

RIJKSUNIVERSITEIT LEIDEN

FACULTEIT DER SOCIALE WETENSCHAPPEN

MASTER THESIS

WIR HOLEN UNS UNSER LAND ZURÜCK!

RIGHT-WING POPULISM IN THE GERMAN PARTY SYSTEM 1989-93 & 2014-18



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LEIDEN, 11 JUNE 2019

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ABSTRACT

With the arrival of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) on the German party marketplace the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) face a major challenge. The AfD, a *right-wing populist party* (RWPP), differs from its predecessors in its electoral successes on state level and 2017 on federal level, which is a novelty in the history of the federal republican party system. However, electoral success of a RWPP is rather not novel. In a comparative case study I aim to examine the causes for RWPP success. Ergo, I argue that the electoral success of right-wing populist parties is affected by the ideological framework of their mainstream right-wing counterparts. Hence, I define RWPP on the basis of *populism* (Mudde) and the *extreme right* (Sokol / Mares / Fiala). By introducing *civilisationism* (Brubaker) I present a concept that appears promising in the analysis of the shifts on the political right between 1989-93 and 2014-18. The majority of studies concerning the rise of right-wing populism in Germany deals with the roots in far-right ideology and address the alteration of the AfD from a Eurosceptic to a xenophobic populist party. I aim to focus on ideological overlaps among the relevant parties on the political right and their electorate.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the 2017 German federal elections the *Alternative for Germany* (AfD) caused a political ‘earthquake’. With a right-wing populist approach, particularly in matters of migration policy and identity politics, the AfD profiled itself as a right-wing electoral alternative on the party marketplace to the *Christian Democrats* (CDU/CSU¹), led by chancellor Angela Merkel. Consequently, the party won 94 seats (12,6% of total number of valid second votes cast) in the German Bundestag (Federal Returning Officer 2017). For the first time in the history of the federal republican party system a right-wing populist party (RWPP) achieved parliamentary group status in the Bundestag (cf. Frei et al. 2019: 7). Hence, the establishment of a right-wing populist party – the AfD – on federal level is a novelty.

¹ The *Christian-Democratic Union of Germany* (CDU) and the *Christian Social Union in Bavaria* (CSU) form on federal level a centre-right political alliance – the *Union = CDU/CSU*, also: *Union parties*. In federal elections they run together and form the *CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group in the German Bundestag*. On state and municipal level the parties operate based on division of labour: the CSU runs explicitly in Bavaria, the CDU in the rest of Germany.

However, the pattern – electoral success of a populist party right-wing to the Christian Democrats – is rather not novel: From 1983 on *The Republicans* (REP) aimed with a right-wing populist strategy to establish themselves in the German party system (Decker 2002). With Germany facing unprecedented immigration from 1989 on, the REP had significant electoral successes between 1989-93 (2002: 254) on European and state level. However, they did not establish a firm position in the party system.

At the same time, the federal government of CDU chancellor Helmut Kohl initiated restrictive legislation in foreigner and asylum policy that can be characterised as ‘right-wing’ (cf. Herbert 2001). Accordingly, the electoral successes of right-wing populist parties as the AfD or the REP appear to have interdependencies with the policy strategies of the major centre-right (or mainstream) parties as CDU and CSU that are generally based on rather right-wing political objectives derived from their ideological principles that shall be further explained in the course of this thesis. Hence, in this study, I ask: *To what extent did the ideological framework of CDU/CSU affect the electoral success of right-wing populist parties, as the AfD in 2014-18, compared to the REP in 1989-93?*

On that account, I proceed with a characterisation of *right-wing populist parties* and aims to categorise ideologically the relevant right-wing populists actors: the AfD and the REP. In addition, the thesis introduces the concept of *civilisationism* – a theory coined in 2017 by Rogers Brubaker – that appears promising in the analysis of the most recent advent of RWPP in Germany. Civilisationism appeals in particular to feelings of ‘Christian identity’ that are embedded in a secular and liberal – “Western” – lifestyle (cf. 2017: 1200). Hence, the subsequent sections build a comparative case study, where the party discourses of CDU/CSU – REP between 1989-93, and CDU/CSU – AfD between 2014-18 are analysed, regarding the parties’ ideological framework. The central aim of

the analysis is to test, whether the use of civilisationism marks a significant factor of electoral success in the competition on the right of the party spectrum in Germany.

While current academic contributions (see Arzheimer 2015; Niedermayer & Hofrichter 2016; Decker 2017; Schmitt-Beck 2017; Hansen & Olsen 2019) on electoral success of German right-wing populist parties concentrate primarily on the AfD ideology and influences of (im)migration, the examination of possible ideological interfaces amongst the political right appears to be promising. Inner-party deliberation of CDU/CSU since the withdrawal of Angela Merkel from the CDU leadership, leaning to a right-wing profiling (Frasch 2019), increases the relevance of this research matter, also beyond the scope of academic debates.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Decker (2002) concluded that the REP succeeded initially in the distinction to the extreme right milieu, especially with the focus on an issue of broad public interest – the “asylum and foreigner problem” (2002: 243). However, the positioning of the right-wing mainstream did not alter too much from the REP position, hence, extreme right objectives gained more relevance in the inner-partisan discourse. The political delimitation from those became more difficult. Claus Leggewie had a similar analysis. The “extremism of the centre” (Leggewie 1990: 87) of the REP became in the moment of the Union parties’ profiling on the right-wing, particularly in the migration policy, redundant. Hence, extreme right ideology was prevalent.

Concerning the scholarly discussion about the AfD there is a preference for electoral studies (Arzheimer 2015; Niedermayer & Hofrichter 2016; Schmitt-Beck 2017; Hansen & Olsen 2019) that emphasise especially the party’s alteration from a right-wing liberal,

Eurosceptic into a far-right or radical right populist party, which approaches voters with xenophobic claims. The primary purpose of this approach is to trigger the fear of being overrun by foreigners or overwhelmed by foreign dominance..

Initially opposing the Euro crisis management of the Merkel government, the AfD quickly changed its focus to vehement opposition of the migration policy of the Merkel government (Arzheimer 2015; Schmitt-Beck 2017). The AfD would hence operate as an ‘anti-establishment party’ (Hansen & Olsen 2019: 14f.) opposing policies that are apparently *without alternatives*. This opposing attitude would then attract voters, who bear a high resistance potential and additionally an extreme right political potential (Niedermayer & Hofrichter 2016: 281f.).

On that account, Dilling (2018) discusses the potential affiliations amongst the rather populist (AfD – Left Party) and rather right-wing (AfD – CDU/CSU) electorate. He identifies a significant overlap between CDU/CSU losses and AfD gains in electoral support, due to an anti-immigrant attitude and sympathy for right-wing conservative positions (2018: 97f.). At the same time, there is a shift in electoral support, namely from the Left Party (Die Linke) to the AfD, particularly in East German federal states. According to Dilling, this is due to the anti-establishment attitude of the AfD that apparently attracted East German voters in particular (2018: 92). Hence, to consider a direct correlation in electoral shifts among AfD and CDU/CSU would be “too simplistic” (2018: 84).

However, his contribution reveals a distinct pattern that exactly implies the assumption Dilling disagrees with: the election outcomes between 2014 and 2017 (2018: 86) show that major AfD successes have been achieved in East German federal states and former CDU strongholds at the same time. Additionally, the 2018 election outcomes in Hesse

(Hessian Returning Officer 2018) and Bavaria (Bavarian Returning Officer 2018) confirm the supposed pattern. Ergo, Dilling might miss to follow the path of ideological overlap among right-wing parties, populist and mainstream, that appears to flow into electoral overlap. Additionally, the other electoral studies focus strongly on the effect of the Euro crisis and the so-called ‘migration crisis’, disregarding that those are rather the trigger for an ideological aggrandisement of the AfD than its primary cause that appears to be in ideological alterations among right-wing political actors.

Debus & Müller (2013) address in a study on the programmatic development of CDU and CSU a shift in their political objectives. In the chancellorship of Angela Merkel (from 2005) the Union parties made moderate adjustments in economic policies, and particularly the CDU made significant shifts in social policies to more progressive positions (2013: 161). Other studies (see e.g. Blöckler & Messinger 2015) confirm these findings.

This shift of CDU/CSU to more progressive policies or to the political centre is also addressed by some other scholars (Korte 2016, 2017, 2018; Probst 2018) emphasising slightly different aspects. Korte for instance identifies an “ethnicisation of several political discourses” (2016: 88; 2018: 7) that affects the appearance of a “new conflict line between cosmopolitanism and communitarism” (ibid.). Korte implies that the focus on ethnic categories within the political discourses on all levels, federal, state and municipal level, reveals a social conflict. This conflict appears between presumed elitist cosmopolitans that feel not bound to national borders and another group that precisely fears the overcoming of their native country in its current existence. This development is catalysed by the major migration movements of 2014-2016.

As a result, party competition, in particular on the right changes: while the Christian

Democrats shift to the centre, they leave a gap on their right-wing (Probst 2018). However, also when addressing the shifts in the right wing of the party system, Probst and Korte emphasise primarily the effects of migration and the influence of ethnic factors for party competition. The influence of cultural – rather internal – factors, i.e. the fear of cultural conflicts between the native and immigrated population, is not part of the analysis of Korte and Probst.

On that account, I aim to add the focus on elements of cultural identity, more specifically the emphasis of culturally grown traditions, relating to party ideology of the relevant parties on the political right. There can be assumed that the cause of electoral support for the AfD is connected to the shift to centre of CDU/CSU. The right-wing electorate however, apparently favours still right-wing conservative political objectives, particularly regarding the migration policy and politics that affect issues of cultural identity.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

CONCEPTS

RIGHT-WING POPULIST PARTIES

In 1983 a new competitor in the party landscape, The Republicans (REP), a political party consisting of disappointed former CSU members, approached to “prevent” (Leggewie 1990: 90) Germany from mass immigration and cultural loss. In addition, the REP warned of “anti-German tendencies” (1990: 92f.) that appear to arrive, i.e. in form of an emerging deeper European Union and a stronger NATO commitment. 25 years later, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) stood for similar political objectives: leave the Euro Area, end mass immigration, preserve cultural identity through stricter migration

and integration policy (Niedermayer & Hofrichter 2016; Schmitt-Beck 2017).

Both parties differ fundamentally from other parties in their approach, since they operate as right-wing populist parties (RWPP). These parties rely on two basic theoretical elements that distinct them from the other parties: A *populist* element and an *extreme right* element.

Here, the minimal definition of *populism* by Cas Mudde (2017) is used. Populism is a thin-centred ideology, which relies on an another ideology, because of lacking answer to important political questions. Populists divide society in two homogenous camps: “the pure people” and “the corrupt elite” (Mudde 2017: 6). Hence, populist parties aim to be considered as political advocates of ‘the people’. As a consequence, all other political parties, not in line with populists, are considered affiliated with ‘the elite’.

On that account, RWPP aim to protect the people, primarily from external threats. The right-wing populist parties, which are the focus of this examination go beyond the right-wing profiling of mainstream right-wing parties in their political objectives. Hence, the thesis applies the definition of the *extreme right* of Sokol / Mares / Fiala (Bötticher et al. 2012: 315) to characterise RWPP. The definition inhibits five core elements:

- (1) National interest in terms of traditionally defined interest of an ethnically defined nation;
- (2) Protection of the ‘native’ population from negative ‘Third World’ consequences, i.e. crime, terrorism and cultural loss;
- (3) Resistance against abuse of the welfare state;
- (4) Hard law and order policies;
- (5) Resistance against European integration that is considered a left-wing (elitist) project.

This definition of right-wing populist parties is *one* conceptual element for the examination of RWPP electoral success. Apart from a firm right-wing profiling, additional potential for an effective competition with mainstream right-wing parties is embedded in ideological flexibility. For this reason, the subsequent concept appears to be promising.

CIVILISATIONISM

In 2017 Rogers Brubaker coined this concept, with regard to the increasing success of RWPP in the European Union and the USA. He argues (2017: 1200) that right-wing populist parties act on the basis of an ideology that is broader than nationalism – *civilisationism*. It consists of three core concepts: (1) *identitarian Christianity*; (2) *secularism* and (3) *liberalism*. The core concepts represent a presumed uniqueness of ‘the Western civilisation’, which would be in danger, due to external threats. For instance, this fear of external threats is also characteristic for an extreme right strategy.

Mainly driven by the threat of Western (occidental) civilisation through Islam – ‘the oriental civilisation’ – supporters of civilisationism theory, aim to create a clear contrast between Christianity and Islam. Ultimately, this contrast should emphasise traditional Christian roots, which then create a feeling of cultural belonging or identity. Hence the element of identitarian Christianity (2017: 1197) is created.

Secularism does not stand in contrary to identitarian Christianity. Rather, it refuses the display of religiosity in public sphere. On that account, there is a contrary between the Western “secular way of life” (2017: 1201) and Muslim-inspired appearance in public life, i.e. perceived Muslim clothing habits. For this reason, civilisationist secularism embeds an anti-Islamic stance, in fear of losing of key principles of Western society (ibid.), primarily the separation of the religious (private) life and public life.

Thirdly, liberalism is most visible in defending achievements of Western liberal societies, such as gender equality and protection of minority rights (i.e. LGBT, Jews). The protection of an Islamic minority is refused in the conception of civilisationism, due to accusing Islam as a whole to disregard other minorities.

Fundamental to civilisationist liberalism is a strong emphasis on freedom of speech. Yet again another distinction between Islam and the West is created, by “embracing a liberal way of life” (2017: 1203), contrarily to the alleged lack of liberty in Islam, i.e. regarding to claimed, religiously inspired speech and thought limits. In addition to this *discursive* strategy, the concept of liberalism is completed by an *electoral* strategy, which aims to reach out to new constituencies and gain mainstream acceptance of the (right-wing) electorate (2017: 1203f.). On that account, RWPP would increase their potential for electoral success by competing mainstream right-wing parties.

Civilisationism bears resemblances with several elements of the here applied definition of the extreme right (see page 8), such as the fear from Third World – here Islamic related – consequences. At the same time, interfaces are identifiable between elements of civilisationism and the AfD characterisation of the scholarly discussion (see i.e. Niedermayer & Hofrichter 2016). Particularly interesting is the strategic element of civilisationist liberalism. On the one hand, RWPP rely on an ideology that is broader than nationalism. Consequently, altered polities, i.e. the EU, which operate beyond the polity level of the nation state could be addressed potentially better, compared to a nationalist approach. On the other hand, it could enable RWPP to gain mainstream acceptance, more specifically broader acceptance of the right-wing electorate, i.e. CDU/CSU electorate.

Analysing the electoral success of right-wing populist parties on the basis of these two concepts is reasonable since RWPP success should be connected to mainstream right-

wing party ideology. Hence, the existence of ideological overlap between mainstream and populist parties on the political right, e.g. through the adoption of mainstream party ideology by a RWPP, should be a cause for RWPP success.

HYPOTHESES

In this thesis, I argue that there is a lack of the cultural (identitarian) component in the observation of RWPP ideology, due to the focus on xenophobia (Niedermayer & Hofrichter 2016) and ethnicisation of the political discourse (Korte 2018). The CDU/CSU-AfD electoral overlap that Dilling (2018) identified and the ideological alteration within the Union parties that Debus & Müller (2013) observed, lead to the assumption that there is an ideological overlap among right-wing political competitors. More specifically, it is reasonable to suggest that CDU/CSU have addressed cultural identitarian issues beforehand, i.e. in 1989-93 that apply in terms of content to the core elements of civilisationism – identitarian Christianity, secularism and liberalism.

As Decker (2002) and Leggewie (1990) explain the positioning of the REP is clearly on the right of the CDU/CSU positioning. As a result, an extreme right position is assumed here. Prominent figures (Sloterdijk 1989; Broder 1991; Mattusek 1991; Strauß 1991) of the right-wing electorate however, appear to follow the logic of civilisationism, by emphasising the relevance of traditions of Western descent. Hence, this study builds on a first set of hypotheses:

1a: CDU/CSU in 1989-93 accommodate civilisationism in their objectives, particularly regarding to the understanding of Europe and in matters of non-Western immigration.

1b: The REP accommodate extreme right ideology in their objectives.

1c: The German right-wing electorate has a preference for civilisationism over extreme right ideology.

The position as ‘holder of civilisationist ideology’ has shifted between the periods of

1989-93 and 2014-18, namely from the right-wing mainstream to the right-wing populists. This also affects the position of the right-wing electorate, which is apparently still in favour for civilisationism (Avanessian & Miller 2018; Hartmann 2018; Lengsfeld 2018) and consequently withdraws support for the Christian Democrats in considerable amount. As a result, a second set of hypotheses is provided:

2a: The AfD in 2014-18 accommodates civilisationism in their objectives, particularly regarding to the understanding of Europe and in matters of non-Western immigration.

2b: CDU/CSU do not accommodate civilisationism in its objectives anymore.

2c: The German right-wing electorate still has a preference for civilisationism over extreme right ideology.

In particular, the data of Dilling concerning the election outcomes (2018: 86) support the assumptions that a considerable part of the right-wing electorate shifts its support from CDU/CSU to AfD. This shift emerges with respect to the adaption of civilisationism as key element in the ideological framework of the AfD in 2014-18.

IV. METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN & CASE SELECTION

With regard to the hypotheses, this thesis aims to analyse the ideological framework of relevant right-wing parties, mainstream as well as populist parties, and the affection of the right-wing electorate in Germany. The central aim is hence, the examination of the ideological framework of CDU/CSU, the REP and the AfD regarding the concept of civilisationism. For this reason, a comparative case study is conducted, inhibiting two cases: (1) CDU/CSU 1989-93; (2) CDU/CSU 2014-18. Both cases will be related to the current RWPP: the REP (1989-93) and the AfD (2014-18). Ultimately, the positioning of the right-wing electorate is added.

DATA

The data used for a comparison of CDU/CSU in above mentioned periods relates primarily to the ideological framework of the parties of interest. As a result, in this study, I firstly rely on party manifestos. Secondly, remarks (party convention and parliamentary debate protocols; print media and public broadcasting reports) of leading CDU/CSU or government figures on federal level, i.e. Helmut Kohl for the period 1989-93 and i.e. Angela Merkel for the period 2014-18, are gathered as well. These remarks will be completed with those of leading RWPP figures, i.e. Frauke Petry or Alexander Gauland (both AfD).

The attitude of the right-wing electorate is researched on the basis of prominent sophisticated citizens, who represent the group. In this study, I rely on positions of the academic publicists Peter Sloterdijk, Botho Strauß, Henryk M. Broder and Matthias Matussek. This group reflects eligibly the attitude of the electorate, with respect to affiliations that grew with their work or due to their background. Peter Sloterdijk explained (Avanessian & Miller 2018) to be “privately a conservative citizen”. His work (see Sloterdijk 1989) is characterised by a traditional view, referencing constantly to ancient philosophy. Botho Strauß attracted in 1993 attention with his essay “*Anschwellender Bockgesang*”, in which he accused German politics strongly of relinquishing cultural traditions. Broder and Matussek expressed continuously (Broder 1991; Matussek 1991) their opinion about the relevance of the preservation of Judeo-Christian culture in German politics, especially regarding the relationship with the USA and in opposition to extreme right uprisings in Germany between 1989-93.

OPERATIONALISATION

The empirical phenomenon of interest is the electoral success of right-wing populist

parties in Germany, in particular the AfD success between 2014-18. On that account, the *electoral success of a RWPP* – the AfD in 2014-18 and the REP in 1989-93 – forms the *dependent variable*. The thesis indicates a correlation between the ideological framework of mainstream right-wing parties, here CDU/CSU, and populist right-wing parties, more specifically the civilisationist substance of mainstream party ideology. Hence, the *ideological framework of a mainstream right-wing party* – CDU/CSU in 1989-93/2014-18 – forms the *independent variable*.

The following indicators are used to identify the existence of right-wing ideology and civilisationism. There is a prior set of indicators linked to the phenomenon of RWPP success, derived from existing research on extreme right ideology (8f.). The main focus is here on *anti-immigrant sentiments, promotion of hard law and order policies, overemphasis of nation pride, fear of supranational influence and connection of national and ethnic identity*. These indicators are especially visible when political actors express sympathy for radical conceptions of national identity, such as purity of a nation, including the neglect of supranational institution, e.g. the European Union.

In addition, a second sets of indicators can be identified that applies to characteristics of civilisationism theory (9f.): *identification via Christianity, anti-Islam/anti-Muslim sentiments, rejecting religious appearance in public sphere and defence of the free and democratic order*. These indicators are especially visible when political actors appeal to Christian roots or the accuse Muslims or Islam entirely, to intrude the public sphere with religiously inspired habits.

METHOD

Methodically this elaboration proceeds as a qualitative content analysis. However, the starting position is a short quantitative content analysis of CDU/CSU and AfD party

manifestos, due to civilisationist content. The REP are not part of this initial analysis, due to the assumption of extreme right ideology in their political objectives.

As indicated in the data section (see page 13) the political objectives in the party manifestos, linked to the remarks of leading figures of CDU/CSU, the REP and the AfD, are analysed particularly regarding their content of civilisationism or extreme right ideology. Those remarks are going to be related to the remarks of figures that stand representatively for the right-wing electorate in Germany. Consequently, there is going to be an analysis with primary concentration on the inner- and inter-party discourses of the Union parties, the REP and the AfD. The analysis is completed by categorising the positioning of the right-wing electorate.

V. RESULTS

Before analysing the content CDU/CSU, the REP and the AfD qualitatively, the analysis begins with a quantitative analysis of the parties that are in an assumed connection to civilisationism. In the analysis of the party manifestos of CDU and CSU of 1993, the 2016 AfD party manifesto and the common CDU/CSU election manifesto of 2017, terms that especially appeal to a contrast between a ‘Western’ and an ‘oriental’ civilisation are tested. The analysis confirms the assumptions of this thesis in terms of the quantitative content.

Firstly, CDU and CSU show signs of application of civilisationism in the 1993 party manifestos, particularly due to the constant mention of terms such as ‘Christian’ or ‘believe’ that imply an emphasis on Christian roots. Secondly, the AfD manifesto appeals to civilisationism, regarding to the constant mention of terms such as ‘Islam’, but also ‘Christian’ or ‘Occidental’ that imply a distinction between presumed civilisations.

Thirdly, the percentage of terms such as ‘Christian’, ‘church’ or ‘believe’ dropped in 2017, compared to the 1993 manifestos of the Union parties. The CDU/CSU election manifesto points out rarely to terms that would confirm an application of civilisationism theory in their political objectives.

	Terms
CDU party manifesto 1993	112
CSU party manifesto 1993	80
AfD party manifesto 2016	61
CDU/CSU election manifesto 2017	30

Table 1: Number of civilisationist terms (‘Christian’, ‘church’, ‘believe’, ‘Occident(al)’, ‘Islam’, ‘Muslim’)

In terms of the qualitative content analysis, CDU/CSU 1989-93 confirm the picture of an emphasis on civilisationism. This includes a) the appeal to Christianity as an identity-creating feature for a common (European) cultural identity; b) secular traditions as humanism or the renaissance to be derived from Christianity and in opposition to an Islamic penetration of the secular public sphere and c) the defence of the free and democratic order as fundament of a liberal society. In 2014-18 the Union parties show appearances of a ‘modernised’ ideological framework, which considers elements of Christian identity not relevant to Christian Democratic politics. Secularism and liberalism are rather not considered as explicit Christian values, but embedded in an international order of values, which lays the ground for social diversity and global interdependencies.

The REP 1989-93 show signs of extreme right ideology. This includes a) exclusively national interests under the motto “Germany first” (Leggewie 1990: 92); b) considering immigration as a general threat, no matter the immigrants’ origin and c) appealing to

“unique Germanness” (ibid.), also by opposing international alliances as EU and NATO and partly liberal values. The AfD however, shows impressive overlap with the civilisationism of the 1989-93 Union parties. Here however, the party especially emphasises the element of *secularism* that inhibits a clear anti-Islam stance and rhetoric, considering the Islam an ideology rather than as a confession of faith. The reference to civilisationist liberalism by the AfD is connected to the attempt of reaching out to political ‘mainstream’ constituencies.

CDU/CSU 1989-93

CDU/CSU in 1989-93 accommodate civilisationism in its objectives, particularly regarding the understanding of Europe and in matters of non-Western immigration.

The Union parties are marked by a Christian-conservative attitude in the development of policies as well as in the principal positioning, most visibly concerning the forming of a “cultural community Europe” (Kohl 1991: 2) in the political unit of the “United States of Europe” (Kohl 1990: 10). The vision of CDU chancellor Kohl considers this polity as political unit, wherein the cultural community of *Christian* descent is organised and its values are realised. In the migration policy, the Kohl government shows restrictiveness in response to asylum seekers, in particular from South-East Europe and non-European countries.

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS

Helmut Kohl directs attention to the relevance of Christian tradition and roots in politics. Apart from the policy of alignment with the West, which appears to be an orientation to countries of Christian influence, Kohl leaves no doubt that he believes in the importance of Christian background in matters of European politics:

“Our CDU is and has always been *the* German ‘Europe party’. To our Christian self-identification belongs a clear neglect of every form of

nationalism. [...] That is why we must never fall back into provincialism, never be to focussed on ourselves. We must know that everything we do affects others as well. [...] For us, Christian Democrats, it is even more certain that the reunited Germany dedicates all its forces to the construction of the United States of Europe. Europe is our future, Germany our fatherland.” (1990: 9f.)

Kohl considers the party not only as pro-European party in terms of deeper (theoretical) integration, i.e. regarding economic affairs. His neglect of nationalism derived from Christian traditions underlines the approach of Kohl for an identitarian element of European integration – or “unification” (ibid.). This identification with Christianity as the motor of European integration represents a general attitude of Helmut Kohl concerning Christianity and politics. As a consequence, the thought of a cultural community of Europe is continuously followed. The characterisation of Europe cannot be complete without references to Christianity as a defining feature in the view of the CDU leader. Kohl declares (1991: 2) that Europe is coined by an “almost 2000 years lasting Christian tradition”.

Christianism as identitarian element is by all accounts also part of the federal policy process, concerning home affairs. The leading role in the legislation process has the Home Office, led by Wolfgang Schäuble until 1991, and by Rudolf Seiters from 1991. At that time, Eckart Schiffer is head of the department *Constitutional Affairs* – a key department – in the CDU-led ministry. Schiffer argues (Foerster 1991: 53), the society in Germany is not culturally homogenous. However, the socio-cultural variety is embedded in a comprehensive basic pattern of identitarian common memories, values and imaginations, which is primarily oriented on values of Christian descent. He refuses (1991: 59) the interpretation of identity in the sense of “blood and soil” (nationalism) and prefers the French way of a “community of will and values”. That being so, he refers to

the acceptance of Huguenot and Polish refugees – refugees with Christian background – by the German people between the 17th and 19th century.

SECULAR AND LIBERAL WAY OF LIFE

The ‘Kohlian’ imagination of a Christian Europe that particularly represents liberal values, i.e. tolerance and protection of minorities, is founded on “ancient and medieval philosophy and renaissance humanism and big thinkers of the enlightenment as Kant or Voltaire” (Kohl 1991: 2). He continues (1991: 5) that the respect for human rights, the protection of minorities and the right to self-determination are “the only way in a common European future”.

However, Germany is confronted with high numbers of immigrants (StBA 1995: 68) that caused conflicts, particularly in federal politics (Bickerich 1990; Kogelfranz 1990) and led to a critical attitude among the political responsible persons in Bonn. Schiffer, who is *the* architect of the home and migration policy of the Kohl government, considers the principle of a “multicultural mosaic society” as “illusionary” (Foerster 1991: 53). According to him there has to be a clear separation of religious (private) and civil (public) sphere (1991: 57):

“We must not sacrifice the achievements of European struggles that lasted centuries: For free speech, free press and the freedom to express one’s opinion, only because we shrink from or feel discouraged to go into action against a self-confident religious fanaticism of foreign provenance. We must nip intolerance in the bud!”

In consideration of the whole Schiffer essay (Foerster 1991), published in DER SPIEGEL, the reference to Islam and its supposed anti-secular potential becomes clear. Accordingly, he addresses the threat for the secular lifestyle that lies in his view, i.e. in the treatment of Muslim women, relating to their clothing habits. The fact that Schiffer quotes (1991: 55) CDU political Heiner Geißler with “*everybody, who aims to live here*

[Germany] must know that not the *Qur'an*, but the Basic Law is and will be the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany”, underlines his Islam criticism.

Secondly, directly linked to the remarks that concern secularism, Schiffer demands from Muslims the recognition of basic constitutional values, including the social position of women. Additionally, he refers to comprehensive religious tolerance, i.e. the religious tolerance embedded in the fundamental rights of the Basic Law. Defending values of a liberal society, another characteristic of civilisationism, is identified here.

Based on these major political lines the Union parties introduced legislation that should reflect the aimed restrictiveness in the foreigner and asylum – migration – policy. In 1990, CDU Home Secretary, Wolfgang Schäuble, justified (German Bundestag 1990: 16281ff.) the revision of the *Aliens Act* in a parliamentary debate with “limits of capability to integrate foreigners in the German society”. Consequently, there “must be a limitation of immigration also to “prevent abuse of the right for asylum” (ibid.). According to Schäuble however, the addressors of such a limitation are ordinary asylum seekers, not *late resettlers*² that enjoy an extraordinary status in the view of the Federal Government. The revision of the *Aliens Act* that led to more restriction, was followed by the pass of the *Asylum Seekers Benefits Act* in 1992 and the revision of the constitutional, individual right for asylum in art. 16 of the Basic Law. According to CDU/CSU politicians (Kogelfranz 1990: 35; Lersch & Petersen: 36ff., 41) the revision of art. 16 is necessary for a meaningful reduction of asylum seeker numbers, in other words: a reduction of immigrant numbers.

² Ethnic Germans, who emigrated a successor country of the former USSR to settle in Germany. These immigrants enjoy a special legal status, connected to their ethnic heritage; German: *Spätaussiedler*

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AS *CIVILISATIONISTS*?

In sum, the core elements of civilisationism are identifiable. Firstly, the ‘Kohlian’ vision of a “*Christian* dialogue between European peoples” (1991: 2), including Eastern states at the hemisphere of the European Union, such as the Ukraine, Russia and Yugoslavia, with the purpose of creating an European feeling of belonging reminds clearly of identitarian Christianity. This identitarian Christianity refuses nationalist (including extreme right) perspectives for the future of the European continent and shall rather develop into a, as Schiffer states, Western value based community.

Secondly, the philosophic tradition of humanism and enlightenment – intellectual progress – would connect Europe and is most visible in the promotion of human rights. From this tradition arises the respect for liberal values as those Kohl and Schiffer refer to. However, there is a twofold (civilisationist) will identifiable for defence of the order that arose from secular and liberal traditions. On the one hand, the strong discard Kohl articulates concerning the systematic structure of the German Democratic Republic, an atheist-socialist single-party dictatorship, where Christians had to fear persecution because of their belief and where liberty did not exist. On the other hand, Schiffer rejecting multicultural tendencies that, according to him, is most visible in the appearance of Islam forces its way into the society. Particularly the migration policy of the Federal Government reflects this defence attitude.

To conclude, for CDU/CSU 1989-93 civilisationist elements are characteristic in terms of quantitative framing and of qualitative content of their political objectives. The vision of a Christian cultural community on the European continent and the contrast to non-European immigrant population are the clearest signs of the application of civilisationism.

THE REPUBLICANS 1989-93

The REP accommodate extreme right ideology in their objectives.

The REP approach the electorate in the late 1980s with xenophobic and nationalist claims, under the motto “Germany first” (Leggewie 1990: 92). In sum, the political objectives of the party are marked by hard law and order imaginations with populist stance, an exclusive positioning regarding the German national identity, a general anti-immigration attitude and a rejection of Western transnational organisations like EU and NATO (1990: 89-93). As a result, the approach applies to right-wing populism. More importantly an overlap with the definition of the extreme right of Sokol / Mares / Fiala is identifiable.

The party appeals to extreme imaginations of national interest. The ‘native population’ should inherit a privileged status compared to citizens, who are not ethnically German. Accordingly, the programme of “social patriotism” (Bickerich 1992: 22) can be understood, as granting benefits of the welfare states only to citizens, who are considered ‘ethnically German’. This ‘programme’ joins other (extreme right-wing) demands, i.e. the rejection of the right to vote for citizens with a legal foreigner status (Leggewie 1990: 91). In addition, the REP refuse to recognise *late resettlers*, as Germans, despite their ethnic heritage and do not distinct between different groups of immigrants. It completes the pursue to ‘Germanness’ that neglects Christian roots as part of cultural identity and justifies “closed borders to protect *us*” (ibid.). Clearly, the REP aim to protect the German populace from negative consequences that arise from immigration, because a “successful integration of immigrants in the German society is impossible” (Decker 2002: 243).

The anti-immigration attitude forms the basic principle of the REP approach. It is directly linked to demands of hard law and order policies and executive action against “aggressive foreigners” (Leggewie 1990: 90). Besides the criminalisation of an entire

group – immigrants, including asylum seekers – there is the insistence on rectitude by accusing particularly asylum seekers of abusing the welfare state. The abuse of asylum and social security benefits should be stopped by “prompt judges at the border” (ibid.).

The party further rejects every affiliation in transnational alliances (Leggewie 1990: 93). Most importantly for the REP is the exit of the European Community [Union], which is considered a threat for the national identity – “German purity” (ibid.). Moreover, the NATO membership of Germany is also considered negative as well, because of the fear of being committed to military action to the alliance. Hence, the REP’s youth organisation openly demands a “non-aligned/neutral Germany” (ibid.).

The resistance against organisations that represent a Western order arises from several motivations. The Republicans promote (Leggewie 1990: 94) anti-Americanism, seeing the USA as a hegemonic threat to the German nation. The neglect of the European Community is linked to it, in terms of considered the EC as an approach for a Western inspired multiculturalism, which represents “international cultural standards and egalitarianism” (ibid.). The rejection of ‘Western values’ can be additionally identified in tinges of anti-Semitism and the derision of Christian Democrats that Leggewie describes (1990: 93) as *comprehensive anti-Occidentalism*. As a consequence, the REP reject each identification form of national identity with religiously inspired traditions and roots, which is characteristically for reactionary ideology.

To conclude, the REP 1989-93 apply to the five points that define the extreme right according to Sokol / Mares / Fiala. In addition, the REP approach the electorate with a contrast between ‘the people’ and ‘the political elite’ – basically CDU/CSU – that is characteristic for populist parties.

RIGHT-WING ELECTORATE 1989-93

The German right-wing electorate has a preference for civilisationism.

In 1989, Peter Sloterdijk writes about perceptions of the German nation. With the world facing the “global experiment” (Sloterdijk 1989: 53), the third millennium is going to be *the* era of general immigration. Nations could only maintain their existence in giving preference to their actual function: acceptance and integration of newly occurring livelihood, contradicting the logic of blood and soil nationalism and habituating the advance of “human intelligence” (1989: 66). This behaviour stands in the tradition of ancient philosophy and “advanced religions” (ibid.). Obviously Sloterdijk refers to Greek-Roman philosophy and further developed or secularised Christianity, neglecting plain nationalism that has developed to a “half-religious national pornography, rich of sacrificial rites” (Sloterdijk 1989: 81).

In this line, Matthias Mattusek’s report (1991: 41-45) pleads for the rejection of extreme right actions, here in Saxony (“*In Hoyerswerda the ugly German has his coming-out*”). He criticises the “barbarian” (Mattusek 1991: 41) behaviour of German citizens against asylum seekers and provides the reader with examples representing the opposite of German citizens, i.e. a former CDU mayor that demands acceptance of asylum seekers, by approaching to fellow citizens with reminding them of own or familiar migration experience.

Henryk M. Broder and Botho Strauß contribute more offensively to the debate in the right-wing electorate with civilisationist ideology. Broder emphasises (1991) the threat of a political Islam, based on observations of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, and the particular threat for Israel. Broder accuses (1991: 257, 261, 267) German politics of being indifferent, in the question of defending Israel in contrast to US politics and demands the

protection of Jewish population from negative influences of Islam, also for the sake of the Western order of values.

Strauß refers (1993: 203) in an essay to the relevance of traditional habits:

“We are required to be empathetic with refugees, obliged to mercy and kindness. To implement this demand into the soul of human beings (not only in the souls of voters) a *re-Christianisation* of our modern, egoistic paganism is required. [...] The public must not be surprised, if its words are irrelevant in times of trouble, regarding its own moral hypocrisy: by the humiliation of Eros, the humiliation of soldiers, the humiliation of the church, tradition and authority”

His resolute plea for the confession to traditions, primarily rooted in Christianity, is followed by the demand to rely on the roots of enlightenment and the disagree with a form of liberalism that is egocentric and inconsiderate (Strauß 1993: 202f.).

To conclude, the right-wing electorate in 1989-93 is in favour of political principles that appeal to civilisationism. This preference goes partly beyond the public expressions of CDU/CSU in the confession to Christian roots however, in disregard of extreme right ideology, such as the in REP programme.

AfD 2014-18

The AfD in 2014-18 accommodates civilisationism in its objectives, particularly regarding the understanding of Europe and in matters of migration of non-Western descent.

The scholar conclusions about the AfD and its alteration from a primarily Eurosceptic to a xenophobic party (Arzheimer 2015; Niedermayer & Hofrichter 2016; Schmitt-Beck 2017), are confirmed in this study. Nevertheless, the party shows clear signs of applying to civilisationism. The party manifesto (2016: 92) states:

“The Alternative for Germany confesses to the German *Leitkultur*³ that is derived from three sources: Firstly, the religious tradition of Christendom, secondly the scholastic-humanist tradition, whose ancient roots have been

³ Concept of a dominant culture within the society, which provides orientation for social life

restored in Renaissance and Enlightenment and thirdly, the Roman law that is the fundament of our state under the rule of law.”

This AfD statement, prominently placed at the beginning of the chapter *Culture, Language and Identity*, applies the conceptual chord of civilisationism theory: identitarian Christianity, secularism and liberalism.

EMPHASIS OF CHRISTIAN ROOTS

The party manifesto has been adopted in 2016. The method to create feelings of belonging through the reference Christian tradition and roots, is already part of initial inner-party arguments. In 2014, Beatrix von Storch drew attention with her claims about women’s emancipation, marriage conditions, her image of the family and homosexuals, especially by linking those concepts to Christian traditions. Consequently, she warns for “public re-education” (Leber 2014) regarding the “deconstruction of sexes” (ibid.) and concludes that for her personally, a believing Protestant Christ, the AfD is the best party to realise her ideas.

Alexander Gauland, AfD leader since 2017, explains (Gennies 2015) that the migration movements to Germany “reminds him of the downfall of the Roman Empire, when the Barbarians crossed the limes”. The traditionalist interpretation of Christian values – Christianity – in politics, linked to self-conception of a civilised against an uncivilised society, characterises AfD ideology and is continuously developed in its anti-Islam rhetoric and claims.

ANTI-ISLAM RHETORIC AND DEFENCE OF THE WESTERN ORDER OF VALUES

The party opposes Islam and from Islam derived habits. In the party manifesto (AfD 2016: 92-99) the AfD demands that public laws and “our values” (2016: 95) set barriers for the practice of religion. The public sphere should not be intruded by Muslim actions.

Furthermore, the AfD explains that “*the Islamic practice contradicts the liberal-democratic order, our laws and the Jewish-Christian and humanist principles of our culture*” (96) and refuses the compatibility of the Sharia with Western values.

Frauke Petry, AfD leader from 2015-17, and Alexander Gauland, the current AfD leader underline (FAZ 2016; Heckmann 2016) the claims of the manifesto. Islam would claim power, in form of the Sharia, and violates the German constitution as a result. Both consider minarets and muezzin calls as symbols of the Islamic power claim and alteration of the public sphere that stands contrary to the secular practice of modern Christianity. Additionally, Gauland (Heckmann 2016) criticises the slaughter practice of Islamic *shechita* as another form of penetration of the secular public sphere in Germany.

Ultimately, the AfD fears that Islam stands confrontational towards the free and democratic order. The party manifesto (2016: 96) complains about parallel structures to the existing rule of law, i.e. “Sharia judges” (ibid.). At the same time, there is a lack of tolerance on behalf of Islam/Muslims for freedom of speech and art, particularly regarding criticism or satire of religion. Frauke Petry emphasises this attitude and explains that “integral elements of Sharia and Qur’an are not compatible with the Basic Law” (Balzli & Kamann 2016), i.e. the hijab as “tool of suppression” (ibid.) against the freedom of women. Moreover, the membership of prominent AfD politicians as Beatrix von Storch, Bundestag group co-leader Alice Weidel and the speaker of the budget committee of the Bundestag Peter Boehringer, in the libertarian *Hayek society*⁴ shall reflect the importance of liberalism for the party DNA.

To conclude, the AfD 2014-18 applies civilisationism in terms of the quantitative and

⁴ The *Friedrich A. von Hayek society* is a club, founded in 1998 by economists, lawyers, entrepreneurs and publicists that confesses itself to the promotion of right-wing liberal ideology in the spirit of the Austrian economist Friedrich August von Hayek.

the qualitative content. Characteristic for the political objectives is a clear opposition to Islam that is considered rather an cultural ideology that a confession of faith. Additionally, prominent party figures appeal to the promotion of Christian traditions and liberal ideals.

CDU/CSU 2014-18

CDU/CSU do not accommodate civilisationism in its objectives anymore.

Debus & Müller identify (2013: 162) a change in the Union parties objectives to more progressive positions – moderately in matters of economic policy, more significantly in social policies. The common election manifesto of CDU/CSU for the 2017 federal election confirms this finding. As Table 1 (see page 16) showed quantitatively the party manifesto contains considerably fewer terms that appeal to civilisationism. Qualitatively the manifesto and also remarks of Angela Merkel, CDU leader from 2000-18, show an emphasis on liberalism over Christianity. The “Christian idea of man” (Merkel 2015: 24; 2016: 9; 2018: 12) that coined the Union parties is mentioned usually, however the link to, i.e. a broader Christian inspired vision as in identitarian Christianity, misses.

STILL CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS?

Although Merkel refers to the Christian roots in the politics of the Union parties it appears not as an emphasis of Christianity. Rather, she links these roots to the universal dignity of man that arises from the Christian idea of man. Referencing liberalism, Merkel links the Christian idea of man to a diverse society, naming different factors that include various features (Merkel 2016: 9). Merkel as CDU leader does not emphasise Christian traditions as common European goods.

Although the 2017 CDU/CSU election manifesto names (CDU 2017: 73) “the enlightenment and our Christian-Jewish heritage as an important remaining fundament”, there is no reference to identitarian Christianity. Hence, it appears remarkable that the

subchapter *Europe as community of values* (2017: 57ff.) avoids the mention of Christian inspired values or culturally grown traditions, which were emphasised by Helmut Kohl in the past.

MODERNISED CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY?

In general the manifesto does not emphasise Christianity, secularism or liberalism in the sense of civilisationism. Contrarily, the Union parties argue against any form of ideological indoctrination of politics, but for “feasible and pragmatic solutions” (CDU 2017: 8). The free and democratic order then is not considered in confrontation with, i.e. Islam. Hence, there is no intention to defend against threats. The manifesto encourages an “Islam that is peaceful and ready for integration” (2017: 73) to establish itself on the ground of the constitution. Negative developments connected to Islam are seen as an abuse of the religion (2017: 74).

Furthermore, the positioning towards Turkey (CDU 2017: 57) in matters of democratic and liberal values and the EU accession negotiations is limited to concerns regarding the rule of law and the freedom of speech and press. A mention of the influence of political Islam under the Erdogan government and its authoritarian boost since July 2016 (Azeri 2016) is absent.

The manifesto and the remarks of Angela Merkel rather appear to address social diversity and economic challenges that arise from global trade interdependencies and digital transformation processes. The major part of the manifesto deals with the economic and fiscal stability of Germany and the Euro Area, with an emphasis on the relevance of labour. CDU/CSU confess themselves clearly to the promotion of democracy and rule of law, in the EU and globally, however, there is no link to Christian traditions or similar features that would apply to civilisationist elements.

To conclude, the liberal positioning of the Union parties that is identified here appears to confirm the findings of Debus & Müller (2013) and Probst (2018) that CDU/CSU shifted to centre of the party system and towards more progressive policies, especially regarding social issues. Civilisationism is not identifiable.

RIGHT-WING ELECTORATE 2014-18

The German right-wing electorate has still a preference for civilisationism.

The group, representing the right-wing electorate in 1989-93, is apparently still in favour for civilisationist positions. Similarly, to the shape of civilisationism among the political parties, there is an emphasis on anti-immigration stance within the right-wing electorate. Supposedly due to the immigrants' origin (StBA 2018: 41) the anti-immigration stance is an anti-Islam stance. A threat of the Western civilisation is perceived by the group around Sloterdijk, as well as by former Christian Democratic figures.

Peter Sloterdijk still argues (Avanessian & Miller 2018) against nationalism. The migration policy of Angela Merkel, more specifically the reception of numerous asylum seekers, is not correct, according to him. Firstly, it would confirm the "organised unrealism" (ibid.) of the German political discourse. Secondly, due to the policy of the Merkel government an exceptional situation, acceptance of high asylum seeker numbers, became a regular situation. As a result, Germany became the number two of immigration countries, "contrary to the common consent" (ibid.).

Botho Strauß argues (Hartmann 2018) in a similar way to 1993 and accuses the social discourse of being blind to traditions. He draws a dystopian picture of a society that is not able to maintain traditions and lacks respect for one another.

Ultimately, prominent figures as Broder and Matussek support the *Declaration 2018*, a declaration initiated by former CDU Bundestag member, Vera Lengsfeld, that criticises

the Merkel migration policy. The group accuses the federal government of ‘damaging Germany’ with “illegal mass immigration” (Lengsfeld 2018) that threatens the free and democratic order, particularly the rule of law.

To conclude, the right-wing electorate is still in favour for civilisationism. Although the positioning contains an anti-immigration stance and is in parts increased right-wing, i.e. in the resolute call for respect of traditions in politics, the electorate is still not supporting extreme right ideology.

VI. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to test whether the ideological framework of the Christian Democrats in the periods 1989-93 and 2014-18 affects the electoral success of right-wing populist parties. I argue that CDU/CSU in 1989-93 approached with civilisationism in the ideological framework, whereas the REP emphasised extreme right objectives. A considerable part of the right-wing electorate favoured civilisationism over extreme right ideology. Subsequently, the thesis argued that the AfD in 2014-18 adapted civilisationism in its party ideology, whereas the Christian Democrats did not rely on civilisationist elements anymore. Nevertheless, a considerable part of the right-wing electorate still favoured civilisationism as part of a right-wing party’s ideology.

The findings of this examination support the argumentation. In 1989-93 the CDU leadership and high-level responsible persons in the CDU/CSU led federal government utilised the three core concepts of civilisationism: identitarian Christianity, secularism and liberalism. The programmatic approach of the REP in 1989-93 applies to the definition of a right-wing populist party applying extreme right ideology as Sokol / Mares / Fiala define it. The party displays nationalist positions, linked to a distinct ethnic

‘Germanness’ that refuses each form of foreign influence, as immigration or European or Western cooperation, especially identity. The right-wing electorate however, favoured the CDU/CSU approach, due to the use of civilisationism.

The AfD, as secondly examined RWPP, operates in the mobilisation strategy seemingly alike to the REP. However, the party does not apply fully to right-wing populism definition of this thesis. The ideological framework is marked by the use of civilisationism. At the same time, the ideological framework of CDU/CSU in 2014-18 has shifted. Although the Christian idea of man still takes a role in the inner-partisan discourse CDU/CSU begin to promote principles of social diversity and international cooperation with the regard to growing global interdependencies. Yet again, a considerable part of the right-wing electorate preferred civilisationism.

On that account, I conclude that the ideological framework of CDU/CSU affects the electoral success of right-wing populist parties to the extent of civilisationist content in the framework. By accommodating civilisationism CDU/CSU in 1989-93 avoided relevant electoral success of the REP, particularly because the Union parties caused no ‘gap’ on the right-wing side of the party system (cf. Probst 2018: 20). Consequently, the political profile of the REP based primarily on an extreme right positioning. The ideological alteration on behalf of CDU/CSU in 2014-18 without civilisationism in the framework exactly caused the former mentioned ‘gap’ in the party system. That gap opened the window for the right-wing populists of the AfD, who applied in 2014-18 civilisationism in their political objectives and achieved relevant electoral successes.

However, the study points out that the doubts of Dilling (2018) regarding the affiliations of CDU/CSU and AfD leave the ideological overlap aside. In line with Debus & Müller (2013) this thesis aimed to take a closer look at the right wing of CDU/CSU,

additionally to the perspective of the left-wing shift the Union parties carried out during the chancellorship of Angela Merkel Debus & Müller (2013) identified.

As indicated recently, this elaboration had its limitations. In concentration on civilisationism as coining part of AfD ideology, this elaboration did not analyse the present right-wing nationalist tendencies of prominent AfD figures like Björn Höcke or the former AfD leader in Saxony-Anhalt, André Poggenburg. Moreover, the appearance of the AfD in the German party system, can be considered as one phenomenon of an increasing fragmentation concerning party competition (Niedermayer 2018).

On that account, further research should concentrate on the dynamics of the party competition as addressed by Decker (2017, 2018), Korte (2016, 2018), Niedermayer (2018) and Probst (2018), in particular with regard to the future development of the two *people's parties*: CDU/CSU and SPD. The appearance of the AfD revealed the problems these parties face now. The rise of the AfD affected especially the electoral success of the Union parties and threw up the question of adjustments in their ideological framework. The recent strengths of *Alliance '90/The Greens* reveals additionally that party competition apparently is in re-arrangement. That being so, further research has numerous starting-points and should particularly examine the alteration of the German party system, due to the decline of the *people's parties*.

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