRP-voters, in which such kind of effects are rarely discussed.

References

- Afonso, A. and Y. Papadopoulos (2015). How the Populist Radical Right Transformed Swiss Welfare Politics: From Compromises to Polarization. *Swiss Political Science Review* 21(4): 617–635.
- Aichholzer, J., S. Kritzing, M. Wagner and E. Zeglovits (2014). How Has Radical Right Support Transformed Established Political Conflicts? The Case of Austria. *West European Politics* 37(1): 113–137.
- Alesina, A. and E. L. Glaeser (2004). *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Arzheimer, K., and E. Carter (2006). Political Opportunity Structures and Right-Wing Extremist Party Success. *European Journal of Political Research* 45(3): 419–443.
- Arzheimer, K. (2008). Protest, Neo-Liberals or Anti-Immigrant Sentiment: What Motivates the Voters of the Extreme Right in Western Europe? *Zeitschrift Für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 2(2): 173–197.
- Arzheimer, K. (2009). Contextual Factors and the Extreme Right Vote in Western Europe 1980–2002. *American Journal of Political Science* 53(2): 259–275.
- Arzheimer, K. (2015). The AfD: Finally a Successful Right-Wing Populist Eurosceptic Party for Germany? *West European Politics* 38(3): 535–556.
- Berbuir, N., M. Lewandowsky and J. Siri (2015). The AfD and Its Sympathisers: Finally a Right-Wing Populist Movement in Germany? *German Politics* 24(2): 154–178.
- Betz, H.-G. (1993). The New Politics of Resentment: Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe. *Comparative Politics* 25(4): 413–427.
- Betz, H.-G. (1994). *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Betz, H.-G. (2002). Conditions Favouring the Success and Failure of Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Contemporary Democracies. In Mény, Y. and Y. Surel (eds.), *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*. Houndmills: Palgrave (197–213).
- Betz, H.-G., and C. Johnson (2004). Against the Current - Stemming the Tide: The Nostalgic Ideology of the Contemporary Radical Populist Right. *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9(3): 311–327.
- Brücker, H., G. S. Epstein, B. McCormick, G. Saint-Paul, A. Venturini, K. Zimmermann and T. Boeri (2002). Welfare State Provision. In Boeri, T., G. Hanson and B. McCormick (eds.), *Immigration Policy and the Welfare System: A Report for the Fondazione Rodolfo De Benedetti*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (66–90).
- Burgoon, B., F. Koster and M. van Egmond (2012). Support for Redistribution and the Paradox of Immigration. *Journal of European Social Policy* 22(3): 288–304.
- Carter, E. (2005). *The Extreme Right in Western Europe: Success or Failure?* Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Ceobanu, A. M. and X. Escandell (2010). Comparative Analyses of Public Attitudes Toward Immigrants and Immigration Using Multinational Survey Data: A Review of Theories and Research. *Annual Review of Sociology* 36(1): 309–328.
- Ennsner-Jedenastik, L. (2016). A Welfare State for Whom? A Group-based Account of the Austrian Freedom Party's Social Policy Profile. *Swiss Political Science Review* 22(3): 409–427.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Falter, J. W. (1980). Wählerwanderungen vom Liberalismus zu (rechts-)extremen Parteien: Ein Forschungsbericht am Beispiel des NSDAP-Aufstiegs 1928–1933 und der NPD-Erfolge 1966–1970. In Albertin, L. (ed.), *Politischer Liberalismus in der Bundesrepublik*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht (92–124).
- FAZ online (2016). "AfD-Hochburg Querfurt Das fremdenfeindliche Städtchen ohne Ausländer." 16 March 2016. Online: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/wahl-in-sachsen-anhalt/afd-hochburg-querfurt-das-fremdenfeindliche-staedtchen-ohne-auslaender-14127708.html> [accessed: 07.03.2018].
- Federal Constitutional Court (2017). *Kein Verbot der NPD wegen fehlender Anhaltspunkte für eine erfolgreiche Durchsetzung ihrer verfassungsfeindlichen Ziele*. Press release of the Federal Constitutional Court. 17 Januar 2017. Online: <http://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/2017/bvg17-004.html> [accessed 07.03.2018].
- Federal Statistical Office. 2017. Online data set. Available at: https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/_Querschnitt/Fluechtlinge/Fluechtlinge.html
- Federal Statistical Office (1997). *Bundestagswahlbezirksstatistik 1994. Data set WB399*. Wiesbaden: Federal Statistical Office.
- Forbes, H. D. (1997). *Ethnic Conflict: Commerce, Culture, and the Contact Hypothesis*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Ford, R., M. J. Goodwin and D. Cutts (2012). Strategic Eurosceptics and Polite Xenophobes: Support for the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in the 2009 European Parliament Elections. *European Journal of Political Research* 51(2): 204–234.
- Fox, C. (2004). The Changing Color of Welfare? How Whites' Attitudes toward Latinos Influence Support for Welfare. *American Journal of Sociology* 110(3): 580–625.
- Franzmann, S. T. (2016a). Von AfD Zu ALFA: Die Entwicklung Zur Spaltung. *MLP* 22: 23–37.
- Franzmann, S. T. (2016b). Calling the Ghost of Populism: The AfD's Strategic and Tactical Agendas until the EP Election 2014. *German Politics* 25(4): 457–479.
- Gilens, M. (1999). *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Giugni, M. G. and R. Koopmans (2007). 'What Causes People to Vote for a Radical-Right Party': A Rejoinder to van Der Brug and Fennema. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 19(4): 488–491.
- Golder, M. (2003). Electoral Institutions, Unemployment and Extreme Right Parties: A Correction. *British Journal of Political Science* 33(3): 525–534.
- Goldschmidt, T. (2015). Anti-Immigrant Sentiment and Majority Support for Three Types of Welfare. *European Societies* 17(5): 620–652.
- Ignazi, P. (2003). *Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ivarsflaten, E. (2005). The Vulnerable Populist Right Parties: No Economic Realignment Fuelling Their Electoral Success. *European Journal of Political Research* 44(3): 465–492.
- Jensen, C. (2012). Labour Market- versus Life Course-Related Social Policies: Understanding Cross-Programme Differences. *Journal of European Public Policy* 19(2): 275–291.
- Kitschelt, H. (1995). *The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Kitschelt, H. (2002). Popular Dissatisfaction with Democracy: Populism and Party Systems. In Mèny, Y. and Y. Surel (eds.), *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*. Houndsmill: Palgrave (179–196).

- Kitschelt, H. (2007). Growth and Persistence of the Radical Right in Postindustrial Democracies: Advances and Challenges in Comparative Research. *West European Politics* 30(5): 1176–1206.
- Lewandowsky, M. (2015). Eine Rechtspopulistische Protestpartei? Die AfD in Der Öffentlichen Und Politikwissenschaftlichen Debatte. *Zeitschrift Für Politikwissenschaft* 25(1): 119–134.
- Lewandowsky, M., H. Giebler and A. Wagner (2015). Alles neu, macht der Mai? Die AfD und die Europawahl 2014. In Kaeding, M. and N. Switek (eds.), *Die Europawahl 2014. Spitzenkandidaten, Protestparteien, Nichtwähler*. Wiesbaden: Springer (137–148).
- Lewandowsky, M., H. Giebler and A. Wagner (2016). Rechtspopulismus in Deutschland. Eine empirische Einordnung der Parteien zur Bundestagswahl 2013 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der AfD. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 57(2): 247–275.
- Lubbers, M., M. Gijsberts and P. Scheepers (2002). Extreme Right-Wing Voting in Western Europe. *European Journal of Political Research* 41(3): 345–378.
- Mudde, C. (2007). *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mudde, C. (2013). Three Decades of Populist Radical Right Parties in Western Europe: So What? *European Journal of Political Research* 52(1): 1–19.
- Niedermayer, O. (1990). Sozialstruktur, politische Orientierungen und die Unterstützung extrem rechter Parteien in Westeuropa. *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen* 21(4): 564–582.
- Niedermayer, O. (2015). Eine Neue Konkurrentin Im Parteiensystem? Die Alternative Für Deutschland. In Niedermayer, O. (ed.), *Die Parteien Nach Der Bundestagswahl 2013*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS (175–207).
- Quillian, L. (1995). Prejudice as a Response to Perceived Group Threat: Population Composition and Anti-Immigrant and Racial Prejudice in Europe. *American Sociological Review* 60(4): 586–611.
- Roosma, F., J. Gelissen and W. van Oorschot (2013). The Multidimensionality of Welfare State Attitudes: A European Cross-National Study. *Social Indicators Research* 113: 235–255.
- Rovny, J. (2013). Where do Radical Right Parties Stand? Position Blurring in Multidimensional Competition. *European Political Science Review* 5(1): 1–26.
- Rydgren, J. (2004). Explaining the Emergence of Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties: The Case of Denmark. *West European Politics* 27(3): 474–502.
- Rydgren, J. (2008). Immigration Sceptics, Xenophobes or Racists? Radical Right-Wing Voting in Six Western European Countries. *European Journal of Political Research* 47(6): 737–765.
- Scheve, K. F. and M. J. Slaughter (2001). Labor Market Competition and Individual Preferences Over Immigration Policy. *Review of Economics and Statistics* 83(1): 133–145.
- Schmitt-Beck, R. (2014). Euro-Kritik, Wirtschaftspessimismus Und Einwanderungsskepsis: Hintergründe Des Beinah-Wahlerfolges Der Alternative Für Deutschland (AfD) Bei Der Bundestagswahl 2013. *Zeitschrift Für Parlamentsfragen* 45(1): 94–112.
- Schmitt-Beck, R. (2017). The ‘Alternative für Deutschland in the Electorate’: Between Single-Issue and Right-Wing Populist Party. *German Politics* 26(1): 124–148.
- Schmitt-Beck, R., J. van Deth and A. Staudt (2017). Die AfD nach der rechtspopulistischen Wende: Wählerunterstützung am Beispiel Baden-Württembergs. *Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft* 27(3): 273–303.
- Schumacher, G. and K. Van Kersbergen (2016). Do Mainstream Parties Adapt to the Welfare Chauvinism of Populist Parties? *Party Politics* 22(3): 300–312.

- Schwander, H. and P. Manow (2017). *It's not the Economy, Stupid! Explaining the Electoral Success of the German Right-Wing Populist AfD*. Center for Comparative and International Studies Working Paper 94, Zürich: ETH. Online: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321762339_It's_not_the_economy_stupid_Explaining_the_electoral_success_of_the_German_right-wing_populist_AfD/overview [accessed: 27.02.2018].
- Schwarzbözl, T. and M. Fatke (2016). Außer Protesten nichts gewesen? Das politische Potenzial der AfD. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 57(2): 276-299.
- Semyonov, M., R. Raijman and A. Gorodzeisky (2006). The Rise of Anti-Foreigner Sentiment in European Societies, 1988-2000. *American Sociological Review* 71(3): 426-449.
- Senik, C., H. Stichnoth and K. Van der Straeten (2008). Immigration and Natives' Attitudes towards the Welfare State: Evidence from the European Social Survey. *Social Indicators Research* 91(3): 345-370.
- Spiegel Online (2016a). "Gabriel vergleicht AfD-Mitglieder mit Nazis." 12 June 2016. Online: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/gabriel-vergleicht-afd-mitglieder-mit-nazis-a-1097149.html> [accessed: 07.03.2018].
- Spiegel Online (2016b). "AfD würde im Schweriner Landtag auch die NPD unterstützen." 31 August 2016. Online: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/joerg-meuthen-afd-wuerde-in-mecklenburg-vorpommern-mit-ndp-stimmen-a-1110202.html> [accessed: 07.03.2018].
- Stichnoth, H. and K. Van der Straeten (2013). Ethnic Diversity and Attitudes towards Redistribution: A Review of the Literature. *Journal of Economic Surveys* 27(2): 364-389.
- Van der Brug, W. and M. Fennema (2003). Protest or Mainstream? How the European Anti-Immigrant Parties Develop into two separate Groups by 1999. *European Journal of Political Research* 42(1): 55-76.
- Van der Brug, W. and M. Fennema (2007). What Causes People to Vote for a Radical-Right Party? A Review of Recent Work. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 19(4): 474-487.
- Van der Brug, W., M. Fennema and J. Tillie (2000). Anti-Immigrant Parties in Europe: Ideological or Protest Vote? *European Journal of Political Research* 37(1): 77-102.
- Van der Brug, W., M. Fennema and J. Tillie (2005). Why Some Anti-Immigrant Parties Fail and Others Succeed: A Two-Step Model of Aggregate Electoral Support. *Comparative Political Studies* 38(5): 537-573.
- Van der Eijk, C., W. van der Brug, M. Kroh and M. Franklin (2006). Rethinking the Dependent Variable in Voting Behavior: On the Measurement and Analysis of Electoral Utilities. *Electoral Studies* 25 (3):424-447.
- Van Oorschot, W. (2006). Making the Difference in Social Europe: Deservingness Perceptions among Citizens of European Welfare States. *Journal of European Social Policy* 16(1): 23-42.
- Winkler J. R. (1994). Die Wählerschaft der rechtsextremen Parteien in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1949 bis 1993. In Kowalsky, W. and W. Schroeder (eds.), *Rechtsextremismus*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften (69-88).
- Zeit Online (2015). "Luckes Weckruf ist verhallt." 05 July 2015. Online: <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-07/bernd-lucke-frauke-petry-weckruf-afd-essen> [accessed: 07.03.2018].

Appendix

Description of the data set

The unit of analysis are individuals surveyed in 2016 on all variables and in 2015 for some independent variables. The sample is a nuanced quota sample from the volunteer panel of (*blinded for review*) to reflect the overall composition of the adult population in terms of age groups, gender, education and *Bundesland*.

We merged the individual data set with contextual data at the postcode level (PLZ-5) with data from a commercial data company (*blinded for review*). There were more than 8000 5-digit postcodes in Germany in 2016. The number of registered inhabitants varied between 0 (industrial area) and more than 58,000 with a mean of about 9,800 (see OpenStreetMap 2018). Most respondents in our data were the only people from their indicated catchment area. 21 individuals are associated with a non-existent postcode as it is against the company policy of (*blinded for review*) to check this voluntary information. For these 21 individuals, we imputed the mean value of the postcode variables under the reasonable assumption that their probability not giving the right information is not associated with the values on these variables.

At the postcode level, we manually created one variables ourselves, namely the electoral district result of the 1994 Bundestag election in the district that is uniquely associated geographically with the postcode-5 in 2016. For 234 individuals, we could not create the value as there was no unique electoral district associated with that postcode or because the postcode was not existent. Here, we imputed the mean value under the assumption that the nature of missingness is not related to the true value on that variable.

Finally, we added two variables about asylum-seeker applications per 1,000 inhabitants that were only available at the *Bundesland* level from the Federal Statistical Office (2017).

Table A.1: Descriptives

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Comments
<i>Dependent variable</i>					
AfD support	2.17	3.36	0.00	10.00	
<i>Socio-economic variables</i>					
Female	0.53	0.50	0.00	1.00	
Education medium (higher than Hauptschule and lower than Abitur)	0.39	0.49	0.00	1.00	
Education high (Abitur and higher)	0.45	0.50	0.00	1.00	
Income	3.80	2.00	1.00	12.00	
Income imputed	0.18	0.38	0.00	1.00	
Age	48.89	15.17	15.00	96.00	
Age ²	2619.8	1468.5	225.0	9216.0	
Adolescence: abroad	7	4	0	0	
Adolescence: East after unification	0.03	0.18	0.00	1.00	
Adolescence: GDR	0.13	0.33	0.00	1.00	
Occupation: blue collar	0.05	0.22	0.00	1.00	
Occupation: self- employed	0.05	0.22	0.00	1.00	
Receives welfare benefits	0.31	0.46	0.00	1.00	
Risk of poverty	0.94	0.95	0.00	3.00	
Risk of unemployment	0.58	0.85	0.00	3.00	
<i>Political attitudes 2016</i>					
Support for redistributive welfare	6.81	2.36	0.00	10.00	
Support for life-cycle welfare	8.31	1.90	0.00	10.00	
Critical of political asylum	0.18	0.39	0.00	1.00	
Welfare chauvinism: medium	0.13	0.33	0.00	1.00	
Welfare chauvinism: high	0.22	0.42	0.00	1.00	
Trust in political institutions	0.00	1.56	-1.83	5.48	
Trust in media	0.86	0.73	0.00	3.00	
Critical of political asylum	0.18	0.39	0.00	1.00	
<i>Political attitudes in 2015</i>					
Support for redistributive welfare	6.68	2.33	0.00	10.00	
Support for life-cycle welfare	8.27	1.87	0.00	10.00	

Welfare chauvinism: medium	0.08	0.27	0.00	1.00	
Welfare chauvinism: high	0.16	0.37	0.00	1.00	
Trust in political institutions	0.00	1.54	-1.98	5.33	
Trust in media	0.73	0.68	0.00	3.00	
<i>Contextual-level variables</i>					
Asylum seekers per 1000 inhabitants (last month)	0.74	0.22	0.26	1.77	Federal Statistical Office 2017, Bundesland
Asylum seekers per 1000 inhabitants (last year)	6.71	2.35	4.54	13.45	Federal Statistical Office 2017, Bundesland
Unemployment rate in %	6.80	3.63	0.00	21.95	(blinded for review), PLZ5 level
Foreign-born population in %	7.32	5.05	0.47	36.74	(blinded for review), PLZ5 level
Purchase power, indexed at national mean (=100)	100.11	15.32	66.62	223.96	(blinded for review), PLZ5 level
Vote share of Republikaner in 1994 in %	1.91	0.83	0.50	4.41	Federal Statistical Office (1997), originally Electoral district (Wahlkreis) then manually mapped to PLZ-5 level

Appendix Reference

OpenStreetMaps 2018, plz-einwohner.xls, available at <https://www.suche-postleitzahl.org/downloads>