THE RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MINORITY IN GERMANY: A STRONGHOLD FOR 'ALTERNATIVE FOR GERMANY'?

By

Elena Meliukhina

Submitted to
Central European University
Department of Political Science

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Supervisor: Professor Gabor Toka

Budapest, Hungary
(2019)

ABSTRACT

In the recent years, the Russian-speaking minority in Germany has become a subject of close attention by scholars and journalists. The reason for that is that in the context of electoral success of new far-right party 'Alternative for Germany' (AfD) on the last parliamentary elections many experts note that there are a lot of Russian-Germans among the supporters of this party. However, the precise level of support of AfD by Russian-Germans is unclear. In this thesis I analyze profiles of Russian-Germans in social media networks and complement these data by the analysis of the GLES 2017 dataset. This research reveals that there is a quite small group among Russian-Germans (primarily men of 50 years and above) who support the anti-immigrant sentiments of AfD. The share of this group constitutes approximately 11%, that is close to the country's average result of AfD. Thus, the support of AfD by Russian-Germans is not overwhelming as media outlets present. To reveal reasons of such media bias I conduct a comparative analysis of media publications. This analysis shows that different media outlets may have different motives to publish news about a tendency of Russian-Germans to vote for AfD, namely: indirect critique of the Kremlin (the Russian non-state media), promoting of AfD (the pro-Kremlin media), and transferring of responsibility (the Western media). At the same time, such explanations as media bias resulting from the search for a memorable story and the lack of valid information can be further motives for all three categories of media outlets.

i

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

List of Figures

List of Tables

INTRODUCTION

'What is good to a Russian, is death for a German'
Old Russian saying

Until recently the Russian-speaking minority in Germany of up to 2.4 million people that composes the biggest share of voters with an immigrant past (Goerres et al. 2018b, 1) was perceived as a politically passive ethnic group. They demonstrate a turnout that is much lower than the country's average (Goerres et al. 2018a, 3); there are no significant politicians of Russian origin on the German political arena and there is no party organized by Russian-Germans either. It is no wonder that journalists from *The Guardian* describing Russian-speaking Germans called them 'invisible ethnic minority' (Oltermann and Soloveitchik 2017).

However, in the recent years, this minority has become a subject of close attention by political experts, scholars, and journalists. The reason for that is that in the context of electoral success of new far-right party 'Alternative for Germany' (AfD) on the parliamentary elections in 2017 many experts note that there are a lot of Russian-Germans among the supporters of this party (Kim 2017, Goerres et al. 2018b). Moreover, before and after the elections, there were a lot of publications in the press with headlines such as: "How Russian Voters Fueled the Rise of Germany's Far-Right" (Shuster 2017), "How Germany's Russian minority could boost far right" (Oltermann and Soloveitchik 2017), "Russian-Germans and the surprising rise of the AfD" (Golova2017).There were so many publications that in September 2017 more than ten organizations of Russian-Germans had to publish an open letter where they blamed the media for the one-sided depiction of the Russian-speaking community as the main supporters of AfD. They argued: "We are not the AfD, not the CDU, and not Putin's fifth column! We are individuals like all other citizens of our country!" (Gurkov 2017).

Here the question arises as: To what extent the support of Russian-Germans has contributed to the rise of AfD? Probably, this is, indeed, a media bias? According to studies, the image of Russia in the Western media is mostly negative (Tsygankov 2017, 19). In conditions, when a far-right party is perceived as a threat to European values because of possible xenophobic associations (BBC2017), especially in Germany with their complicated history, can this negative media image of Russia in some way be transmitted to the Russian-speaking German citizens?

Nevertheless, the precise level of support of AfD by Russian-Germans is unclear. Journalists adduce different evidence of its abnormal popularity among Russian-Germans. Reporters of *Time* note that the electoral support of AfD is much higher in areas densely populated by the Russian-speaking Germans, for instance, in Berlin's Marzahn-Hellersdorf district where the level of AfD support is about 23% (Shuster 2017), and in Heide in Schleswig-Holstein where this figure is about 44% (RT 2017a). Their colleagues from *Reuters* (Shalal 2017) and *Deutsche Welle* (Jolkver 2019) provide analogous examples but they also refer to the research (Goerres et al. 2018a, 2) that shows that only around 15% of Russian-Germans vote for the AfD, which is slightly higher than the country's average. However, journalists from *Financial Time* refer to data from the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (SVR), according to which, 4.7% of Russian-Germans support AfD. At the same time, reporters from Bloomberg refer to the sociological data of AfD under which a third of their votes come from Russian-Germans (Meyer 2017).

These discrepancies show that the phenomenon of support of AfD by Russian-Germans should be examined in greater depth. The studies about voting behavior are of particular relevance today in relation to the ever increasing support of the right-wing and populist parties in many countries. In addition, the Russian-speaking minority in Germany is interesting not only because of AfD, this community itself is a very distinct group. Firstly,

2

most of them are ethnically Germans who came back to Germany in 1990s from the former republics of the USSR. Their ancestors started to resettle to The Russian Empire since the eighteenth century (Oltermann and Soloveitchik 2017); over three centuries, they had been living in Russia in closed communities and many of them managed to remain religiously and ethnically homogeneous (Goerres et al. 2018b, 2). That is why they were perceived by the majority population as aliens – Germans. In the late 1980s, ethnic Germans from the USSR got a chance to return to 'motherland' thanks to the new resettlement policy that was devised by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) led by Helmut Kohl. From 1987 to March 2015 approximately 2.3 million ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union repatriated to Germany (Hess 2016, 381). However, when these so-called resettlers came back to Germany, they became aliens again: but now Russians for Germans (Goerres et al. 2018b, 11). I assume the awareness of a very special, puzzled, group identity must influence their life, including that voting behavior.

Secondly, many scholars argue that ethnic minorities tend to support left-wing parties that are perceived as parties with more inclusive proposal upholding comprehensive social welfare programs and more sympathetic to minorities (Anwar 2001, Teney et al. 2010). That is why the tendency that Russian-Germans prefer to vote for the right parties (Goerres et al. 2018a, 2) is counterintuitive, which constitutes the second puzzle of my research. Thirdly, such kind of political orientation looks paradoxical because these people came from the USSR, the country that suffered the most from fascism in 20th century: 40 million of human casualties (Gutiontov 2017). The victory in World War II, the fight against fascism was a significant part of the Soviet identity and the national pride. At the same time, at least a part of Russian-Germans supports the far-right party that has been frequently criticized because of repeated xenophobic and racist scandals that were extensively covered by both the Western and the Russian media outlets (BBC 2017, RT 2017b). The members of AfD with the Russian roots

were also involved in such scandals. The journalists from *RT* (formerly known as *Russia Today*, TV channel funded by the Russian government) published news about a Russian-German deputy from AfD who shared in social media photos of Hitler with the words praising him (RT 2017b). So, the third puzzle is: how can these attitudes be compatible with the Soviet mentality?

In the media there are different explanations why Russian-Germans sympathize with AfD. Usual hunches include the refugee crisis in 2015 that politicized part of this community, targeted active work of AfD with the Russian-speaking community, and influence of the Kremlin media that portrayed AfD in a favorable light (Shuster 2017, Oltermann and Soloveitchik 2017). It is noteworthy that these hunches are nor baseless. AfD has done a lot of work to capture the votes of Russian-Germans: this party translated its election manifesto into Russian and published Russian-language party promotional materials (Goerres et al. 2018b, 5; Kim 2017, 8). Moreover, representatives of AfD are particularly active in the Russian social media: there are more than 40 communities of AfD supporters in the Russian 'analogue' of Facebook – 'VK' (*Vkontakte*), some of them are quite numerous (the maximum number of followers may reach 5771 users); in another popular social media – 'Classmates' (*Odnoklassniki*) – there are more than 20 communities, where the largest one includes more than 20 000 followers. In contrast to that, supporters of other German political parties are not so active in the Russian social media, the most numerous community includes 136 followers (the group of left party '*Die Linke*' in VK). The search was conducted by the author on May 25, 2019. Regarding the influence of the Russian media, the data from '*Boris Nemtsov Foundation's survey: Russian-speaking Germans*' (2016, 17) shows that quite a large share of Russian-Germans still consume information from the Russian-language media, for instance, 40% of TV users only watch Russian television. What is more, the level of their trust in the Russian media is higher than in the Western ones: only 19% of respondents trust the Western

4

media outlets in comparison with 30% of respondents who tend to trust the Russian-language media (2016, 17). Unfortunately, this survey does not categorize the Russian-language media into non-state media and media that are affiliated with the Russian government as I assume that this distinction can be important for this analysis.

However, a search of academic studies finds surprisingly few papers concerning the voting behavior of Russian-Germans. As this phenomenon is quite new, political scientists have only recently turned their attention to the scrutiny the Russian speaking minority's sympathies towards AfD. I assume some articles are now being prepared for publication. Among the academic research that was published I can note several papers by Goerres et al. (2018, 2018a, 2018b) who point out that anti-immigrant sentiments of a certain part of the Russian-speaking community could influence their electoral preferences. As this topic is not researched well yet this is a very promising field for scholars. My research interest is to reveal how this phenomenon can be explained from an academic point of view, to what extent it corresponds to existing theories of far-right radical voting. For that I employed quantitative methods of analysis as in the aforementioned academic papers the authors used mostly qualitative research techniques.

This thesis is structured as follows: after introduction, in the next chapter I discuss the main theories that explain the reasons for voting for far-right radical parties. This chapter is complemented by a review of the studies concerning far-right voting, voting behavior of ethnic minorities in general and the Russian-speaking minority in Germany, in particular. In addition, I consider studies about media bias. Then, in the second chapter, I introduce research design, methodology, and data. Based on that, in the third chapter, the empirical analysis is presented. In conclusion I summarize main findings and suggest ways in which this research can be further developed.

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Theoretical Framework

In political science there are a lot of theories that explain voting for the far-right parties. In this chapter I follow the approach that is proposed by Arzheimer (2016) who categorized all theories into three groups. The first group is *value-oriented* theories that claim that supporters of such parties have strong conservative, even authoritarian, orientations. The first researchers that developed this approach were T. Adorno and his colleagues who published in 1950 the book "The Authoritarian Personality". In this book they reveal the psychological roots of the rapid rise of fascist parties in Europe in 1930s. They argue that there is a certain type of personality that is more susceptible to authoritarian ideology, moreover, this can be measured by means of a special tool that they called 'F-scale'. This kind of personality is defined by the following nine traits: conventionalism, submission, aggression, anti-intraception (i.e. rejection of self-reflection), superstition, power orientation, cynicism, projectivity, and excessive fixation on sexuality (cited in Van Ijzendoorn 1989, 37-38).

In similar manner, B. Altemeyer and R. A. Altemeyer (1996) explore the psychology of radical right voters in their book "The Authoritarian Spectrum". They argue that some people are initially psychologically predisposed to support fascist views to the detriment of democracy. Thus, "what happened in Germany in 1993 *can* happen in North America too" (p.5). The empirical research of Ignazi (1992) is based on an approach that prioritizes values as the main predictors of far-right voting. He argues that the discourse of extreme right parties aims to discredit the democratic systems and undermine its legitimacy. Moreover, "through their strong xenophobic stances, they undermine one of the keystones of democracy, equality of men" (Ignazi 1992, 25).

 The second branch of explanations emphasizes *social disintegration* as a main predictor of voting for far-right parties as voting behavior is a reflection of social anger and isolation

(cited in Arzheimer 2016, 3). The main catalysts of distribution such attitudes in society are modernization and globalization. Ever increasing labor migration coupled with technological development leave blue-collar workers in economically vulnerable position (Immerzeel 2015, 266).These people are often considered as 'losers of modernization'. It is remarkable that this term was used by Betz (1994, 24-25) who applied it to the people who supported NSDAP in 1920-30 in Germany. That was the party that expressed the dissatisfaction of small farmers, shopkeepers, and independent artisans with the economic and social situation in the country.

The third group of explanations of the popularity of radical right parties is derived from social psychology. This group encompasses various theories but all of them are based on an *intergroup conflict*. The first theory is *intergroup contact theory* which was elaborated by G.Allport (1954, 281) in his book 'The Nature of Prejudice". He argues that regular interpersonal contacts between members of different (ethic, linguistic, etc.) groups may reduce prejudices but only under certain conditions: equal status between "majority and minority groups", "common humanity", "common goals', and "institutional support". Consequently, the lack of these conditions is conducive to the emergence of prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination.

The next theory that is very popular among scholars is *the theory of 'ethnic competition'*. According to Blumer (1958), race prejudice is based on a sense of group position rather than on a set of feelings that members of one ethnic community have towards the members of another one. In conditions of scarce resources, competition between different ethnic groups increases, in particular, job competition; and this process is an inevitable result of modernization and urbanization (Olzak and Nagel 1986, 3-4). The members of other ethnic communities are perceived as a possible threat to the well-being. Belanger and Pinard (1991) stress that the main objects of competition are not individual goods like jobs, but rather larger collective goods (p.446). In a similar vein the *realistic group conflict theory* emphasizes that

7

"competition between groups for valuable but limited material and/or symbolic resources breeds hostility" (Brief et al. 2005, 830).

Finally, there is one more theory concerning intergroup conflict is *frustration-aggression theory* (Dollard et al. 1939). Its main claim sounds as follows: "the occurrence of aggression always presupposes the existence of frustration, and, contrariwise, frustration always leads to some form of aggression" (cited in Breuer and Elson 2017, 1). In the context of group interactions, minorities or immigrants can often be in some way a 'scapegoat' – a target for aggression by a majority (primarily, society's underclass). Mostly, they become a target because of their distinctiveness and defencelessness (Arzheimer 2016, 4).

Overall, in my view, these groups of theories (value-oriented, social disintegration, and intergroup conflict) do not necessarily contradict each other and may well be complementary. We may well imagine a voter who is not integrated within society and extremely critical of the government policy, and, at the same time, he/she has conservative and anti-immigrant attitudes simultaneously.

1.2 Literature Review

In this part I review different studies that are related to far-right voting, voting behavior of ethnic-language minorities, and the Russian-speaking minority, in particular. In addition, I analyze studies of scholars who explore media bias: how they explain its reasons and consequences. Studies that are dedicated to far-right parties reveal that there is a certain gender gap in the voting for such radical parties, namely: men are more inclined to vote for them. Immerzeel et al. (2015) in their research prove this tendency explaining this phenomenon by the theories that were mentioned before. They argue that because of modernization and globalization blue-collar sectors of national economies with high numbers of manual workers are threatened. In such a situation where manual workers are mostly men

they are in a more vulnerable position than women and have more chances to become 'losers of globalization'; moreover, they perceive immigrants as competitors for jobs (Immerzeel et al. 2015, 266).However, from my point of view, this stance can be challenged because there are still a lot of low-wage positions that are occupied primarily by women: babysitters, kitchen staff, cleaning staff, and so on, where immigrants also typically compete for these jobs. I think the gender composition may vary in every single sector; also it may change in different countries over time. In that sense, this hypothesis should be verified.

It is important to mention that empirical research does not always prove theoretical stances. For instance, Lengfeld (2017) in his paper explores to what extent the thesis of 'losers of modernization' works in the case of the social base of AfD. He finds that there is no significant relationship between the typical low social status characteristics and voting for AfD. Conversely, people from middle and upper classes have a stronger intention to support AfD (Lengfeld 2017, 210). That is why one of the aims of this research is to investigate to what extent classical theories explain growing support for AfD. What if this case does not correspond to any of these theories?

As this paper is dedicated to analysis of voting behavior of a certain ethnic-linguistic group it is important to consider how ethnicity may affect voter choice. Political scientists note that belonging to a certain ethnic or linguistic minority group largely determines voting behavior (Huber 2012; Teney et al. 2010). The widespread thesis is that they mostly vote for the left parties because the latter are more tolerant to minorities and have a more inclusive policy and support wide welfare programs. One example of such voting behavior of ethnic minorities is Great Britain where they invariably vote mostly for the Labour Party (Anwar 2001, 539). The American scholars reveal a similar pattern: the black minority mainly votes in favor of the Democrats (Huber 2012, 999) as the Republicans are traditionally associated with a more conservative agenda and less tolerant attitudes towards minorities because of the legacy of

9

anti-black rhetoric during the era of "Southern Strategy" between 1960 and 1970 (Brown 2016, 22).

However, there is another point of view that different ethnic minority groups vote differently even within one linguistic group. Teney et al. note that ethnic groups do not always support left-wing parties (2010, 285). Conversely, we can find examples when an ethnic group tends to vote for right-wing party. For instance, researchers note that the Cuban minority in the US prefers to vote for the Republicans in contrast to other Hispanic-speaking groups (Portes and Mozo 1985). They explain this pattern by influence of the Cuban Revolution that was the reason for their emigration to the USA. They had to leave their motherland; this fact then has formed their strong rejection to everything that even remotely reminds them of left ideology (Portes and Mozo 1985, 55). Therefore, the explanations of 'unusual' voting patterns that ethnic minorities demonstrate we may find in their historical background that relates to their country of origin.

Another example of how different ethnic groups vote differently is Germany. Here, a group of researchers headed by Prof. Dr. Achim Goerres analyzed the voting behavior of Germans with immigrant background – the Immigrant German Election Study (IMGES) (Goerres et al. 2018a). Scholars conducted face-to-face interviews with representatives of two largest diasporas in Germany: the Turkish-speaking and the Russian-speaking minority groups (both samples include about 500 randomly selected respondents).This research reveals that Turkish Germans tend to vote for the parties on the left, namely: the Social Democratic Party (SPD), the Left ('*Die Linke'*) and the Greens. This stands in contrast to the preferences of Russian-Germans who vote more for the right-wing parties: CDU, Free Democratic Party and AfD. The level of AfD support among Russian-Germans in their sample constitutes 15% (Goerres et al. 2018a, 2). Thus, we see that only a certain part of the Russian-speaking minority indeed supports AfD. However, this study did not explain factors that affect the voting behavior of

10

different minority groups and why these two ethnic-linguistic diasporas have very different party preferences.

In their next research that is dedicated specifically to Russian-Germans, Goerres et al. (2018b) tried to fill this gap. They conducted focus-group interviews with the members of the Russian-speaking minority and reveal that initially most of them voted for CDU because this party had initiated the policy that enable them to come to Germany. Voting for CDU was in a certain way an act of gratitude for that opportunity. However, in the recent years, a part of this community becomes to support AfD, although, not all (Goerres et al. 2018b, 27). So, what was a 'mover' that makes some of them to vote for AfD. And who are those people who support this party? In this paper I will try to fulfill this gap.

In general, as I have already mentioned in Introduction, the issue of party preferences of Russian-Germans remains underobserved because this is a quite specific topic that has become popular relatively recently. At the same time, there are a lot of historical and sociological studies that are dedicated to this minority group as its history is truly unique (Pfetsch 1999, Dietz 2000). One piece of recent research of Russian-Germans was conducted by *Boris Nemtsov Foundation* in the fall of 2016. The sample comprises 606 respondents with 'Russian background'. In addition to demographic and sociological issues, this survey also includes politically relevant questions concerning attitudes of Russian-Germans towards democracy, human rights, trust in media, etc. But, unfortunately, this study fails to address questions about their party preferences. Nevertheless, it makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of this minority.

Scholars who have explored media bias focus on different aspects of this phenomenon. Mullainathan and Shleifer (2002) analyzed possible reasons why media bias occurs. They distinguish two main motives of news outlets to disseminate biased information: the first one

is ideological, which implies that owners, editors, or journalists want to influence reader opinions according to their political preferences; the second motive is just "to create a memorable story" (2002, 2) that sells that newspaper better and therefore such stories generate huge profits. The authors call the latter motive as 'spin'. They note that in the second case media often use technique of simplification when some piece of information is ignored and news becomes more unusual and therefore attractive for readers. In general, the authors note that it is very difficult to avoid bias in media because even if the ideological motive can be overcome through media competition but this competition, in its turn, makes media to create more memorable stories.

The effect that biased media may cause is a widely debated topic in political science. Many scholars who have studied media bias argue that inaccurate and incomplete information may directly influence voters' attitudes and eventually their electoral decision (Bernhardt et al. 2008, DellaVigna and Kaplan 2007, Druckman and Parkin 2005). At the same time, other scholars (Mutz 2007, Levendusky 2013) note that it is hard to measure the role of media in voter choice because there are so many media outlets and every person may choose any of them. Here, the question arises: what makes a reader to choose a certain media source? Most likely, he/she chooses that media products that reflect his/her preferences. Levendusky points out "it is not simply enough to say that media can reinforce attitudes; we need to know under what circumstances, how, and for whom these effects occur" (2013, 613). He found that partisan media make relatively extreme readers even more extreme, while cross-cutting media may affect in different ways: either polarize attitudes or moderate their readers. Thus, Levendusky concludes that such different reactions stem from a reader's abilities and preferences, and the main question is "who is doing the activation" (2013, 620). In general, scholars agree media bias has a negative effect on democracy because it may distort reality

12

and therefore makes people vote for the wrong candidates (Bernhardt et al. 2008, Druckman and Parkin 2005).

To conclude, in this chapter I have presented the three main theoretical approaches that explain the rise of far-right parties. The value-oriented theories, theories of social disintegration, and intergroup conflict theories explore the phenomenon of the rise of radical right parties from different disciplines (psychology, sociology, economics, and etc.) and, at the same time, these theories can complement each other quite well. However, the empirical analysis demonstrates that reality does not always correspond to theoretical stances. If the level of AfD support amongst the Russian-speaking Germans is exaggerated by media, then, according to scholars who explore media bias, this can be explained by either ideological motive or desire to attract more readers. At the same time, the issue to what extent media may influence voter choice and partisanship remains puzzling because some scholars argue that media can affect whereas other scholars emphasize the importance of initial personal preferences in media choice.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Conceptualization of the term 'Russian-Germans'

In this paper I define the Russian-Germans as members of the Russian-speaking community that live in Germany, so the main criterion of belonging to this group is the Russian language. In studies that are dedicated to the Russian-Germans there are different ways to determine this community, but I find them quite questionable. Some scholars include in their sample only resettlers from the former USSR (for instance, Goerres et al 2018b). However, within this group there is a distinction between people who came before and after 1993. Resettlers who moved before 1993 had privileged right of access, after 1993 the rules that guide the process of repatriation were revised and made more stringent. People who came from 1993 onwards have been called by another term – a 'late resettler' (Hess 2016, 383). Moreover, there are different generations within the group of resettlers and late resettlers: the first generation includes people who were born in the former USSR and moved when they were adults, the so-called 1.5th generation includes people who moved when they were adolescents (Goerres et al 2018b, 15), and finally people who were already born in Germany constitute the second generation.

The parameter of ethnicity for defining of Russian-Germans looks much more complex because many of the families of ethnic Germans in the Soviet Union in the second half of the twentieth century were mixed. Moreover, within the group of Russian-Germans there is a group of ethnic Jews who repatriated to Germany as descendants of victims of Holocaust (so-called Jewish quota of resettlers that constitutes approximately 11% of this community, according to the data of *Boris Nemtsov Foundation's* survey that was conducted in 2016). The parameter of country of origin is not a very good choice either, because resettlers moved not only from Russia, but also from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine (Goerres et al 2018b,

15). Thus, I choose a very broad approach that is the most flexible as well and allows me to encompass representatives of different ethnic groups inside Russian-Germans and people who moved to Germany because of professional and family reasons as well, not only resettlers. The Russian language is the unifying factor for all these subgroups of the Russian-Germans. Besides, it is well-known the importance of language for forming and sustaining of unity and identity of a community. Moreover, scholars argue that "primary socialization through the language most often spoken at home will affect political preferences" (Marcos-Marne 2017, 2635).

2.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

As I have mentioned before, there are different points about the strength of sympathies of Russian-Germans towards AfD. In the media, there is a widespread opinion that this community tends to vote forAfD, although, organizations of Russian-Germans disprove this claim. Scholars note that a certain part of Russian-speaking community truly supports this party. But it is still unclear how large is this part. Thus, my first research question sounds as follows: What is the level of support of AfD amongst Russian-Germans? Here, I test to what extent hypothesis about higher than average popularity of AfD among Russian-Germans, which is widely publicized by media fits reality as we know from literature that media outlets often distort information. The first hypothesis sounds as follows:

Hypothesis 1: The level of AfD support among Russian-Germans is significantly higher than the country's average result.

Then, if a certain part of Russian-Germans supports AfD, who are they? What does differ them from the rest members of the Russian-speaking community? So, my second research question: What is the social portrait of a typical supporter of AfD?

Following the theories that explain voting for far-right parties, I plan to test two more hypotheses. One of them concerns the influence of gender on voter choice. I want to test to what extent valid the theories of social disintegration and group conflict that predict that men are over-presented in the electorate of far-right parties. Thus, the second hypothesis sounds as follows:

Hypothesis 2: Men have a tendency to support AfD more frequently than women.

My third hypothesis is derived from the theories of social disintegration and the value-oriented theories. I hypothesize that than the older people – the more conservative they become, the more difficult for them to integrate into the society. People who were born in the former USSR and socialized there and then in adulthood moved to Germany must have a much stronger link with their birthplace. It is harder to adapt in a new country (even if it is a motherland of ancestors) and get used to new mentality, and etc. It is possible that some of them did not manage to embed themselves into the German society. Therefore, my third hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 3: The older generation is more prone to support AfD.

The second and third hypotheses concern the social portrait of the typical AfD supporter. However, they do not concern possible reasons that explain such sympathies. Thus, my third research question: What does explain a higher electoral support of AfD among Russian-Germans? In the Western media one of possible explanations is the influence of the Kremlin media. In fact, this hunch is hard to test as it has two components: firstly, whether depiction of AfD by the Kremlin media looks more appealing than its depiction in the Western media, secondly, to what extent a positive media image of a certain party may affect voting behavior, it is highly likely that, there are other significant factors that are at work? It is questionable whether media activate and form political attitudes and preferences, not the other way around

(Levendusky 2013). Analysis of the second component requires some separate detailed research, this cannot be covered within the confines of this thesis. However, at least the first component can be tested here that will allow us to better understand the phenomenon of far-right voting among Russian-Germans. Thus, my fourth hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 4: The Russian state media depict AfD in a more favorable light than the Western ones.

2.3 Data and Methods

The ideal methodological approach for testing these hypotheses would be quantitative analysis because in this type of analysis it is easier to find relationships between variables such as age, gender, and level of AfD support. Moreover, the few studies that investigate party preferences of Russian-Germans are mostly qualitative. However, in the searching of data I faced some obstacles: in fact, it is hard to find recent dataset concerning German elections where it would be possible to select the Russian-speaking respondents. For instance, there is no such option in the dataset '*Politbarometer 2017 (KumulierterDatensatz)*'. In those datasets where this is possible, many of Russian-German respondents did not answer to the questions about their party preferences; for instance, in the European Social Survey 2016 only about 30 Russian-German respondents indicated their party identification that is statistically not sufficient for a robust analysis. The one dataset in which I managed to select a sample that includes 85 Russian-German respondents who indicated their party preferences is the German Longitudinal Election Study that was carried out in 2017 (GLES 2017). This study is the largest national election study in Germany that has conducted election surveys since 2009 with the support of the German Research Foundation. Nevertheless, this sample is also quite small which cannot be used for a robust and full analysis; it can only complement a core analysis.

17

In this situation, I decided to conduct my core analysis in social media networks focusing on profiles of Russian-German users. I analyzed the profiles of the Russian-Germans in the two largest Russian-speaking social media networks: 'VK' (*VKontakte, vk.com*) and 'Classmates' (*Odnoklassniki, ok.ru*). These two online platforms are the main means of communication for Russian-Germans with each other and with their relatives and friends living in Russia. According to the data that internet-service *Alexa* provides, these two websites rank 9th and 24[th]respectively among the most popular sites in Germany (rank is calculated using a combination of average daily visitors and pageviews over the past month, data obtained April 10, 2019).The number of users that indicated their country of residence as Germany in VK is 828 914, whereas, in Classmates this figure is even larger – 2 629 346 (data obtained April 10, 2019).

The analysis of social media networks is often applied in political science studies, namely, for research of political preferences and public opinion. Scholars question whether social media studies may demonstrate the same accuracy as traditional public opinion surveys (Oliveira et al. 2017) or whether they can forecast election results (Tumasjan et al. 2010, Ceron et al. 2015).These authors found affirmative responses to these questions. It may well be that in the future social media studies will replace traditional opinion polls, given the fact that the former ismuch cheaper than the latter. Moreover, social media analysis allows me to encompass quite large number of users from different regions of Germany.

To obtain my sample I used the following technique of randomization: to choose 10 the most popular German surnames and the most popular Russian names (1 – male, 1 – female). Combining them, I selected my sample searching for people whose names are the most typical for the Russian-Germans. Under the communist regime, the Soviet government pursued the policy of russification of ethnic Germans in the USSR. By the late 1980s, young generations of Germans in the Soviet Union were russified in their language and mentality

(Stricker 2000, 169). They still had German family names, but gave mostly the Russian names to their children. So, the combination of the German surname and the Russian name is widespread among Russian Germans. Using this technique I managed to draw a sample of 300-400 profiles. I excluded from my sample closed profiles and ones who have not published posts over the last three years.

In this research I used the method of content analysis. This method is one of the most popular techniques in for analysis of user profiles in social media, in particular for compiling of social portraits of users (Magnuson and Dundes 2008, Jones et al. 2008). I developed a coding protocol that will consist of two parts: the first one is biographical data (gender, birthplace, location, education, age, place of work (if available). These parameters are independent variables, whereas, the dependent variable is support of AfD. To measure the dependent variable I analyzed the second part of the protocol – user-generated content that was categorized on several items. The most important part of user-generated content concerns social and political issues (activity of political parties, immigration, government policy, religion, and etc.). By means of content analysis I measured the frequency of a certain type of posts. Thus, information that users share with friends must demonstrate which topics are salient for the Russian-Germans, to what extent they are close to the position of AfD, therefore, how many Russian-Germans in my sample can be supporters of this party. Time period for analysis is period since 2013 (the year when AfD was founded) till present.

To test the fourth hypothesis I conducted a comparative analysis of media publications concerning AfD and its popularity among Russian-Germans in the Western media outlets and the Russian ones. The method that I used is content analysis.

2.4 Limitations

This research has some limitations. First of all, I do not include in my analysis Facebook users because of the privacy setting of this social media network: there are much more closed profiles in comparison with VK and Classmates. Thus, biographical data and posts are mostly available only to friends. Moreover, here the question arises as: which script of names should be used for searching (Cyrillic, English, or German)? Hypothetically, a Russian-German whose name is, say, Alexander Schmidt may use any of them, and his namesake who does not belong to the Russian-speaking minority may use English or German as well. So, it is not clear how to distinguish Russian-Germans because the name Alexander is popular both in Russia and Germany. Thus, my samples are limited to people who initially have a stronger link with the former USSR as they use the Russian social networks. Probably, that part of Russian-Germans who are integrated into German society very well, including younger generations, may not have accounts in VK and Classmates or may use them very rarely.

Secondly, a sample that is derived from social media networks may be biased because a certain part of Russian-Germans may use their accounts in social media only for private purposes and do not share politically relevant information, at the same time, more radical people may tend to use any platform, including social media accounts, for sharing their attitudes. Thirdly, my sample does not include Russian-Germans who have non-German surnames (for instance, descendants on maternal lines from mixed families, people who moved because of job, etc.). Although, I think a family name itself does not affect party preferences.

To overcome the aforementioned limitations I complemented my research by the analysis of the GLES 2017 dataset. The dataset consists of several 'Components' (sections). The section that I analyzed is called '*Pre- and Post-election Cross Section (Cumulation)*', which comprises interviews with 4291 respondents including the Russian-speaking respondents and

more than two hundred questions about their party preferences, gender, and age. Therefore, using the method of descriptive statistic I can test my hypotheses. Moreover, this dataset allows me to evaluate the extent to which sympathies of Russian-Germans are strong and to compare the party preferences of this minority group and the German society as a whole. Thus, to test my hypotheses I conducted an empirical analysis that consists of three parts: the analysis of social network profiles in Classmates and VK, the analysis of the GLES 2017 survey, and the analysis of media publications about AfD and its popularity amongst Russian-Germans.

CHAPTER 3: THE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

3.1 Social Media Network Analysis: Classmates

This chapter consists of four parts: the first two parts are dedicated to the analysis of social media networks Classmates and VK; in the third part I complement the previous analysis by the data from GLES 2017 survey; finally, in the fourth part I analyze media publications about AfD. To obtain a sample of users in Classmates I have used the following approach: first of all, I have taken the first ten the most popular German family names, according to the research of Marynissen and Nübling (2010, 322), who analyzed German telephone books; these family names are as follows: *Müller, Schmidt, Schneider, Fischer, Weber, Meyer, Wagner, Becker, Schulz,* and *Hoffmann*. Then, according to the data of *Mercator* on the most popular Russian first names in the twentieth century that were registered in Moscow and Moscow region I have chosen the most popular name among males – *Alexander* and among females – *Tatiana.* Thus, combining German family names and Russian first names I have obtained twenty combinations of the most typical names of the Russian-Germans. I used these combinations to search for user profiles in which Germany is indicated as a country of residence. I analyzed the user-generated content that users shared only during the time period from 2013 (the year of foundation of AfD) till present. The data was collected during the time period from 22 April 2019 to 10 May 2019.

I did not include in my sample those users who have closed profiles, those who have not been active and have not published posts over the last three years, and those who have not indicated their age as this parameter is necessary for checking one of my hypotheses. In addition, I ignored the so-called 'joint profiles' of spouses as in such cases it is impossible to determine the gender of a person who publishes posts, and as I have mentioned in the previous chapter, gender is another crucial variable for testing my hypotheses. Because of

these limitations I could not include in my sample users with family name *Meyer,* the search in Classmates revealed only a few profiles none of which fitted the criteria that have been mentioned before. Thus, I managed to draw a sample that includes 352 users, the majority of whom are female (193 users or 55%), therefore the share of male is 159 users or 45%. The mean of age is 49.2. The majority of users indicated a state where they live: this information is available in 336 profiles. The users represent all sixteen states of Germany, the greatest share of users is from North Rhine-Westphalia (23%), followed by Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria with20% and 18%respectively. For the statistics on other regions see in Graph 1.

Graph 1. The Geographical Distribution of Users in Classmates
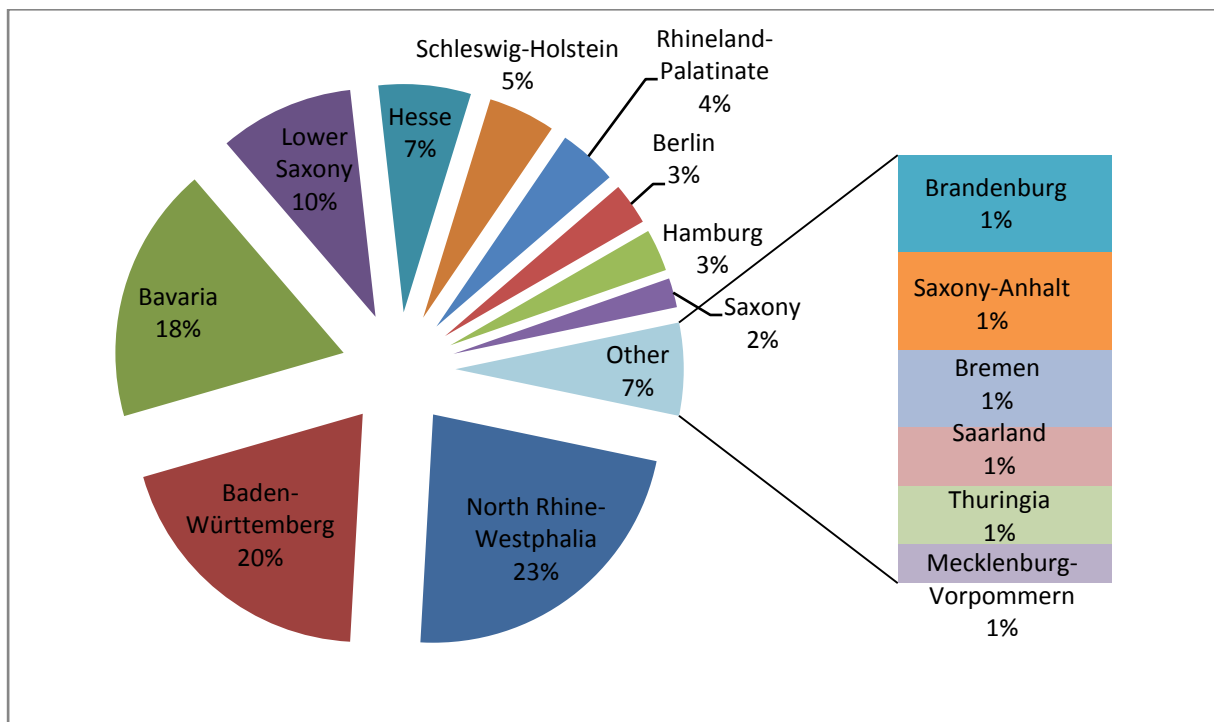
Source: Social Network 'Classmates' (www.ok.ru), N=336.

For analysis of the content that users share in Classmates I use information in the section 'Notes' (*Zametki*) in a user profile. This section includes all posts of a certain user. To analyze the content I have designed the coding protocol that consists of 47 categories that are split into two parts. The first part covers the biographical data of users in ten categories (variables): ID number, name, profile link, age, sex, state, place of residence, school location, education, and marital status. The second part concerns user-generated content that I have categorized into 37

clusters, 10 of which are dedicated to political issues: for instance, anti-immigrant sentiments, critique of Angela Merkel, support for Vladimir Putin, and etc. The remaining 27 topics encompass the most diverse issues from religion and sport to music and games. The full list of clusters and related sub-themes can be seen in Table A.3 in the Appendix. I used directed approach to content analysis in the process of developing this coding protocol (Hsieh and Shannon 2005, 1286); that is, prior to the analysis of the data I had already had some clusters based on existing theories and research. For instance, I assumed that users in my sample would share posts about the activity of AfD, news from the Russian media, anti-immigrant sentiments, and so on. However, as analysis proceeded, additional clusters were developed, for instance, homophobia and conspiracy theories. Thus, my coding protocol has been revised and refined, and consequently, the data was recalculated several times in the beginning of this analysis.

3.1.1 Results of Analysis in Classmates

For every user I calculated the frequency of posts that he/she published on each cluster, thus, I managed to calculate the share of each cluster for every certain user. Then, I calculated the share of each cluster for my sample on the whole using arithmetic mean. This analysis shows that users in Classmates mostly share non-political content, its share is 95%; therefore, only 5% of content is related to political issues. This fact is fairly predictable because Classmates as any social media network is primarily designed for communication and entertainment of people. That is why the biggest shares of content in this analysis belong to such clusters as 'Congratulations' (18.89%), 'Recipes' (13.04%), and 'Music' (13.03%). The statistics of other clusters see in Table A.4 in the Appendix.

At the same time, there are some interesting findings concerning political content that Russian-Germans share in Classmates. The most popular clusters in this segment are 'Anti-Ukraine' (critique of the current Ukrainian authorities, including their actions during the war

in Donbass) – 45 users or 12.78% published such kind of posts, then 'Anti-Immigration' (37 users or 10.5%) and 'Anti-West' (the claims against the policy of the USA and eurosceptic posts were published by 21 users or 5.9%). Incidentally, as the further analysis will show, there is a significant overlap between users who share these three topics.

However, if we look at the share of each cluster on the whole sample, the first three places in political segment are slightly different. 'Anti-Ukraine' with the share 1.15% is on the first place as well, then 'Putin's Critique' (1.14%), and 'Anti-Immigration' (1.02%). As we can see two out of the three first places belong to the issues of non-German agenda, namely, issues that are linked with the politics in the post-Soviet area. Even though the Russian-speaking community has been living in Germany, they are still interested in these issues. At the same time, the gap between these topics and the most salient topic of German domestic policy – 'Anti-Immigration' – is not so significant. I assume this gap can be explained by the time factor: the refugee crisis in Europe began in 2015, while the coming to power of the current Ukrainian government and the war in Donbass took place early – in 2014. Thus, users had more time to publish negative posts against Ukraine.

The same explanation can be applied to the popularity of 'Putin's Critique': for almost 20-year period of Putin's ruling his policy aroused a lot of criticism, especially in the Western countries. It is noteworthy that the number of users who publish posts against Putin is lower than the number of users, who publish content in his support (12 and 19 users, respectively). However, among Putin's critics there are some users who are very obsessed with this topic; the share of anti-Putin posts in the content of four users is more than 50%, while among Putin's supporters the maximum share of positive posts about the Russian president constitutes 40% (this is just in one case, on average this figure is about 3-4%). Thus, inside the Russian-speaking community there are different points of views concerning Putin's policy, and there is a certain group of people criticized who him strongly.

As I have already mentioned, this analysis shows that the most significant topic in German domestic agenda for the Russian Germans is anti-immigration. 37 users (or 10.5%) out of the sample share anti-immigrant posts that include the crimes of migrants, anti-immigrant and anti-Islam caricatures, and condemnation of the migration policy of the German government. This topic is one of the key issues – if not the most prominent one – of the political program of AfD (Goerres et al. 2018, 247); that is why I consider users who share such posts as potential supporters of AfD. We see that the level of AfD support among Russian-Germans is not overwhelming as media outlets depict, thus, my first hypothesis is not confirmed.

Moreover, among the group of potential supporters there are 10 users who share posts that are directly linked with this party, namely: interviews and public speeches of representatives of AfD, content from AfD's communities such as 'Russian-Germans for AfD' (*Russlanddeutschefür die AfD,* https://ok.ru/afdrus). Incidentally, this community is verified and refers to the site of the Russian-speaking supporters of AfD in North Rhine-Westphalia (*Russlanddeutschefür die AfD NRW,* https://russlanddeutsche-afd.nrw), that, in its turn, refers to the regional office of AfD in North Rhine-Westphalia (https://afd.nrw).Thus, I found evidence that organizations that are affiliated with AfD have an official community in the Russian social media network. What is more, AfD is the only political party that is considered in a positive light in the content that the Russian-Germans share in Classmates; the other political parties such as CDU led by Merkel, the Greens, and the left-wing parties are criticized (for the shares of these critical posts see Table A.4 in the Appendix).

Thus, I consider these 10 users that share AfD content as active supporters of AfD, their share constitutes 2.8% of the sample. Then, in this chapter I consider in details these two groups, i.e. active and potential supporters of AfD, and compare them with the rest of the users. First of all, the gender distribution in the group of potential supporters of AfD seems quite equal at first glance: 19 men and 18 women. However, women predominate in the initial sample (193

vs 159); thus, the share of potential supporters of AfD among males is greater than among females: 11.9% and 9.3%, respectively. Moreover, men predominate in the group of the active supporters of AfD: 8 male users against 2 female users. Therefore, we can conclude that men are more likely than women to support AfD, though among potential supporters the gender gap is not so significant, whereas, there is a dramatic difference towards men among the active supporters of this party. Thus, my second hypothesis that men have a tendency to support AfD more frequently than women is confirmed. In that sense, supporters of AfD among the Russian-Germans once again prove the well-known pattern that men are more likely than women to support far-right parties (Immerzeel et al. 2015).

Secondly, a comparative analysis of the average age of AfD supporters and the rest users reveals one more pattern. The arithmetic mean of age in the group of users who do not share anti-immigrant posts is 48.91, while this figure in the group of potential supporters of AfD is 51.64, finally, this indicator is even higher in the group of active supporters of AfD – 52.8. Thus, the higher support of AfD – the higher average age, that is, elder users are more likely than younger ones to support AfD. Therefore, my third hypothesis that people of the older generation are more inclined to support AfD is confirmed as well.

Thus, analysis of profiles of the Russian-Germans in Classmates reveals that the level of potential support of AfD in this minority group is about 10-11% (37 users that share anti-immigrant posts); that is quite close to the result of AfD on the last Bundestag elections. According to the data of the Federal Returning Officer, this party got 11.5% in local constituencies (first vote) and 12.6% on the federal level (second vote). However, as the share of political issue content in Classmates is quite small, I assume that the real level of support of AfD by the Russian-Germans can be higher as many people may use social media networks exclusively for communication and entertainment (the dominant share of content in this analysis is non-political issues – 95% that proves it), they do not necessarily express and share

their political attitudes and beliefs because of reasons which we do not know. At the same time, the advantage of social media network analysis is that we can reveal the range of issues that are important and salient for a certain group of users. Regarding the group of potential supporters of AfD, we can find which topics coupled with 'Anti-Immigration' are shared by the Russian-Germans, what they are concerned about. Thus, we can better understand the social portrait of the potential supporters of AfD. Here, there are some intriguing findings.

First of all, only potential supporters of AfD publish posts in support of AfD and against the Greens and the left-wing parties. Moreover, only they share posts against sex education at schools. Other users do not publish such posts at all. For the further analysis I used such an indicator as the average number of posts on each cluster per user. I divided my sample into two groups: the first one is potential supporters of AfD who share anti-immigrant posts (37 users) and the second group – the 315 users who do not share such posts. In general, the supporters of AfD tend to publish more posts that the rest of the sample, to be more precise: 2.5 times more frequently. The average number of posts per user for the first group is 427 while in the second group this figure is only 159. That is, if the concerns and interests of these two groups are more and less similar and equally distributed, the potential supporters of AfD must share posts about music and recipes two and a half times more often than the rest of the users. However, this hunch does not always fit reality (see Table 1).

As we can see in Table 1, there are dramatic discrepancies concerning political issues between supporters of AfD and the rest of the users. As a rule, potential supporters of AfD much more often share posts concerning the following topics than the rest of the sample: anti-Ukrainian claims, Putin's support, anti-Western claims, critique Merkel, and homophobic claims. In addition, they do not publish critical posts against Putin, their number is closer to zero, whereas, the rest of the users criticize Putin quite often and almost ignore the aforementioned topics.

Table 1. The Average Number of Posts per User in Classmates

.

Cluster	Group 1 (AfD supporters)	Group 2 (the rest)
Political Issues		
Putin's Critique	0.02	60
Putin's Support	1.16	0.05
Anti-Ukraine	69.8	0.26
Anti-Merkel	2.45	0.01
Anti-Immigration	6.45	0
AfD	3.64	0
Anti-West	2.78	0.05
Homophobia	0.62	0.006
Anti-Left	0.21	0
Russian Media	2.51	1.86
Non-Political Issues		
Religion	23.24	0.71
Atheism	0	0.25
Games	5.83	7.71
Art	8.40	1.87
Sport	1.91	0.13
Army	0.37	0.09
Humor	21.78	6.63
Philosophy	9.78	2.54
Family	10.94	4.41
Music	36.43	14.88
Farming	14.21	2.75
Recipes	93.64	27.83
Auto	0.97	0.14
Health	29.70	6.69
Travelling	7.72	1.02
Animals	2.08	0.60
History	5.18	1.66
Conspiracy	1.56	0.10
Congratulations	13.83	7.16
Beauty	4.72	5.35
Business	18.45	0.27
Technology	0.16	0.22
Fishing, hunting	0.81	0.03
Craft	9.24	3.00
Charity	16.94	0.54
Anti-vaccination	0.24	0.003
Anti sex education	0.10	0

Source: Social Network 'Classmates' (www.ok.ru), the data was collected from 22.04.2019 till 10.05.2019. N=352.

Meanwhile, regarding non-political issues, the potential supporters of AfD indeed share posts about family, sport, and humoristic issues two and a half times more often than the rest of the sample. However, this rule does not work in the cases of such topics as business, religion, conspiracy theories, anti-vaccination, and charity. Here, supporters of AfD are much more active than the rest of the users. It is quite predictable that people are simultaneously interested in political and business issues. The link between sympathies towards far-right parties and tendency to believe conspiracy theories and anti-vaccination claims is well-known. The recent research of *The YouGov-Cambridge Globalism Project* shows that populists are more likely to believe in conspiracy theories, including anti-vaccination claims (Lewis et al. 2019). The tendency of potential supporters of AfD to be more religious and therefore more conservative is understandable as well. In that sense, a positive relationship between anti-immigrant sentiments and charity may look surprising. It appears that supporters of AfD are ready to help other people but their compassion is limited and does not cover immigrants. That in some way is paradoxical.

To conclude, content analysis in Classmates reveals that there is a certain group among the Russian-Germans who have strong anti-immigrant attitudes and sympathies towards AfD. This group constitutes at least 10-11%, thus, I have to reject my first hypothesis. In addition to anti-immigrant sentiments, these people tend to criticize the policy of the western politicians, and Chancellor Merkel in particular, and at the same time, they positively assess the policy of Vladimir Putin and have extremely negative attitude towards the Ukrainian authorities due to the war in Donbass. I assume that this set of attitudes can be formed by the Russian state media to a large extent as this discourse is similar to their agenda. Even today, all actions of the Ukrainian authorities are portrayed in a negative light by the Russian state media outlets. However, these people do not share many links to the Russian media. Probably, this link is indirect. Regarding their 'social portrait', this group is quite religious, tends to

believe in conspiracy theories, including anti-vaccination and quite active in the issues concerning charity. Our hypotheses that the base of AfD's electoral support constitutes primarily men and people of older generations are confirmed. Thus, men over the age of 50 are the most active supporters of AfD. At the same time, among the Russian-Germans there is another group of people who actively criticize Putin and do not share aforementioned set of attitudes, but their share is smaller (12 users or around 3%). Thus, we see that the Russian-speaking community in Germany is not homogeneous in their political orientations that can be seen in their attitudes towards the Russian president's policy which are quite polarized.

3.2 Social Media Network Analysis: VK

To obtain my sample in VK I used the similar scheme as in the case of Classmates. I used the same ten most popular German family names but in combination with other male and female names – *Sergej* and *Elena* – that are the second most popular Russian names, according the data of *Mercator*. I used other names to avoid the situation when I would mostly have to analyze profiles of the same people who I have already analyzed in Classmates. People very often have profiles in several social networks where they share the same content. As a result, I managed to collect a sample that consists of only 79 profiles because most users in VK do not indicate their age and residence; moreover, there are a lot of closed profiles and users who have not been active over the last three years. That is why I decided to add in the searching process the new combinations with names – *Vladimir* and *Olga* – the next most popular Russian names, according the data of *Mercator*. Thus, using 40 combinations of the names of Russian-Germans (ten German surnames coupled with four Russian names), I collected a sample that includes 164 profiles. The data was collected from 17 May till 22 May 2019.

The average age of my sample in VK is 37.35 while this figure in Classmates is much less (49.20). Thus, it shows that the audience in VK is much younger than in Classmates. Mostly, VK is used by so-called 1.5th generation of the resettlers who were adolescents in 1990s when their family moved in Germany. Younger generations of Russian-Germans do not primarily use this social network; the 20-year-old users are rare in my sample. Most of them have been already born in Germany so their personal link with Russia is not such strong as in the case of older generations. As in the case of Classmates, women predominate in my sample in VK, what is more, the gender gap is significant: 109 females against 55 males. The fact that women are more active in social media is often mentioned by scholars (Herring and Kapidzic 2015, 147). However, in this case the difference is overwhelming; probably, women in the 30-40 year age group are much more socially active than men in the same age group.

The majority of users in VK sample indicate their residence (159 users). The geographical distribution of users in VK is similar with Classmates. The users from VK sample present 15 regions of Germany; that is almost all regions, except for Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. The largest shares constitute users from the same regions as in the case of Classmates: North Rhine-Westphalia (22%), Bavaria (19%), and Baden-Württemberg (12%).That is not surprising because these three regions are the most densely populated regions in Germany, according to the data of Federal Statistical Office of Germany. The representativeness of other regions can be seen in Graph 2.

3.2.1 Results of Analysis in VK

The analysis shows that users in VK are much more indifferent to political issues than users in Classmates. The share of political topics among all content that Russian-German users share in VK is less than 1%, namely – 0.56%. Some of the political issues they do not cover at all: 'Critique of Merkel', 'AfD', and 'Anti-Left'. The statistics of other clusters see in Table A.5 in the Appendix. Among politically relevant topics they share posts about the following

issues: 'Anti-Ukraine' (6 users share such kind of posts, or 3.7% of users), 'Putin's Support' (3 users or 1.8%), 'Putin's Critique' (2 users, or 1.2%), and 'Anti-Immigration' (1 user, or 0.62%). Thus, we can see that the issues that are linked with their country of origin predominate as well as in the case of Classmates, and only one user is concerned with the migration policy of Germany. At the same time, it is noteworthy that aforementioned figures are statistically quite small and do not allow us to provide a robust analysis.

Graph 2. The Geographical Distribution of Users in VK
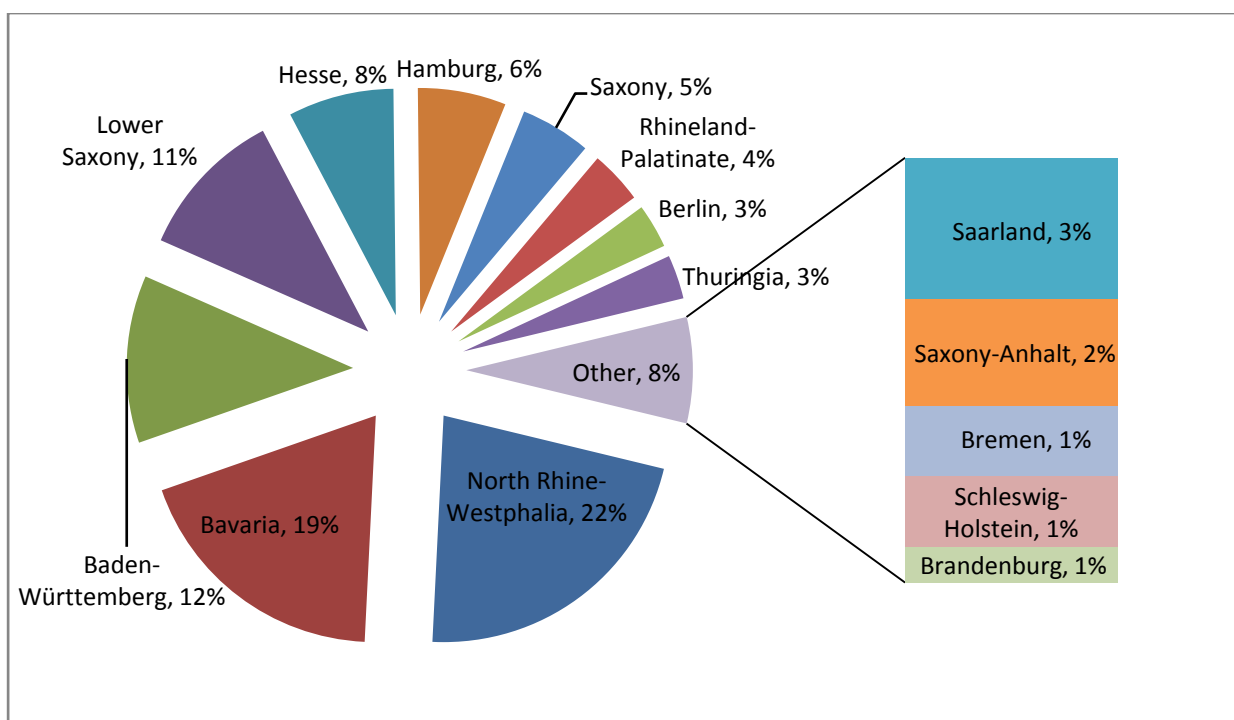
Source: Social Network 'VK' (www.vk.com), N=159.

At the same time, such topics as 'Family', 'Travelling', and 'Music' are major areas of interest of the Russian-German users in VK, their shares constitute 27.55%, 13.31%, and 8.61%, respectively. The average number of posts per user in VK is 163.9 while this figure in Classmates is not so much bigger – 187.39. Regarding the hypotheses of this analysis, I suppose that the fact that sample in VK is much younger and gender-skewed indirectly may prove my second and third hypotheses. Firstly, younger generation does not share critical posts concerning the migration policy of Germany except 1 user; therefore, this issue is not

salient for them as much as for users in Classmates. As the analysis in Classmates shows primarily older users share such posts. Secondly, probably, the share of political issues and anti-immigrant sentiments is so small because women are nearly twice as numerous as men in VK sample, and as we see in the analysis in Classmates men are more prone to support anti-immigrant views.

To conclude, content analysis of user profiles in VK shows that the audience in this social media network differs from the audience in Classmates. The sample in VK includes primarily female users who are much younger than users in Classmates. As the share of politically relevant content is so small I cannot provide a robust analysis of political preferences of users in VK. At the same time, this fact may indirectly confirm my hypotheses that older men are more likely than women have anti-immigrant attitudes as the sample in VK mostly include younger women who do not share such posts.

3.3 Analysis of GLES 2017 Dataset

In this part I present the results of analysis of the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES 2017). This dataset includes interviews with 4291 respondents. There are more than 200 questions, but for this analysis I am interested in several of them, namely: language spoken in household (variable № 187) and party identification (variable № 99). Thus, I can identify among all respondents, the group of Russian-Germans who mainly speak Russian at home and compare their party preferences with preferences of the rest of the respondents. I want to find whether there is a difference in party preferences of Russian-Germans towards AfD. However, only 27 respondents indicated that they mainly speak Russian at home, which is about 0.6% of the sample, whereas, the share of Russian-Germans in Germany constitutes at least 3% of the population in Germany (2.5 million people out of 83 million). That is not representative, unfortunately. Apparently, over 20-30 years, many Russian-Germans have been successfully assimilated. To extend the sample of the Russian-Germans I decided to add

respondents who were born in the countries of the former USSR (variable № 174) and respondents whose both parents were born in the Soviet Union (variables № 179-180). Thus, I managed to select a sample of Russian-Germans that consists of 88 respondents that constitutes 2% of a whole dataset. That is less than it must be (3%), however, as I mentioned above in the chapter about methodology, we have no other data, in other datasets provide a sample of Russian-Germans is even less or cannot be selected at all.

First of all, if we look at the gender composition of the sample of Russian-Germans, we can see that there is an imbalance towards women: female constitute 64% (56 respondents), whereas, men account for only 36% (32 respondents). The average age is 48. In a whole dataset there is no such imbalance, the gender distribution is quite equal: women – 49.1% and men – 50.9% (2109 and 2182 respondents, respectively). The average age in GLES 2017 is 51. Then, I analyzed the party preferences of the Russian-Germans by means of variable – party identification. The question sounds as follows:

Now, let's look at the political parties. In Germany, many people lean toward a particular political party for a long time, although occasionally, they vote for another party. How about you, do you lean toward a particular political party? If yes, which party is that?(GLES 2017)

Three respondents did not answer this question, so I excluded them from the sample, the final sample constituted 85 respondents. The distribution of party preferences of the Russian-speaking minority and the German majority see in Graph 3. The greatest share of the Russian-Germans identifies themselves with CDU/CSU, at 36%. The second most popular party is SPD, at 13%. AfD occupies the third place at 8%, this result cannot be called as overwhelming, thus, my first hypothesis is not confirmed. Incidentally, AfD became the third biggest party in Bundestag, according to the results of the 2017 elections. The remaining parties have 4% or less. It is noteworthy that quite a large share of Russian-Germans – 32% – do not identify themselves with any party. Thus, the aforementioned figures rather demonstrate the share of people with a strong party preference.

Graph 3. The Comparison of Party Preferences of the Russian-speaking Minority and German Majority
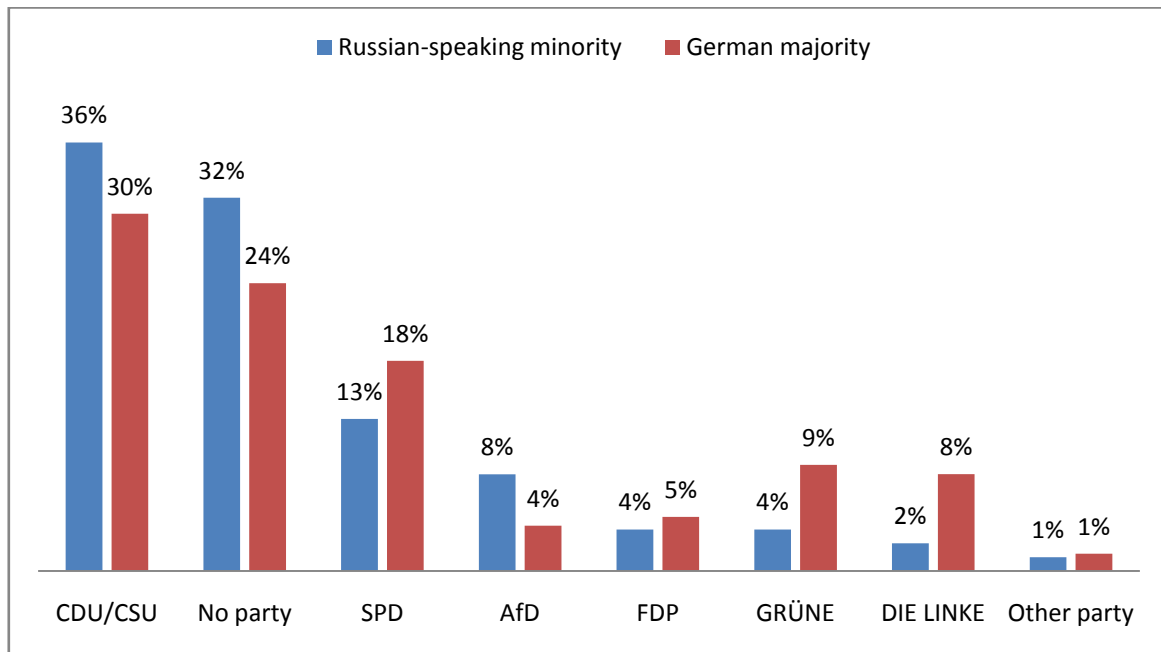
Source: GLES 2017, N (Russian-speaking minority) =85, N (German majority) = 4064.

In raw numbers, only 7 respondents from the sample of Russian-Germans identify themselves with AfD, of these, 4 are men and 3 are women. As in this sample women predominate, the level of support of AfD among males is statistically higher than among women: 13% and 5%, respectively. Therefore, my second hypothesis is confirmed again. The average age of supporters of AfD among Russian-Germans is 59, that is much higher than the average age of the sample (48 years). Thus, we can conclude that among the Russian-speaking supporters of AfD people of older generation predominate which proves my third hypothesis.

It is interesting to compare party identification of the Russian-speaking minority and the rest of the German society – German majority. I excluded Russian-Germans from the initial dataset and obtained a new sample without the Russian-speaking minority. In addition, I excluded the respondents who did not answer the question about party identification. It can be seen that, the first two places belong to the same parties: CDU/CSU and SPD. There is also a

quite large share of respondents who did not identify themselves with any party. However, here AfD occupies only the sixth position with 4% after GRÜNE, DIE LINKE, and FDP. Thus, Russian-Germans are more inclined to sympathize with AfD than ordinary Germans. At the same time, the level of their AfD support is not overwhelming. One more difference between the Russian-speaking minority and the rest of the German society is that the share of respondents who do not identify themselves with any party among Russian-Germans is higher than among ordinary Germans (32% and 24% respectively). Probably, because of that reason this community is called by experts as politically passive minority (Oltermann and Soloveitchik 2017).

It is notable that if we look at all supporters of AfD in GLES 2017 dataset, we may see an interesting feature. The total number of AfD supporters is 159 respondents, of these, 106 are men and 53 are women. Here we can see that males predominate in the electoral base of this far-right party, that has been already confirmed in other studies (Immerzeel et al. 2015) and in my analysis of social media networks. However, the average age of AfD supporters is 48, whereas, this figure among the Russian-speaking supporters of AfD is much higher – 59. That is, the fact that the older generation of Russian-Germans is more likely than the younger one to support AfD is specific only for this minority group.

To conclude, the analysis of GLES 2017 dataset shows that the greater share of Russian-Germans identify themselves with CDU/CSU. Moreover, we can observe the same pattern in the group of the rest of the GLES dataset. However, party preferences of Russian-Germans differ from the rest Germans regarding to AfD. Among the Russian-speaking minority there are more people who sympathize with AfD in comparison with the rest of the German society (8% and 4% respectively). Thus, we see that the level of AfD support in the Russian-speaking community is not overwhelming as media present; therefore, I reject my first hypothesis. At the same time, the analysis reveals that the most active supporters of this party are men of

about 55-60 years of age. Thus, my second and third are confirmed. What is more, this age pattern is specific only for the Russian-Germans as it was not found in the group of all supporters of AfD.

3.4 Analysis of Media Publications

The analysis of my results presented above shows that, in fact, the level of AfD support among Russian-Germans is not significantly above the country's average result. In the third research question I wanted to find explanations of a higher electoral support of AfD among Russian-Germans but – as we can see – this claim does not correspond to reality. That is why I formulated an alternative research question: If the level of AfD support among Russian-Germans is not overwhelming as media depicts, why is this phenomenon widely publicized by media? To understand possible motives, I conducted a comparative analysis of different media outlets that reveals differences between them and their possible hidden motives in the way they cover this topic.

The fourth hypothesis about a more appealing representation of AfD in the Russian media outlets remained the same. To test this hypothesis I analyzed and compared media publications about AfD in major Western media (English-language) and the Russian-language media. I categorized the Russian media outlets into two groups: non-state media that are independent from the Russian government and media that are somehow affiliated with the Kremlin (funded by the government or owned by oligarchs who are close to the Kremlin). This distinction is important as their reports often reflect diametrically opposite points of view. In that sense, it is interesting to measure to what extent they differ on that issue. As there are a lot of media publications about AfD, I decided to narrow my search and include in a sample only publications in major mainstream media that concern a tendency of Russian-Germans to vote for AfD. I conducted my search in two ways: in Google search and directly

on the websites of major media outlets using the combination of key words 'Russian-Germans + AfD'.

Thus, I managed to draw a sample that includes 25 publications: 7 articles in the Western media (*The Guardian, Time, Bloomberg, Reuters, The Financial Time,* and 2 publications in *Deutsche Welle*); 7 articles in non-state Russian media (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, TV Rain, RTVI,* and 2 publications in *Meduza* and *BBC Russian Service*); and 11 articles in the Russian media that are affiliated with the Kremlin (*RIA Novosti, NTV, Kommersant, Rambler,*2 publications in *MK ('Moskovskiy Komsomolets')* and *Tzargrad TV*, and 3 publications in *RT*). The articles were published between 2016 and 2019.

For the analysis of media publications I used the method of content analysis. The data selection included two stages. First of all, to determine how AfD is represented in different media outlets I selected definitions (mostly, adjectives) by which journalists locate this party in the political spectrum and which characteristics it is credited with. Second, to provide a more complete comparison I analyzed journalists' explanations of electoral success of AfD among Russian-Germans. For data on each publication see in Table A.6 in the Appendix.

In the publications journalists note that there is a quite surprising phenomenon that many Russian-speaking Germans who themselves have immigrant background tend to vote for anti-immigration party AfD. Moreover, in all three categories of media outlets we can find publications about the appearance of the Jewish branch in AfD which was organized mostly by immigrants from the former USSR. This fact looks much more counterintuitive at first glance; that is why it was widely publicized in the world press. At the same time, in some articles journalists note that AfD is not the only party that Russian-Germans support, they emphasize that earlier many of them voted for CDU, in doing so, other parties are less

frequently reported. These are the only common features that can be found in both the Western and the Russian-language media.

Now, let us consider in detail differences in depiction of AfD by different media outlets. When describing political orientation of AfD, journalists from the Western media mostly use relatively neutral phrases which are widely used in political science: far-right, populist, right-wing, anti-immigration, opposition to Merkel. More critical terms were used only two times: the adjective 'nationalist' was once used by journalists from *The Time* and the term 'xenophobic' is mentioned in *Deutsche Welle* in an interview with a representative of a Russian-German organization that published an open letter in media "We are not AfD". It is noteworthy that only the Russian-language media call this party 'pro-Russian'.

At the same time, depictions of AfD in non-state Russian media and media that are affiliated with state greatly differ. Non-state media also use relatively neutral definitions that were mentioned before. However, some media use phrases that represent this party mostly in a negative light such as: 'ultra-conservative', 'nationalist', 'Islamophobic', 'xenophobic', 'radical' (*Meduza*), 'manipulated by the Kremlin' (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*), 'ultra-right conservatives', 'pro-Putin political force', 'radicals of Nazi sort' (*TV Rain*), 'for many AfD something is not quite decent', 'it tries to look respectable' (*BBC Russian Service*). It should be noted that some of these definitions were citations of people who have been interviewed. It can be assumed that they do not automatically reflect the position of a certain media, but the choice of speakers means a lot.

In the media that are affiliated with the Kremlin we can also find relatively neutral definitions (*RT, RIA Novosti, NTV, Kommersant*) but in some media AfD is represented in a more favorable light. For instance, in *MK,* in addition to wide-spread terms 'right-populist' we can find such definitions as 'a party of professors' and 'patriotic-conservative party'. The only

media outlet that presents AfD only in a positive light is *Tzargrad TV*. Here, we can find such characteristics as 'young and fast-growing political force', 'leading opposition', 'political defender of Jews in Germany', 'pro-Israeli party', 'truly CDU'. At the same time, their journalist argues that "in Germany, AfD is called a pro-Kremlin party, which is a big lie" (Latyshev 2018). So, this media attempts to distance AfD from the Kremlin. What is more, Latyshev (2018) notes that all attacks on AfD concerning its alleged anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi characteristics are unfounded. At the same time, it is noteworthy that Tzargrad TV is a channel of very conservative, even monarchic, and Orthodox orientations. It was launched in 2014 but already in 2017 it had to terminate its broadcasting, and now it functions only on the Internet (Current Time 2017a). Experts note that the lack of audience was the main reason why this channel was shut down (Current Time 2017b). Thus, this media had a very limited audience; and its specific views cannot be representative of a wide Russian-speaking audience.

Analysis of the reasons why AfD is quite popular among Russian-Germans reveals that the Western media and the Russian non-state media share a similar point of view. In addition to the refugee crisis, anti-establishment sentiments, pro-Russian position of AfD, and activity of AfD in the Russian-speaking community, they emphasize the influence of pro-Kremlin media, they often use the term 'propaganda'. At the same time, the Russian media affiliated with the Kremlin certainly ignore this point of view. In their turn, they emphasize internal problems of the German politics and failures of the German government that affect the voting behavior of Russian-Germans. First of all, the German political parties, except AfD, allegedly ignore Russian-German voters who feel that they are aliens in Germany like 'second class citizens' (*RIA Novosti*). Secondly, journalists note dissatisfaction of Russian-Germans with modern European values which, in their view, contravene traditional Christian values, and as result, German Christian culture is at risk. Aside from that, journalists from the Russian-state

media agree with their colleagues from other media outlets that the activity of AfD, the refugee crisis, etc. have had an effect on the electoral preferences of Russian-Germans.

To reveal the reasons why the topic of allegedly high level of AfD support among Russian-Germans is widely publicized by media we can refer to Mullainathan and Shleifer (2002) who distinguish two main motives of news selection. No doubt, all media are driven by the motive to publish a memorable story as the Russian-speaking minority in Germany itself is a distinct group and their support (to be more precise, support of a certain group in this community) of AfD looks counterintuitive at first glance and therefore attractive for readers. Another motive according to Mullainathan and Shleifer (2002) is ideological that implies that personal political preferences of media owners, editors, and journalists influence content of that media source. I assume that a possible reason why the Russian non-state media outlets depict AfD in a more negative light may be their motive to demonstrate how the Kremlin manipulates public opinion and interferes in the policies of other governments, which reflects negatively on the Russian government. Conversely, the Russian media affiliated with the Kremlin belong to another political camp; therefore, their motive differs from motives of non-state media. As they depict this party in a more favorable light, the pro-Kremlin media may try to influence the Russian-speaking voters representing the positive image of AfD and thereby promoting this party. This makes political sense because AfD favors the elimination of Anti-Russian sanctions and recognizes the Crimea as a Russian territory. Finally, a possible motive for the Western media to exaggerate slightly the level of AfD support among Russian-Germans may be an attempt to transfer responsibility for the electoral success of populist party onto the Russian-speaking minority ('scapegoat' effect according to Arzheimer 2016, 4). In fact, not only Russian-Germans but many ordinary Germans voted for AfD. At the same time, one more reason for media bias can be just the lack of information, data, and surveys concerning Russian-Germans. The Russian-speaking minority remains an underobserved group in the

German society, especially their political attitudes and beliefs. This explanation can be relevant for all three categories of media outlets.

To conclude, the Western and the Russian-language media present AfD slightly differently. In general, all three categories of media outlets describing the location of this party on the political spectrum use such definitions as right-wing, populist, and far-right. However, difference is in details. The Russian non-state media also tend to use terms with negative connotations; whereas, some state-affiliated media depict AfD in a more favorable light. In that sense, the biggest difference exists not between the Western and the Russian media but between two categories of the Russian-language media: non-state and pro-state. This distinction is not surprising I assume it may correlate with that fact that inside the Russian-speaking minority there are different points of view regarding, for instance, the policy of Vladimir Putin that we could observe in the social media network analysis. Moreover, the Western and non-state Russian media outlets emphasize the importance of pro-Kremlin media as one of the main predictors that affects political and party preferences of Russian-Germans. Whereas, media affiliated with the Kremlin stress that explanations must be sought within the German society not from outside. Moreover, according to them, AfD is the only party that directly appeals to Russian-Germans who have been ignored by other parties. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is confirmed as well.

However, this does not automatically mean that the Kremlin media affect the Russian-speaking minority in Germany. The link between consuming a certain media and political action/vote is not necessarily direct. Here, the question arises: why some of them consume news from state-affiliated media, while others consume them from non-state media? What determines their media choice? Probably, initially they have certain attitudes and choose that media that is closer to their beliefs (Mutz 2007, Levendusky 2013)? To answer these questions, it needs another detailed research. For further studies of media depiction of AfD, it

makes sense to extend the sample of publications, including German-language media, and to try to conduct an analysis through automatic search of key words.

I assume that different media outlets may have different motives to publish news about a tendency of Russian-Germans to vote for AfD: indirect critique of the Kremlin (the Russian non-state media), promoting of AfD (the pro-Kremlin media), and transferring of responsibility (the Western media). At the same time, such explanations as media bias resulting from the search for a memorable story and the lack of valid information can be can be further motives for all three categories of media outlets.

Conclusion to the Empirical Chapter

In this chapter I described the results of my empirical analyses of social network profiles, GLES 2017 dataset, and media publications. My analysis of social media reveals that there is a certain group among Russian-Germans that supports AfD but its share is relatively small – around 10-11%. The fact that support of AfD by Russian-Germans is not overwhelming is confirmed in the analysis of GLES 2017 dataset. Thus, I have to reject my first hypothesis. The group of AfD supporters primarily includes men of about 55-60 years of age. Thus, the second and the third hypotheses are confirmed.

The analysis in Classmates also revealed some characteristics concerning political and social orientations of AfD supporters. There is a positive relationship between support of AfD and support of the policy of Vladimir Putin. At the same time, active supporters of AfD have strong anti-Western attitudes and negatively assess the Ukrainian authorities. Besides, they are quite religious and, at the same time, interested in business issues, they tend to believe in conspiracy theories, doubt the benefits of vaccination, and, what is surprising: they share charity content. Unfortunately, the data in VK does not allow me to provide a robust analysis; however, the characteristics of the sample indirectly prove the findings that were made during

the analysis in Classmates. Media analysis shows that the Russian media that are affiliated with the Kremlin depict AfD in a more favorable light. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is confirmed as well. As the level of AfD support among Russian-Germans is slightly exaggerated in media outlets, I assume that different media outlets may have different motives for publication of these reports.

CONCLUSION

In this research I explored the phenomenon of far-right voting among the representatives of the Russian-speaking minority in Germany. This pattern has been widely publicized in the media since 2016; that is unsurprising as voting of people with recent immigrant background for an anti-immigrant party looks counterintuitive at first glance and is consequently an interesting topic for the media, particularly in the context of rumors that the Russians and the Kremlin may interfere with the elections in the USA and other countries. However, information about the concrete level of support of AfD among Russian-Germans is still unclear. So far, there have been few academic studies about this topic. One possible explanation of that can be the lack of the data. Unfortunately, there is no dataset that would include a sufficient sample of Russian-Germans. That is why I decided to turn my attention to profiles of Russian-Germans in social media network. This analysis constitutes the main part of this research.

Social media network analysis in Classmates and VK revealed that there is a certain, in fact, quite small, group among Russian-Germans in my sample who support the anti-immigrant sentiments of AfD. The share of this group constitutes approximately 10-11%, that is close to the country's average result of AfD on the last parliamentary elections. Thus, I found that the support of AfD by Russian-Germans is no overwhelming as media outlets present; therefore, I have to reject my first hypothesis. In general, the group of AfD supporters includes men of 50 years and above. Thus, my second and third are confirmed. Moreover, social media analysis revealed that there is a positive relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and interest in religion, business, charity and conspiracy theories, including anti-vaccination. The next finding of social media analysis is that the Russian-speaking Germans have quite polarized attitudes towards the policy of Vladimir Putin who remains an important figure for these German citizens who are registered in Classmates. This analysis has certain limitations as

46

social media networks are primarily designed for communication and entertainment of users and not for expression of political attitudes.

To overcome aforementioned limitations, I analyzed the data about party identification of Russian-Germans using the data of GLES 2017. This analysis revealed that the greater share of the Russian-speaking Germans still identify themselves with CDU, at around 30%. At the same time, the level of AfD support in this minority group is higher than among the rest of the German society. Moreover, a comparison of AfD supporters among the Russian-German minority and the German majority revealed that the tendency of older generation to support AfD is specific only for the group of Russian-Germans.

The analysis of media publications concerning AfD confirmed that the Russian state-affiliated media tend to depict AfD in a more favorable light than the Western media and non-state Russian media. Thus, my forth hypothesis is confirmed as well. However, the biggest differences in depiction of AfD we can observe between two groups of the Russian-language media: non-state and state-affiliated. Such polarized points of view may correlate with diametrically opposite attitudes towards Vladimir Putin.

I assume that the topic of Russian-Germans and their allegedly high level of support of AfD is widely publicized indifferent media due to several reasons. Moreover, different outlets may have different ideological motives to publish such news, namely: indirect critique of the Kremlin (the Russian non-state media), promoting of AfD (the pro-Kremlin media), and transferring of responsibility for the rise of far-right party in Germany on the Russian-speaking minority (the Western media). At the same time, such explanations of media bias as search for a memorable story and the lack of valid information can also be can be motives to publish such news for all three categories of media outlets.

In general, this research can be further developed in two directions. Firstly, voting behavior of Russian-Germans requires further study. Ideal solution would be to collect a dataset with a sufficient sample of Russian-Germans of around 500 respondents with a wide range of available information (party identification, level of income, media preferences, age, sex, etc.) and to compare this data with analogous parameters of the rest of the German society. Because the lack of data and studies caused a biased representation of this minority group in the media; in fact, the tendency of Russian-Germans to support AfD is somewhat exaggerated. Secondly, this case can be explored for the analysis of media bias. However, it makes sense to extend the sample of publications, including the German-language media, and to try to conduct analysis through automatic search of key words.

Table A.2. The Coding Protocol. Part I: Biographical Data

Number	Variable
1	ID number
2	Name
3	Profile Link
4	Age
5	Sex
6	State
7	Place of Residence
8	School Location
9	Education
10	Marital Status

Table A.3. The Coding Protocol. Part II: The User-Generated Content

Number	Cluster	Sub-Themes
	Political Issues	
1	Putin's Critique	The personal critique of Putin's policy and the policy of the Russian government
2	Putin's Support	The positive assessment of Putin's policy and the actions of the Russian government
3	Anti-Ukraine	The negative assessment of the situation in Ukraine and the actions of the Ukrainian authorities during the war in Donbass
4	Anti-Merkel	The negative assessment of Merkel's policy
5	Anti-Immigration	The crimes of migrants, anti-immigrant and anti-Islam caricatures, condemnation of the migration policy of the German government
6	AfD	Interviews and public speeches of representatives of AfD, the content from AfD's communities
7	Anti-West	The claims against the policy of the USA, euroscepticism
8	Homophobia	The homophobian claims and caricatures
9	Anti-Left	The claims against the left-wing parties and the Greens
10	Russian Media	The links to the Russian media sources
	Non-Political Issues	
11	Religion	Prayers, notes about saints, icons, religious practices
12	Atheism	Atheistic claims
13	Games	Social network games
14	Art	Films, poetry, dancing
15	Sport	Sport news and fan support
16	Army	Military news, army photos
17	Humor	Humoristic shows, anecdotes, non-political caricatures
18	Philosophy	Philosophical claims, the quotes of famous people
19	Family	Family and relationship issues, photos of relatives and friends
20	Music	Musical clips, songs, concerts
21	Farming	Farming tips

22	Recipes	Recipes
23	Auto	Exhibitions, automobile news, photos
24	Health	Medication, tips, traditional medicine, fitness
25	Travelling	Travelling and vacation
26	Animals	Pets, photos of animals, news
27	History	Historical events, history of the Russian-Germans
28	Conspiracy	Conspiracy theories, paranormal phenomena, alternative history
29	Congratulations	Congratulations and gratitude
30	Beauty	Beauty and fashion
31	Business	Financial and business issues
32	Technology	New technologies, devices
33	Fishing, hunting	Fishing, hunting
34	Craft	Handicraft, design, construction
35	Charity	Charity, crowdfunding, search for missing persons
36	Anti-vaccination	Claims against vaccination
37	Anti sex education	Claims against sex education

Table A.4. The User-Generated Content, Clusters and their Distribution in 'Classmates'

Number	Cluster	The share
Political Issues		
1	Putin's Critique	1.14%
2	Putin's Support	0.23%
3	Anti-Ukraine	1.15%
4	Anti-Merkel	0.14%
5	Anti-Immigration	1.02%
6	AfD	0.07%
7	Anti-West	0.15%
8	Homophobia	0.03%
9	Anti-Left	0.01%
10	Russian Media	0.73%
Non-Political Issues		
11	Religion	0.95%
12	Atheism	0.18%
13	Games	8.11%
14	Art	2.73%
15	Sport	1.04%
16	Army	0.33%
17	Humor	7.86%
18	Philosophy	3.52%
19	Family	8.32%
20	Music	13.03%
21	Farming	1.63%
22	Recipes	13.04%
23	Auto	0.54%
24	Health	4.87%
25	Travelling	2.29%
26	Animals	0.69%
27	History	1.15%
28	Conspiracy	0.18%
29	Congratulations	18.89%
30	Beauty	1.19%
31	Business	0.80%
32	Technology	0.42%
33	Fishing, hunting	0.13%
34	Craft	2.16%
35	Charity	1.27%
36	Anti-vaccination	0.008%
37	Anti sex education	0.002%

Source: Social Network 'Classmates' (www.ok.ru), the data was collected from 22.04.2019 till 10.05.2019. N=352.

Table A.5. The User-Generated Content, Clusters and their Distribution in 'VK'

Number	Cluster	The share
Political Issues		
1	Putin's Critique	0.03%
2	Putin's Support	0.002%
3	Anti-Ukraine	0.119%
4	Anti-Merkel	0.0%
5	Anti-Immigration	0.003%
6	AfD	0.0%
7	Anti-West	0.01%
8	Homophobia	0.0004%
9	Anti-Left	0.0%
10	Russian Media	0.39%
Non-Political Issues		
11	Religion	0.40%
12	Atheism	0.0%
13	Games	5.55%
14	Art	7.89%
15	Sport	1.80%
16	Army	0.0%
17	Humor	5.20%
18	Philosophy	5.02%
19	Family	27.55%
20	Music	8.61%
21	Farming	0.04%
22	Recipes	6.09%
23	Auto	1.23%
24	Health	2.16%
25	Travelling	13.31%
26	Animals	2.31%
27	History	0.44%
28	Conspiracy	0.01%
29	Congratulations	3.02%
30	Beauty	1.23%
31	Business	3.13%
32	Technology	0.15%
33	Fishing, hunting	0.38%
34	Craft	3.47%
35	Charity	0.33%
36	Anti-vaccination	0.026%
37	Anti sex education	0.0%

Source: Social Network 'VK' (www.vk.com), the data was collected from 17.05.2019 till 22.05.2019. N=164.

Table A.6. Content Analysis of Media Publications

Media	Presentation of AfD	Explanations
The Western Media		
1. The Guardian (22.09.2017) *"How Germany's Russian minority could boost far right"* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/22/how-germanys-russian-minority-could-boost-far-right	the rightwing populist party, far right	1. Refugee crisis 2. Dissatisfaction with democracy 3. Activity of AfD 4. AfD against anti-Russian sanctions
2. Time (25.09.2017) *"How Russian Voters Fueled the Rise of Germany's Far-Right?"* http://time.com/4955503/germany-elections-2017-far-right-russia-angela-merkel/	far right, right-wing, a vocally anti-immigrant and nationalist party, opposition to Merkel	1. Influence of the Kremlin media 2. Frustration with Merkel 3. Nativist stance against immigration 4. Attacks against EU 5. Anti-establishment sentiments, dissatisfaction with democracy 6. AfD against anti-Russian sanctions
3. Bloomberg (02.05.2017) *"Putin Has a Really Big Trojan Horse in Germany"* https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-05-02/putin-s-trojan-horse-for-merkel-is-packed-with-russian-tv-fans	anti-immigration, right-wing	1. Anti-establishment narrative 2. Russian cyber attacks 3. Influence of the Russian media
4. Reuters (16.08.2017) *"Russian-Germans in focus amid fears of Moscow propaganda"* https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-election-russian-germans/russian-germans-in-focus-amid-fears-of-moscow-propaganda-idUSKCN1AW1NA	far right	1. Russian propaganda 2. Activity of AfD 3. Anti-immigrant sentiments
5. Deutsche Welle (14.04. 2019) *"Are Russian Germans the backbone of the populist AfD?"* https://www.dw.com/en/are-russian-germans-the-backbone-of-the-populist-afd/a-48321687	far-right populist	1. Russian television 2. Effect of 'ghetto'
6. Deutsche Welle (17.09.2017) *"Ethnic Germans from Russia in open letter:*	right-wing populist,	1. Russian television

'We are not the AfD'" https://www.dw.com/en/ethnic-germans-from-russia-in-open-letter-we-are-not-the-afd/a-40549269	xenophobic	
7. The Financial Times (31.08.2017) *"AfD deploys double-headed eagle to snare Russian-German voters"* https://www.ft.com/content/1e58cfcc-897a-11e7-bf50-e1c239b45787	populist, anti-immigration	1. Activity of AfD 2. Pro-Kremlin stance of AfD 3. Refugee crisis
Non-State Russian Media		
8. Meduza (25.08.2016) *"The Alternative for Putin: By means of the Russian-Germans the far-right party is becoming the third political force in Germany"* https://meduza.io/feature/2016/08/25/alternativa-za-putina	far-right, ultra-conservative, nationalist party, xenophobic, Islamophobic, pro-Russian, nationalist-patriotic, opposition, radical	1. Refugee crisis, 2. Mobilization of protest electorate 3. Pro-Russian orientation
9. Meduza (28.05.2018) *"There was not multiculturalism in the USSR, and there will be not it here: How millions of the Russian-Germans live in Germany and why they are not always welcome"* https://meduza.io/feature/2018/05/28/v-sssr-ne-bylo-multikulturnosti-i-zdes-ne-budet	Right, anti-immigration party, populist, radical	1. Refugee crisis 2. Activity of AfD 3. Rejection of Christian values in German society, enhanced americatization 4. Perception of Russian-Germans by AfD as truly Germans, not immigrants
10. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (27.08.2017) *"The Russian-speaking people in Germany began collecting signatures against the pro-Kremlin agitation"* https://www.svoboda.org/a/28699614.html	Manipulated by the Kremlin via the Russian group in party	1. Kremlin propaganda
11. TV Rain (25.09.2017) *"The Russian trace in the German politics: how the migrants from Russia helped the radicals to enter the German Parliament"* https://tvrain.ru/teleshow/vechernee_shou/bundestag-445817/	Radicals, ultra-right conservatives, pro-Putin political force, radicals of Nazi sort	1. Refugee crisis
12. RTVI (08.10.2018) *"The Jews for ultra-right: How the Jewish branch appeared in the German 'AfD'"* https://rtvi.com/stories/kak-v-nemetskoy-alternative-dlya-germanii-poyavilos-	Ultra-right, right-radical	1. Refugee crisis

evreyskoe-otdelenie/		
13. BBC Russian Service (07.10.2018) *"Schulz and Abramovich organize the Jewish branch of AfD"* https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-45722955	Right-populist party, for many AfD something is not quite decent, it tries to look respectable	1. Refugee crisis, mass immigration of Muslims
14. BBC Russian Service (25.09.2017) *"AfD: what is the secret of success of far-right?"* https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-41392567	Far-right, anti-immigration, pro-Russian party	1. AfD against anti-Russian sanctions, its pro-Russian position 2. Refugee crisis
The Russian Media Affiliated with the State		
15. RT (03.06.2017) *"The Russian-Germans vote for AfD (Original: Frankfurter Allgemeine)"* https://russian.rt.com/inotv/2017-06-03/Frankfurter-Allgemeine-russkie-nemci-vibirayut	Populist, may become 'a traditional party of Russians'	1. The rest parties ignore Russian-German voters 2. Dissatisfaction with liberal democracy 3. Conservative attitudes 4. Support of Russian TV
16. RT (09.09.2017) *"Russian-Germans turned on Merkel for the sake of AfD (Neckar Chronik)"* https://russian.rt.com/inotv/2017-09-09/Neckar-Chronik-russkie-nemci-otvernulis		1. Dissatisfaction with Merkel's policy because of refugee crisis
17. RT (26.04.2017) *"Russian-Germans support AfD because of fear of Muslims"* https://russian.rt.com/inotv/2017-04-26/Der-Westen-Rossijskie-nemci-podderzhivayut	Opposition party, conservative, pro-Russian party	1. Refugee crisis 2. Dissatisfaction with Merkel's anti-Russian policy and CDU 3. Conservative attitudes 4. Russian-Germans feel that they are aliens because of mistaken policy of German parties
18. RIA Novosti (23.09.2017) *"'She is a usuper': the Russian-Germans united against Merkel"* https://ria.ru/20170923/1505386314.html	Alternative to Merkel	1. Negative attitudes towards Merkel's policy because of confrontation with Russia and

		refugee crisis
		2. Russian-Germans feel that they are 'people of the second sort'
		3. Activity of AfD
19. NTV (26.09.2017) *"Experts explained why AfD is perceived to be the pro-Russian one"* https://www.ntv.ru/novosti/1933380/	Pro-Russian, right party	1. Pro-Russian agenda
20. MK(13.09.2018) *"Alternative for Germany: Why the German nationalists speak with the Russian accent"* https://www.mk.ru/politics/2018/09/13/altern ativa-dlya-germanii-pochemu-nemeckie-nacionalisty-razgovarivayut-s-russkim-akcentom.html	Nationalist, right-conservative, 'party of professors'	1. Refugee crisis 2. Positive attitudes towards Russia
21. MK (29.11.2018) *"The life of Russian-Germans in Germany: why they came in politics. The resettlers are dissatisfied by pensions and migrants"* https://www.mk.ru/social/2018/11/29/zhizn-russkikh-nemcev-v-germanii-pochemu-oni-poshli-v-politiku.html	Right-populist, patriotic-conservative	1. Refugee crisis 2. Activity of AfD 3. Dissatisfaction with current situation in Germany 4. AfD defends Christian values 5. Protest voting
22. Kommersant (31.08.2017) "'Alternative for Germany' decided to attract the Russian voters" https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3398073	Right, conservative and eurosceptic, anti-American orientations	1. AfD against anti-Russian sanctions 2. Activity of AfD 3. Anti-immigration policy 4. Preservation of German Christian culture
23. Tsargrad TV (22.09.2017) *"How 'The Russian Germany' will save Germany"* https://tsargrad.tv/articles/kak-russkaja-germanija-spaset-germaniju_86503	Young and fast-growing political force, national-conservative, right	1. Refugee crisis, threat to European culture 2. Activity of AfD 3. Hostility of native Germans towards Russian-Germans, rusophobia 4. Dissatisfaction with modern European values

24. Tsargrad TV (10.10.2018) *"Russian Jews and Germans decided to save Germany together"* https://tsargrad.tv/articles/russkie-evrei-i-nemcy-reshili-vmeste-spasat-germaniju_162710	Leading opposition, national-conservative, young party. Political defender of Jews in Germany. Pro-Israeli party. 'Truly CDU'. Pro-Kremlin party is false	1. AfD is only political force that defends Jews from Muslim immigrants 2. Islamization of Germany 3. AfD for cooperation with Russia
25. Rambler (22.09.2017) *"The Russians and Bundestag"* https://news.rambler.ru/articles/37969500-russkie-i-bundestag/?updated	Right-radical, close to nationalists	1. Activity of AfD 2. AfD for cooperation with Russia and cancelation of sanctions

Bibliography

Sources:

1. Boris Nemtsov Foundation's survey: Russian-speaking Germans (2016). Accessed April 9, 2019. https://nemtsovfund.org/en/2016/11/boris-nemtsov-foundation-s-survey-russian-speaking-germans/

2. Roßteutscher, Sigrid; Schoen, Harald, Schmitt-Beck, Rüdiger; Weßels, Bernhard; Wolf, Christof; Bieber, Ina; Stövsand, Lars-Christopher; Dietz, Melanie; Scherer, Philipp; Wagner, Aiko (2019): Pre- and Post-election Cross Section (Cumulation) (GLES 2017). GESIS Data Archive, Cologne: ZA6802. Data file Version 3.0.1, doi:10.4232/1.13236

3. The Population of the Federal Regions in Germany (2019).*The Federal Statistical Office of Germany*. Accessed May 24, 2019. https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online/link/tabelleErgebnis/12421-0003&sachmerkmal=BEVPR2&sachschluessel=BEVPROG01https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online/data;sid=C99948AE12B46BC82EFE47A0C1866765.GO_2_1?operation=abruftabelleBearbeiten&levelindex=2&levelid=1558655712910&auswahloperation=abruftabelleAuspraegungAuswaehlen&auswahlverzeichnis=ordnungsstruktur&auswahlziel=werteabruf&selectionname=12411-0010&auswahltext=&werteabruf=Werteabruf

4. The Popularity of Names in Moscow and Moscow Region in the 20th century (2019). *Mercator*. Accessed April 22, 2019. http://names.mercator.ru/

5. The Results of Bundestag Elections (2017). *The Federal Returning Officer*. Accessed May 13, 2019. https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/bundestagswahlen/2017/ergebnisse/bund-99.html#erststimmen-prozente7

6. Top Sites in Germany (2019). *Alexa*. Accessed April 10, 2019. https://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/DE

References:

1. Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice.* Reading, MA, USA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

2. Altemeyer, B., & Altemeyer, R. A. (1996). *The authoritarian specter.* Harvard University Press.

3. Arzheimer, K. (2016). Electoral Sociology–who Votes for the Extreme Right and Why–and When? *The Populist Radical Right: A Reader, 277.* Accessed from https://www.kai-arzheimer.com/paper/electoral-sociology-who-votes-for-the-extreme-right-and-why-and-when/

4. Anwar, M. (2001). The participation of ethnic minorities in British politics. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27(3), 533-549.

5. BBC. (2017). German election: How right-wing is nationalist AfD? October 13. Accessed February 6, 2019. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37274201

6. Belanger, S., & Pinard, M. (1991). Ethnic movements and the competition model: some missing links. *American Sociological Review*, 446-457.

7. Bernhardt, D., Krasa, S., & Polborn, M. (2008). Political polarization and the electoral effects of media bias. *Journal of Public Economics*, 92(5-6), 1092-1104.

8. Betz, H. G. (1994). *Radical right-wing populism in Western Europe*. Springer.

9. Blumer, H. (1958). Race prejudice as a sense of group position. *Pacific Sociological Review*, 1(1), 3-7.

10. Brief, A. P., Umphress, E. E., Dietz, J., Burrows, J. W., Butz, R. M., & Scholten, L. (2005). Community matters: Realistic group conflict theory and the impact of diversity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48(5), 830-844.

11. Brown, J. A. (2016). The new "Southern Strategy:" Immigration, race, and "welfare dependency" in contemporary US Republican political discourse. *Geopolitics, History, and International Relations*, 8(2), 22-41.

12. Ceron, A., Curini, L., & Iacus, S. M. (2015). Using sentiment analysis to monitor electoral campaigns: Method matters—evidence from the United States and Italy. *Social Science Computer Review*, 33(1), 3-20.

13. Chazan, G. (2017). AfD deploys double-headed eagle to snare Russian-German voters. *Financial Time*, August 31. Accessed May 27, 2019. https://www.ft.com/content/1e58cfcc-897a-11e7-bf50-e1c239b45787

14. Current Time. (2017a). "Tzargrad zakryvaetsya: o chem veschal kanal 'pravoslavnogo bol'shinstva'" (Tzargrad shuts down: what the channel of 'Orthodox majority' broadcasted about). December 1. Accessed May 27, 2019. https://www.currenttime.tv/a/28888712.html

15. Current Time. (2017b). "Tzargrad – ambitsioznyi proekt bez auditorii. Ekspert o tom, pochemu zakrylsyakanal" (Tzargrad is an ambitious project without audience. Expert about why the channel shuts down). December 4. Accessed May 27, 2019. https://www.currenttime.tv/a/28890781.html

16. DellaVigna, S., & Kaplan, E. (2007). The Fox News effect: Media bias and voting. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 122(3), 1187-1234.

17. Dietz, B. (2000). German and Jewish migration from the former Soviet Union to Germany: Background, trends and implications. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 26(4), 635-652.

18. Dollard, J., Miller, N. E., Doob, L. W., Mowrer, O. H., & Sears, R. R. (1939). Frustration and aggression. New Haven: Yale University Press.

19. Druckman, J. N., & Parkin, M. (2005). The impact of media bias: How editorial slant affects voters. *The Journal of Politics*, 67(4), 1030-1049.

20. Golova T. (2017). Russian-Germans and the surprising rise of the AfD. *openDemocracy*. October 4. Accessed April 8, 2019. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/russian-germans-and-surprising-rise-of-afd-germany/

21. Goerres, A., Spies, D. C., & Kumlin, S. (2018). The electoral supporter base of the Alternative for Germany. *Swiss Political Science Review*, 24(3), 246-269.

22. Goerres, A., Mayer, S. J., & Spies, D. C. (2018a). How did Immigrant Voters Vote at the 2017 Bundestag Election? First Results from the Immigrant German Election Study (IMGES). Universitat Duisburg Essen, Open-Minded.

23. _____. (2018b). Immigrant voters against their will: a focus group analysis of identities, political issues and party allegiances among German resettlers during the 2017 bundestag election campaign, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2018.1503527

24. Gurkov A. (2017). Ethnic Germans from Russia in open letter: 'We are not the AfD'. *Deutsche Welle*, September 17. Accessed April 10, 2019. https://www.dw.com/en/ethnic-germans-from-russia-in-open-letter-we-are-not-the-afd/a-40549269

25. Gutiontov, P. (2017). "Pobeda pred'iavliaet schet" (The Victory Requires Calculation). *Novaya Gazeta,* March 21. Accessed February 6, 2019. https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2017/03/22/71864-pobeda-pred-yavlyaet-schet

26. Herring, S. C., & Kapidzic, S. (2015). Teens, gender, and self-presentation in social media. *International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 2, 146-152.

27. Hess, C. (2016). Post-Perestroika Ethnic Migration from the Former Soviet Union: Challenges Twenty Years On. *German Politics*, 25(3), 381-397.

28. Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277-1288.

29. Huber, J. D. (2012). Measuring ethnic voting: Do proportional electoral laws politicize ethnicity? *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(4), 986-1001.

30. Ignazi, P. (1992). The silent counter-revolution: Hypotheses on the emergence of extreme right-wing parties in Europe. *European Journal of Political Research*, 22(1), 3-34.

31. Immerzeel, T., Coffé, H., & Van Der Lippe, T. (2015). Explaining the gender gap in radical right voting: A cross-national investigation in 12 Western European countries. *Comparative European Politics*, 13(2), 263-286.

32. Jolkver, N. (2019). Are Russian Germans the backbone of the populist AfD? *Deutsche Welle*, April 14. Accessed May 25, 2019. https://www.dw.com/en/are-russian-germans-the-backbone-of-the-populist-afd/a-48321687

33. Jones, S., Millermaier, S., Goya-Martinez, M., & Schuler, J. (2008). Whose space is MySpace? A content analysis of MySpace profiles. *First Monday*, 13(9).

34. Kim, S. (2017). The populism of the Alternative for Germany (AfD): an extended Essex School perspective. *Palgrave Communications*, 3(1), 5.

35. Latyshev, S. (2018). "Russkie evrei I nemtsy reshili vmeste spasat' Germaniyu" (Russian Jews and Germans decided to save Germany together). *Tzargrad TV,* October 10. Accessed May 25, 2019. https://tsargrad.tv/articles/russkie-evrei-i-nemcy-reshili-vmeste-spasat-germaniju_162710

36. Lengfeld, H. (2017). Die „Alternative für Deutschland": eine Parteifür Modernisierungsverlierer? (The "Alternative für Deutschland": a party for losers of societal modernization?). *KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 69(2), 209-232.

37. Levendusky, M. S. (2013). Why do partisan media polarize viewers? *American Journal of Political Science,* 57(3), 611-623.

38. Lewis, P., Boseley, S., Duncan P. (2019). Revealed: populists far more likely to believe in conspiracy theories. *The Guardian*, May 1. Accessed May 13, 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/01/revealed-populists-more-likely-believe-conspiracy-theories-vaccines?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Facebook&fbclid=IwAR28wbdvpQW_2deTpX422diAcwAPiMQs46adkf2hGeWBA6j3wRvQ41moNfc

39. Magnuson, M. J., & Dundes, L. (2008). Gender differences in "social portraits" reflected in MySpace profiles. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 11(2), 239-241.

40. Marcos-Marne, H. (2017). Minorities to the left: ethno-linguistic identification and vote in Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 43(15), 2634-2651.

41. Marynissen, A., & Nübling, D. (2010). Familiennamen in Flandern, den Niederlanden und Deutschland – eindiachroner und synchroner Vergleich. *Dammel, Antje/Kürschner, Sebastian/Nübling, Damaris (Hg.): Kontrastive germanistische Linguistik.(= Themenband in der Reihe „Germanistische Linguistik 206-209). Hildesheim/Zürich/New York*, 311-364.

42. Meyer, H. (2017). Putin Has a Really Big Trojan Horse in Germany. Bloomberg, May 2. Accessed May 24, 2019. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-05-02/putin-s-trojan-horse-for-merkel-is-packed-with-russian-tv-fans

43. Mullainathan, S., & Shleifer, A. (2002). *Media Bias* (No. w9295). National Bureau of Economic Research.

44. Mutz, D. C. (2007). How the mass media divide us. *Red and Blue Nation*, 1, 223-248.

45. Oliveira, D. J. S., Bermejo, P. H. D. S., & dos Santos, P. A. (2017). Can social media reveal the preferences of voters? A comparison between sentiment analysis and traditional opinion polls. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 14(1), 34-45.

46. Oltermann, P., & Soloveitchik R. (2017). How Germany's Russian minority could boost far right. *The Guardian*, September 22. Accessed February 6, 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/22/how-germanys-russian-minority-could-boost-far-right

47. Olzak, S., & Nagel, J. (1986). Introduction, competitive ethnic relations: An overview. *Competitive Ethnic Relations. Edited by S. Olzak and J. Nagel*, 1-16.

48. Pfetsch, B. (1999). *"In Russia we were Germans, and now we are Russians." Dilemmas of identity formation and communication among German-Russian Aussiedler* (No. FS III 99-103). WZB Berlin Social Science Center.

49. Portes, A., &Mozo, R. (1985). The political adaptation process of Cubans and other ethnic minorities in the United States: A preliminary analysis. *International Migration Review*, 19(1), 35-63.

50. RT. (2017a). "Neckar Chronik: russkie nemtsy otvernulis' ot partii Merkel radi 'Alternativy dlya Germanii'" (Neckar Chronik: Russian-Germans turned on Merkel for the sake of 'Alternative for Germany'). September 9. Accessed May 25, 2019. https://russian.rt.com/inotv/2017-09-09/Neckar-Chronik-russkie-nemci-otvernulis

51. RT. (2017b). 'Adolf, Germany needs you!' AfD investigates regional leader over Hitler posts on WhatsApp. February 15. Accessed May 25, 2019. https://www.rt.com/news/377388-afd-hopeful-hitler-photo/

52. Shalal, A. (2017). Russian-Germans in focus amid fears of Moscow propaganda. August 16. *Reuters*, Accessed May 25, 2019. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-election-russian-germans/russian-germans-in-focus-amid-fears-of-moscow-propaganda-idUSKCN1AW1NA

53. Shuster, S. (2017). How Russian Voters Fueled the Rise of Germany's Far-Right. *Time,* September 25. Accessed February 6, 2019. http://time.com/4955503/germany-elections-2017-far-right-russia-angela-merkel/

54. Stricker, G. (2000). Ethnic Germans in Russia and the Former Soviet Union. *German Minorities in Europe: Ethnic Identity and Cultural Belonging.* Berghahn: New York, Oxford, 165-180.

55. Teney, C., Jacobs, D., Rea, A., & Delwit, P. (2010). Ethnic voting in Brussels: Voting patterns among ethnic minorities in Brussels (Belgium) during the 2006 local elections. *Acta politica*, 45(3), 273-297.

56. Tsygankov, A. P. (2017). The dark double: The American media perception of Russia as a neo-Soviet autocracy, 2008–2014. *Politics*, 37(1), 19-35.

57. Tumasjan, A., Sprenger, T. O., Sandner, P. G., & Welpe, I. M. (2010). Predicting elections with twitter: What 140 characters reveal about political sentiment. *Fourth international AAAI conference on weblogs and social media.*

58. Van Ijzendoorn, M. H. (1989). Moral judgment, authoritarianism, and ethnocentrism. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 129(1), 37-45.