

**A Holistic Approach to Populism:
(Right-wing) Populist Voting Dynamics in the 2017 Federal Elections in
Germany with Respect to Cultural and Socio-economic Determinants**

By

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Abstract

With the ideational approach to populism, scholars established a minimal definition that allows studying populism regardless of ideological loadings or regional characteristics among the supply and the demand side of the political system. Building on the insights of the ideational approach, in this thesis I examine under which circumstances individuals with populist attitudes do actually cast their vote in favor of populist parties on the example of the 2017 federal elections in Germany. Choosing a holistic approach to populism, I study both the supply and the demand side of the political system by analyzing an expert survey, campaign manifestos and a public opinion survey. Considering comparative populist research, in particular socio-economic and cultural approaches to populism, I find dissatisfaction with democracy and established parties as essential conditioning factors of a populist voting decision. Furthermore, the data shows that worries about a potential status loss constitute an important indirect effect on (right-wing) populist voting behavior but are rather insignificant compared to outgroup rejection.

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List of Abbreviations

AfD – Alternative für Deutschland
CDU – Christlich Demokratische Union
CSU – Christlich Soziale Union
FDP – Freie Demokratische Partei
SPD – Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands

Introduction

Populism is one of the most contested concepts in the social sciences. Over the last decades it has been defined as a political strategy,¹ a political logic,² an ideology,³ a communication style,⁴ a discursive frame,⁵ a form of mobilization,⁶ or as a political style.⁷ These different definitions of and approaches to populism often contradicted each other and could never accommodate all movements, actors, and parties that are commonly perceived as populist. However, this has changed over the recent years. With the ideational approach to populism, which conceives populism as a set of ideas that differentiates between an evil elite and a good people, scholars have established a minimal definition of populism. Such a minimal approach made it possible to study populism in a wide range of settings regardless of geographical specificities and different ideological loadings of populism like left- or right-wing populism.⁸

While this newfound consensus allows the replicable and comparable study of populism in a variety of cases, the ideational approach has its limitations. Regarding the understanding of voting behavior in favor of populist parties it often yields divergent results. Scholars using the ideational approach have often focused on the “lowest common denominator”⁹ of populist attitudes among different countries and settings. However, examining the presence of populist actors and attitudes alone cannot explain the success of populism¹⁰ and some studies using the

¹ Kurt Weyland, “Clarifying a Contested Concept: Populism in the Study of Latin American Politics,” *Comparative Politics* 34, no. 1 (2001).

² Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, Paperback edition (London, New York: Verso, 2007).

³ Cas Mudde, “The Populist Zeitgeist,” *Government and Opposition* 39, no. 4 (2004).

⁴ Jan Jagers and Stefaan Walgrave, “Populism as Political Communication Style: An Empirical Study of Political Parties’ Discourse in Belgium,” *European Journal of Political Research* 46, no. 3 (2007).

⁵ Paris Aslanidis, “Is Populism an Ideology? A Refutation and a New Perspective,” *Political Studies* 64, 1S (2016).

⁶ Robert S. Jansen, “Populist Mobilization: A New Theoretical Approach to Populism,” *Sociological Theory* 29, no. 2 (2011).

⁷ Benjamin Moffitt and Simon Tormey, “Rethinking Populism: Politics, Mediatization and Political Style,” *Political Studies* 62, no. 2 (2014).

⁸ Kirk Hawkins and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, “Introduction: The Ideational Approach,” in Hawkins et al., *The Ideational Approach to Populism*.

⁹ Matthijs Rooduijn, “The Nucleus of Populism: In Search of the Lowest Common Denominator,” *Government and Opposition* 49, no. 4 (2014).

¹⁰ Carlos Meléndez and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, “Political Identities: The Missing Link in the Study of Populism,” *Party Politics* 25, no. 4 (2019).

ideational approach even claim that there is no relationship between holding populist attitudes and voting for a populist party.¹¹ Consequently, the question arises why only some populist movements are electorally successful. This thesis aims to provide answers to this question with a particular focus on right-wing populist parties.

To answer this question and to understand the particular dynamics of populism scholars have argued that researchers should “leave their comfort zone”¹² and study populism not as an isolated phenomenon but in correspondence with adjacent factors like socio-economic circumstances, cultural and political dispositions or personality traits.¹³ Hitherto, this has been done by conducting cross-country studies in order to find similarities between the success of different populist movements. However, their results showed that populist constituencies are quite heterogeneous. These studies were not able to find a common set of attitudes and conditions – neither when comparing European and Latin American countries,¹⁴ nor when comparing Western European countries only.¹⁵ Thus, to really understand populist success, it seems to be beneficial to choose a correspondingly narrow focus to allow the in-depth study of regional dynamics and factors. Consequently, in this study I choose an accordingly narrow focus and consider only the case of Germany’s last federal election in 2017.

Regarding the success of populist parties, Germany constitutes a special case in Europe. With *DIE LINKE* Germany has had a moderately successful left-wing populist party since the middle of the 2000s. While most neighboring countries have already experienced the

¹¹ Takeshi Hieda, Masahiro Zenkyo, and Masaru Nishikawa, “Do Populists Support Populism? An Examination Through an Online Survey Following the 2017 Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly Election,” *Party Politics* 27, no. 2 (2021).

¹² Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, “Studying Populism in Comparative Perspective: Reflections on the Contemporary and Future Research Agenda,” *Comparative Political Studies* 51, no. 13 (2018): 1686.

¹³ Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, “Studying Populism in Comparative Perspective: Reflections on the Contemporary and Future Research Agenda”; Matthijs Rooduijn, “State of the Field: How to Study Populism and Adjacent Topics? A Plea for Both More and Less Focus,” *European Journal of Political Research* 58, no. 1 (2019).

¹⁴ Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser and Steven M. van Hauwaert, “The Populist Citizen: Empirical Evidence from Europe and Latin America,” *European Political Science Review* 12, no. 1 (2020).

¹⁵ Matthijs Rooduijn, “What Unites the Voter Bases of Populist Parties? Comparing the Electorates of 15 Populist Parties,” *European Political Science Review* 10, no. 3 (2018).

emergence of right-wing populist parties and sometimes even formed governments with their support (Netherlands) or direct involvement (Austria), Germany did not have a successful right-wing populist party until 2013. In the context of the Euro crisis, the *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) was formed as a neoliberal, conservative party with the main objective to abolish the Euro as a currency. Only moderately successful in the beginning, the party closely missed the five-percent threshold for the federal elections in 2013.¹⁶

With the beginning of the so called “refugee crisis”, the AfD started to gain electoral support. The party adopted a strong anti-migrant and anti-refugee stance, which led to several electoral successes on the state level. Its success was especially striking in East Germany, where the AfD could secure up to a quarter of the vote.¹⁷ In the federal elections in 2017, the AfD scored 12.6% of the vote making it the third strongest party in the parliament and the strongest opposition party after the center-right *CDU/CSU* and the center-left *SPD* decided to continue their coalition government.¹⁸ Again, differences between East and West were salient: On average only about 11% of the West Germans voted for the AfD compared to 20.5% of the East Germans.¹⁹ While the AfD has retained its original market liberal position from 2013, it could establish itself as a radical conservative party.²⁰

The quick electoral success of the AfD has been studied intensively by German scholars. Mostly focusing on the voters of the AfD these scholars could not show a clear-cut picture. There are two main approaches to studying the voters of the AfD among German scholars. First, a socio-economic approach that tries to explain support for the AfD with certain economic

¹⁶ Daniel Mullis and Paul Zschocke, *Regressive Politiken Und Der Aufstieg Der AFD: Ursachensuche Im Dickicht Einer Kontroversen Debatte*, PRIF report 2019, 5 (Frankfurt am Main: Leibniz Institut Hessische Stiftung Friedens- u. Konfliktforschung (HSFK), 2019), 3–4.

¹⁷ Oskar Niedermayer and Jürgen Hofrichter, “Die Wählerschaft Der AfD: Wer Ist Sie, Woher Kommt Sie Und Wie Weit Rechts Steht Sie?,” *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen* 47, no. 2 (2016): 270–71.

¹⁸ Mullis and Zschocke, *Regressive Politiken und der Aufstieg der AFD*, 3–4.

¹⁹ Beate Küpper, Franziska Schröter, and Andreas Zick, “Alles Nur Ein Problem Der Ostdeutschen Oder Einheit in Wut Und Hass? Rechtsextreme Und Menschenfeindliche Einstellungen in Ost- Und Westdeutschland,” in Zick; Küpper; Berghan, *Verlorene Mitte, Feindselige Zustände*, 243–44.

²⁰ Frank Decker, “The “Alternative for Germany:” Factors Behind Its Emergence and Profile of a New Right-Wing Populist Party,” *German Politics and Society* 34, no. 2 (2016): 5.

circumstances.²¹ These studies yield different results: while some ascribe below-average levels of income to voters of the *AfD*,²² others find that they are mostly from socio-economically solid backgrounds but perceive themselves to be part of the lower classes²³ or are at least very worried about the development of the economy.²⁴ The latter point could partly explain the relatively strong performance in the eastern regions that are doing economically worse than the western parts. In fact, when comparing the socio-economic and attitudinal profiles of East and West German *AfD* voters, they tend to be very similar.²⁵

In contrast, other studies argue that socio-economic factors are secondary and put an emphasis on socio-cultural reasons, i.e., the rejection of refugees and immigration.²⁶ These arguments usually build on cultural backlash theories that assume support for right-wing populist parties originate in a sense of cultural threat. Such approaches explain East/West differences with the historical background of East Germany. While some authors stress the importance of both cultural and economic reasons for explaining the success of the *AfD*,²⁷ an intense debate unfolded between supporters of the two different approaches.²⁸

²¹ For an overview see also Mullis and Zschocke, *Regressive Politiken und der Aufstieg der AfD*, 17–19.

²² Karl Brenke and Alexander S. Kritikos, “Wählerstruktur Im Wandel,” *DIW Wochenbericht*, no. 29 (2017).

²³ Ina Bieber, Sigrid Roßteutscher, and Philipp Scherer, “Die Metamorphosen Der AfD-Wählerschaft: Von Einer Euroskeptischen Protestpartei Zu Einer (R)Echten Alternative?,” *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 59, no. 3 (2018).

²⁴ Knut Bergmann, Matthias Diermeier, and Judith Niehues, “Die AfD: Eine Partei Der Sich Ausgeliefert Fühlenden Durchschnitts- Verdiener?,” *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen* 48, no. 1 (2017): 72.

²⁵ Mullis and Zschocke, *Regressive Politiken und der Aufstieg der AfD*, 7–8.

²⁶ Holger Lengfeld and Clara Dilger, “Kulturelle Und Ökonomische Bedrohung. Eine Analyse Der Ursachen Der Parteiidentifikation Mit Der „Alternative Für Deutschland“ Mit Dem Sozio-Oekonomischen Panel 2016,” *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 47, no. 3 (2018); Susanne Rippl and Christian Seipel, “Modernisierungsverlierer, Cultural Backlash, Postdemokratie,” *KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 70, no. 2 (2018); Tobias Schwarzbözl and Matthias Fatke, “Außer Protesten Nichts Gewesen? Das Politische Potenzial Der AfD,” *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 57, no. 2 (2016).

²⁷ Mullis and Zschocke, *Regressive Politiken und der Aufstieg der AfD*, 22.

²⁸ Holger Lengfeld, “Die „Alternative Für Deutschland“: Eine Partei Für Modernisierungsverlierer?,” *KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 69, no. 2 (2017); Thomas Lux, “Die AfD Und Die Unteren Statuslagen. Eine Forschungsnotiz Zu Holger Lengfelds Studie Die „Alternative Für Deutschland“: Eine Partei Für Modernisierungsverlierer?,” *KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 70, no. 2 (2018); Andreas Tutić and Hagen von Hermann, “Sozioökonomischer Status, Deprivation Und Die Affinität Zur AfD – Eine Forschungsnotiz,” *KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 70, no. 2 (2018); Holger Lengfeld, “Der „Kleine Mann“ Und Die AfD: Was Steckt Dahinter?,” *KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 70, no. 2 (2018).

However, it is salient that all these studies usually refrain from using populism as an analytical description for the *AfD* and also do not make use of the insights of populism research. Often, populism is written off as being a too vague and morally charged term. Instead, German scholars use descriptions like “national conservative party with links to right-wing extremism”²⁹ or “authoritarian national conservatism”³⁰. The rich populism literature has rarely been consulted to explain the rise of the *AfD* and if so, only on a superficial level.³¹ Some noteworthy exceptions can be found in form of the *Populismusbarometer* and the *Mitte-Studie*.

The authors of the *Mitte-Studie* choose a comprehensive approach to explain high levels of populism by taking into account different adjacent factors. However, they focus on right-wing populism only and do not consider the effect of populism on voting behavior. Furthermore, they exclude some aspects that are perceived as vital indicators of populism, e.g., anti-elite attitudes.³² The study’s conceptualization of and approach to populism deteriorates the comparability with other studies. Still, their results can also inform the study of populist voting behavior. According to the *Mitte-Studie* the strongest indicators of right-wing populism are a lack of orientation in life, a feeling of political powerlessness and low levels of education.³³

The *Populismusbarometer*, although using a very restricted understanding of populism, discovers astonishingly high levels of populism among the German electorate. For the year 2017, the authors identify nearly a third of the voters as populist and assign mixed populist attitudes to another third. Like the studies cited above, the *Populismusbarometer* indicates a strong relationship between low levels of income, education and populism. The study shows

²⁹ Niedermayer and Hofrichter, “Die Wählerschaft der AfD: Wer ist sie, woher kommt sie und wie weit rechts steht sie?,” 278.

³⁰ Mullis and Zschocke, *Regressive Politiken und der Aufstieg der AfD*, 4.

³¹ Heiko Giebler and Aiko Wagner, “Populistische Einstellungen,” in *Zwischen Polarisierung Und Beharrung: Die Bundestagswahl 2017*, ed. Sigrid Roßteutscher et al., 1. Auflage, Wahlen in Deutschland (Baden-Baden, © 2019: Nomos, 2019).

³² Beate Küpper, Wilhelm Berghan, and Jonas H. Rees, “Aufputschen Von Rechts: Rechtspopulismus Und Seine Normalisierung in Der Mitte,” in Zick; Küpper; Berghan, *Verlorene Mitte, Feindselige Zustände*, 180–85.

³³ Küpper, Schröter and Zick, “Alles nur ein Problem der Ostdeutschen oder Einheit in Wut und Hass? Rechtsextreme und menschenfeindliche Einstellungen in Ost- und Westdeutschland.”

that people with strong right-wing attitudes have the highest levels of populism. However, in absolute numbers most voters with strong populist attitudes are located in the political center. Even though the study claims that the *AfD* and *DIE LINKE* benefit most from the populist vote, this means a large share of the population holds populist attitudes without voting for populist parties.³⁴

Following the *Populismusbarometer* the majority of Germans holds at least partly populist attitudes, but only a small fraction of the electorate votes in favor of populist parties. Again, the question for the success of populist parties arises: why can only some of the individuals holding populist values be mobilized by populist parties and what conditions this mobilization? Are they actually driven by populist attitudes or are other factors more important for their voting decision? To answer these questions a holistic approach to the populist dynamics in Germany is necessary. Accordingly, both the supply side of the political system, meaning the political actors like parties and politicians, and the demand side, meaning the voters, must be studied. Accordingly, in this thesis I do not only examine the *AfD* and its voters, but also the other parties, their voters and non-voters to get a comprehensive picture of the context in which populism is successful.

Since this thesis puts a particular focus on the success of the *AfD*, I consider adjacent factors that the literature suggests as crucial for explaining right-wing populism. I take into account literature that establishes a link between populism and nationalism and an updated version of the ‘losers of globalization thesis’, which stresses structural reasons for populist voting behavior. Hence, to draw a holistic picture of (right-wing) populist voting dynamics I consider socio-economic as well as cultural factors and test their respective explanatory power. In this context, I also test two different definitions of nationalist attitudes as an explanatory factor of

³⁴ Robert Vehrkamp and Christopher Wratil, “A Populist Moment? Populist Attitudes of Voters and Non-Voters before the German Federal Election 2017” (Gütersloh, 2017).

populist voting behavior that can be found in the literature: a positive but exclusive definition that builds on ethnic terms and a negative definition that is constructed merely against the exclusion of outgroup attitudes.

In Chapter 1 of the thesis, I introduce the ideational approach to populism in more detail. I outline its development and discuss its methodological and analytical advantages over other understandings of populism. Based on the ideational approach, I consider theoretical approaches to the success of populist parties that form the framework for the later analysis. Then, I introduce the literature on right-wing populism and its specific characteristics and dynamics, as well as the literature on socio-economic factors that might condition populist voting behavior. I connect these different approaches embedded in a resonance theory to construct an apt theoretical framework for analyzing populism in a holistic manner including both the demand and the supply side of the political system. Chapter 2 deals with the sources and the methods of the analyses. It includes the introduction of the party manifestos, the German Longitudinal Election Study Candidate Survey and Cross Section Study. Further, I discuss the variables, indices and methods that I use for analyzing the sources – a qualitative content analysis for the manifestos, and descriptive and multivariate statistics for the surveys. Chapter 3, the empirical part, entails the qualitative analysis of the party manifestos, the analysis of the expert survey and the cross section study. Finally, Chapter 4 sums up and discusses the findings, considers the limitations of the study and presents the implications for further research.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

1.1 Early Approaches to Populism

Populism has been discussed as an analytical concept for decades. Starting with a conference in the 1960s and a resulting edited volume on populism,³⁵ the term remained conceptually vague and was interpreted in multiple ways. A common theme among those early works on populism is their inductive approach: they usually have an a priori idea about which party, movement or actor is populist and then try to sort out common characteristics to propose some form of typology or theoretical framework. For example, Margaret Canovan put forward seven types of populism covering a wide range from revolutionary intellectual populism over peasant populism to populist democracies.³⁶ While offering a first approach to conceptualize populism, such typologies usually suffer from a vagueness originating in the attempt to incorporate a wide range of examples, from US People's Party and the Russian *Narodniki* in the 19th century to modern instances of populism in both Americas and Europe.

Other early authors contributed greatly to the later understanding and conceptions of populism. Building on Canovan, Paul Taggart defined five themes of populism that have had a great influence on the study of populism without proposing a new: First, he argues that populism is linked to representative politics. According to him populist attitudes are widespread in modern societies and can even be described as a “cultural leitmotiv”. He claims that these attitudes manifest only as a political movement and ideology in a representative setting and, thus, describes it as “hostile to representative politics”. Second, following Taggart populism is based on the conception of a “heartland” which can be understood as a subjective construction of populist actors that defines a community on a myth of a common past. Third, populism lacks

³⁵ Ghița Ionescu and Ernest Gellner, *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics*, Weidenfeld goldbacks (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970).

³⁶ Margaret Canovan, *Populism* (London: Junction Books, 1981).

any core values and is, thus, described by Taggart as “empty-hearted” and “chameleonic”. This explains the different forms in which populism appears, for example, as left- or right-wing populism. Fourth, Taggart claims that populism is always a reaction to a sense of an extreme crisis that transforms the hitherto underlying cultural attitudes in a political movement. Therefore, Taggart believes that a populist movement is inextricably linked to its respective crisis. Since those are by definition short-lived, Taggart argues, fifth, that populist movements in most cases disappear as quickly as they emerged.³⁷

Another influential early scholar of populism is Ernesto Laclau, who proposes a profoundly different and rather normatively driven conception of populism. For Laclau populism is a political logic that manifests in the discursive creation of two camps that divide the social space – a power block and a popular block. The popular block is connected through a set of unsatisfied demands – a so called chain of equivalence. One of these demands functions as an empty signifier being representative for all demands that are part of the chain of equivalence. In this context ‘the people’ that comprise the popular block are not the sum of individuals living in a political entity but those who can be located in the social identity that is created through the chain of equivalence. Similar to Taggart, Laclau perceives populism as a content-independent phenomenon that brings together different interests in a coherent movement and identity. However, Laclau is stretching his concept to a point where it becomes generic, when he equates his understanding of populism with politics all together. Thus, while he offers a wide range of interesting points about the constructed nature and evolving dynamic of populism that is underlying most modern populism research, his theoretical framework is eventually unapt for empirical analyses.³⁸

³⁷ Paul Taggart, “Populism and Representative Politics in Contemporary Europe,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9, no. 3 (2004); Paul A. Taggart, *Populism*, Concepts in the social sciences (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000).

³⁸ Laclau, *On populist reason*; Ernesto Laclau, “Populism: What's in a Name?,” in *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, ed. Francisco Panizza, Phronesis (London: Verso, 2005).

1.2 The Ideational Approach to Populism

The ideational approach to populism draws heavily from the insight, of these early scholars while trying to avoid the conceptual vagueness and analytical fuzziness that often accompanied them. The first significant step to such an empirically sustainable conceptualization of populism was made by the political scientist Cas Mudde. Mudde defines populism as “an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people.”³⁹ To sharpen his conception of populism Mudde defined it against elitism and pluralism. He argues that elitism is the exact opposite of populism describing the elite as the virtuous group and the people as corrupted. Pluralism, on the other hand, rejects the homogeneity claim and perceives a society as a huge number of different and partly overlapping interest groups that have to make (political) decisions in mutual respect.⁴⁰

Another, if not the central feature of Mudde’s definition, is his conceptualization of populism as a “thin-centered ideology”. This term was originally coined by Michael Freeden as part of his morphology of ideologies. Freeden understands ideologies as “thought-patterns of individuals and groups in a society which relate to the way they comprehend and shape their political worlds, and which supply us with crucial clues for understanding political conduct and practices”.⁴¹ Freeden distinguishes between full ideologies that must be offering “particular interpretations and configurations of all the major political concepts attached to a general plan of public policy that a specific society requires”⁴² and thin-centered ideologies that have a

³⁹ Mudde, “The Populist Zeitgeist,” 543.

⁴⁰ Mudde, “The Populist Zeitgeist,” 543.

⁴¹ Michael Freeden, “Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?,” *Political Studies* 46, no. 4 (1998): 749.

⁴² Freeden, “Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?,” 750.

“restricted core attached to a narrower range of political concepts” and “sever[] itself from wider ideational contexts, by the deliberate removal and replacement of concepts”⁴³.

By defining populism as such a thin-centered ideology Mudde accommodates the “chameleonic” nature that Taggart ascribes to populism. A thin-centered ideology can and must be combined with other thin or full ideologies as socialism or nationalism in order to offer political solutions for the challenges occurring in modern societies. Thus, such a minimal definition of populism enables us to understand and analyze actors with vastly different ideological stances and policy plans under the conceptual lens of populism.⁴⁴ For example, it is possible to study forms of exclusionary populism that are most prevalent in the guise of right-wing populism in Europe as well as a rather inclusionary populism that occurs mainly in the form of left-wing populism in South America.⁴⁵

However, Mudde’s conception of populism as a thin-centered ideology did not go uncontested, not at least by Michael Freeden himself.⁴⁶ A notable critique was put forward by Paris Aslanidis, who criticizes inconsistencies in Mudde’s conceptualization of populism as an ideology. According to Aslanidis, Freeden’s methodological conception of ideologies is in general too vague, which reduces the assessment of ideologies as thin-centered or full to a mere question of interpretation. Accordingly, Aslanidis considers Mudde’s definition to be equally contestable and conceptually vague. To bypass these problems, Aslanidis proposes to analyze populism as a discursive frame instead. However, besides that change of perspective he largely maintains Mudde’s definition by defining populism as an “anti-elite discourse in the name of

⁴³ Freeden, “Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?,” 750.

⁴⁴ Mudde, “The Populist Zeitgeist,” 544; Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 6; Mudde, “The Populist Zeitgeist,” 547–48.

⁴⁵ Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, “Exclusionary Vs. Inclusionary Populism: Comparing Contemporary Europe and Latin America,” *Government and Opposition* 48, no. 2 (2013).

⁴⁶ Michael Freeden, “After the Brexit Referendum: Revisiting Populism as an Ideology,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 22, no. 1 (2017).

the sovereign People”⁴⁷. While pointing out significant weaknesses of Mudde’s concept, Aslanidis’ own conceptualization adds barely anything new to the understanding of populism.⁴⁸

Kirk Hawkins and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser have picked up the tension between these two very similar conceptualizations of populism by subsuming them under the umbrella of the ideational approach to populism.⁴⁹ They perceive populism in somewhat looser terms as a set of ideas that can be held by individuals and groups and can as such be discursively expressed and transmitted. This enables Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser to retain the productive conceptualization of populism laid out by Mudde without getting stuck in the conceptual discussion around the term ideology. However, they still use different terms like “thin-centered ideology”, “discourse”, or “frame” and mean essentially the same phenomenon.⁵⁰ While I subscribe to an ideational understanding of populism in this thesis, I intend to avoid such a terminological fuzziness. Thus, I will refer to populism either as a set of attitudes and opinions or as a discourse.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser stick mostly to Mudde’s minimal definition of populism. However, their definition emphasizes different aspects. They describe three essential characteristics of populism: ”a Manichean and moral cosmology; b) the proclamation of ‘the people’ as a homogenous and virtuous community; and c) the depiction of ‘the elite’ as a corrupt and self-serving entity.”⁵¹ Following Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser; something can only be labeled populism if all three aspects are present.

The ideational definition offers significant advantages for studying populism. As Mudde has pointed out earlier, this approach allows to examine populism on both the demand and the

⁴⁷ Aslanidis, “Is Populism an Ideology? A Refutation and a New Perspective,” 96.

⁴⁸ Aslanidis, “Is Populism an Ideology? A Refutation and a New Perspective.”

⁴⁹ Kirk A. Hawkins and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, “The Ideational Approach to Populism,” *Latin American Research Review* 52, no. 4 (2017); Kirk A. Hawkins and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, “What the (Ideational) Study of Populism Can Teach Us, and What It Can’t,” *Swiss Political Science Review* 23, no. 4 (2017); Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser, “Introduction: the ideational approach.”

⁵⁰ Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser, “Introduction: the ideational approach,” 5.

⁵¹ Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser, “Introduction: the ideational approach,” 3.

supply side.⁵² Other definitions of populism like conceiving populism mainly as a political style focus on the supply side only and lack such a holistic approach.⁵³ These conceptions often have a hard time explaining why some populist movements are successful while others are not. In contrast, the ideational approach assumes that populism can only successfully emerge when the two sides of the political system are interacting since it assumes that the discursive usage of populist rhetoric by political actors triggers already existing and quite prevalent populist attitudes and opinions among groups and individuals.⁵⁴

Of course, this does not lead to an automatism whereby prevalent populist attitudes can be transformed by skillful populist politicians into an electoral success at any time. For example, surveys show high levels of populism among voters in Chile. Still, populist politicians have failed to transform these existing attitudes into strong electoral support.⁵⁵ Consequently, many scholars have asked how to explain the recent success of populist parties and politicians in Europe and elsewhere. Following Taggart, a common explanation is a preceding crisis situation that motivates voters to look for new, radical solutions which they find in the guise of populists.⁵⁶ However, the mere notion of a crisis situation is unsatisfactory to explain populism. After all, in the history of democracies there have been numerous crisis that did not result in the rise of populist challengers. Thus, scholars have searched for structural reasons that can explain the recent and persisting success of populist parties in western countries and elsewhere.

For example, Rogers Brubaker identifies two of such structural reasons. First, “the crisis of institutional mediation” which describes the mediatization of politics, the demise of parties as controlling entities, and new means of communication that allow politicians to bypass

⁵² Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism*, 20.

⁵³ Carlos de La Torre, “The Resurgence of Radical Populism in Latin America,” *Constellations* 14, no. 3 (2007); Weyland, “Clarifying a Contested Concept: Populism in the Study of Latin American Politics.”

⁵⁴ Cas Mudde and Cristóbal R. Kaltwasser, “Populism and (Liberal) Democracy: A Framework for Analysis,” in *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy?*, ed. Cas Mudde and Cristóbal R. Kaltwasser (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2012), 10.

⁵⁵ Meléndez and Rovira Kaltwasser, “Political identities: The missing link in the study of populism.”

⁵⁶ Rooduijn, “The Nucleus of Populism: In Search of the Lowest Common Denominator,” 573.

traditional guards of public opinions. Second, the endorsement of protectionist measures that are employed as a reaction to upheavals in societies like the globalization of economics, liberal emancipatory movements or mass migration.⁵⁷ This explanation plays partly into the populist *Zeitgeist* thesis, which assumes that populist discourses are not an extraordinary phenomenon that is reserved only to some political outsiders but has become a widely used instrument, that is employed by mainstream actors like established politicians and media in contemporary democracies.⁵⁸

However, the populist *Zeitgeist* thesis should be seen critically. Several scholars have tried to validate it by examining party manifestos over time in single-country studies⁵⁹, party manifestos in cross-country studies of several western European populist and non-populist parties⁶⁰, or party manifestos as well as newspaper and tabloid articles in cross-country studies⁶¹. Employing an ideational understanding of populism, none of these studies was able to find empirical evidence that there was a rise of populist discourse among mainstream parties or in the media in the course of the last decades. Only Luke March was able to find an increasing emphasis on people-centrism and popular sovereignty in mainstream party manifestos. However, since he could not find an increasing use of anti-elitist discourses, an essential characteristic of the ideational understanding of populism, he refuses to use the term populist *Zeitgeist* as well. Instead, he introduces the term demoticism and suggests to rather speak of a demotic *Zeitgeist*.⁶²

⁵⁷ Rogers Brubaker, "Why Populism?," *Theory and Society* 46, no. 5 (2017): 368–73.

⁵⁸ Mudde, "The Populist *Zeitgeist*," 562.

⁵⁹ Luke March, "Textual Analysis: The UK Party System," in Hawkins et al., *The Ideational Approach to Populism*.

⁶⁰ Matthijs Rooduijn, Sarah L. de Lange, and Wouter van der Brug, "A Populist *Zeitgeist* ? Programmatic Contagion by Populist Parties in Western Europe," *Party Politics* 20, no. 4 (2014).

⁶¹ Luca Manucci and Edward Weber, "Why the Big Picture Matters: Political and Media Populism in Western Europe Since the 1970s," *Swiss Political Science Review* 23, no. 4 (2017).

⁶² March, "Textual Analysis," 56.

A more fruitful approach to explain populism can be found in the functional approach. It states that populist ideas and populist voting behavior is a reaction by citizens that are disgruntled with the way representative democracies work since they do not find their opinions represented by mainstream parties.⁶³ Such disparities between the policies of existing parties and the desires of citizens can be labeled a “representation gap”⁶⁴. As mentioned above, the ideational approach assumes that populist attitudes are already widespread and form a latent demand or disposition among most western populations. Populist actors instrumentalize or “activate”⁶⁵ these dispositions by connecting them to such a representation gap, or other institutional failures such as widespread corruption.⁶⁶ For example, Hawkins et al. showed that even though populist attitudes are widespread in both Chile and Greece, populist politicians have only been successful in the Greek case.⁶⁷

In contrast to the populist *Zeitgeist* thesis, the functional approach could be empirically validated. Simon Bornschier has discussed the emergence of populist parties in Latin America and Western Europe taking Uruguay, Venezuela, France and Germany as examples. He shows that populist parties only successfully emerge when the mainstream parties are not responsive to the voters’ desires either by a change of the voters’ demands or by a change of the parties’ policies. Since populist attitudes are expected to be widespread as a cultural *leitmotif* in Taggart’s terms, they can in connection with the lack of responsiveness of the mainstream parties be ‘activated’ by populist actors.⁶⁸

⁶³ Rovira Kaltwasser and van Hauwaert, “The populist citizen: Empirical evidence from Europe and Latin America,” 6; Hanspeter Kriesi, “The Populist Challenge,” *West European Politics* 37, no. 2 (2014).

⁶⁴ J. E. Oliver and Wendy M. Rahn, “Rise of the Trumpenvolk,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 667, no. 1 (2016): 194.

⁶⁵ Kirk A. Hawkins, Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, and Ioannis Andreadis, “The Activation of Populist Attitudes,” *Government and Opposition* 55, no. 2 (2020).

⁶⁶ Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser, “Introduction: the ideational approach.”

⁶⁷ Hawkins, Rovira Kaltwasser and Andreadis, “The Activation of Populist Attitudes.”

⁶⁸ Simon Bornschier, “Populist Success in Latin America and Western Europe: Ideational and Party-System-Centered Explanations,” in Hawkins et al., *The Ideational Approach to Populism*.

Moreover, the functional approach can explain why populist movements often successfully emerge after a crisis situation without adapting a crisis as a necessary condition. A crisis often restricts the capacity of action of governing politicians to a specific set of policies that might have negative social implications for individual citizens. Such a situation can be instrumentalized by populists in two ways: First, they can use it as evidence for the incompetence of established politicians who let the crisis unfold in the first place. Second, they can ostensibly reveal a lack of responsiveness to the desire of their voters, who are negatively affected by the crisis resolution policies. Thus, populist actors benefit from (perceived) crisis situations and may even try to discursively create and prolong them. Moffitt labels such a behavior as “the performance of a crisis”.⁶⁹ However, unlike Moffitt, the ideational approach does not perceive a (performance of a) crisis as a necessary condition of populist success but as an acceleration and an intensification of an already existing process.

Finally, a considerable advantage of the ideational approach is that it offers the theoretical and empirical possibility to study adjacent concepts as right-wing or left-wing attitudes. In fact, several cross-country studies showed that the typical populist voter does not exist.⁷⁰ The voters differ significantly in terms of socio-economic factors and political profiles. Thus, considering other factors and their interacting and conditioning effects on populism⁷¹ is necessary in order to understand the voting behavior of populist voters in a single-country study.

In summary, the ideational approach allows a holistic analysis of the populist phenomenon taking into account both sides of the political system as well as adjacent factors that condition the emergence and success of populist movements. Bart Bonikowski brings these

⁶⁹ Benjamin Moffitt, “How to Perform Crisis: A Model for Understanding the Key Role of Crisis in Contemporary Populism,” *Government and Opposition* 50, no. 2 (2015).

⁷⁰ Rooduijn, “What unites the voter bases of populist parties? Comparing the electorates of 15 populist parties,” 353; Rovira Kaltwasser and van Hauwaert, “The populist citizen: Empirical evidence from Europe and Latin America.”

⁷¹ Steven M. van Hauwaert and Stijn van Kessel, “Beyond Protest and Discontent: A Cross-National Analysis of the Effect of Populist Attitudes and Issue Positions on Populist Party Support,” *European Journal of Political Research* 57, no. 1 (2018).

advantages together in a theoretical framework that is based on a sociological theory of resonance.⁷² Arguing that there have been populist attitudes as well as populist rhetoric before the rise of populist parties, he suggests to rather look at the resonance between the two sides that have newly been brought into alignment. Bonikowski claims that this resonance is a consequence of a status threat that many people experience due to significant social, cultural and economic changes. To overcome the deadlock, they choose to vote for radical outsiders who promise to overthrow the current system. The resonance is, thus, a consequence of structural change with socio-cultural as well as socio-economic effects.⁷³

In the next two subchapters, I consider such adjacent socio-cultural and socio-economic factors that are likely to condition voting behavior in favor of the *AfD*. First, I take into account literature that establishes a connection between populism and nationalism and offers, thus, the most apt framework to study right-wing populism. Second, I discuss the ‘losers of globalization’ thesis and other socio-economic explanations for the rise of (right-wing) populism.

1.3 Populism & Nationalism

There are two different conceptual approaches to the relationship between populism and nationalism. One that perceives those two phenomena as two separate, albeit often interacting concepts and one that depicts them as inextricably linked. Cas Mudde’s influential work on Populist Radical Right Parties (PRRP) in Europe belongs to the former strain of thought. He defines three core features of this party family: Populism, nativism, and authoritarianism.⁷⁴ Following his own definition of populism as a thin-centered ideology, he describes nativism as an “ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (‘the nation’) and that nonnative elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally

⁷² Terence E. McDonnell, Christopher A. Bail, and Iddo Tavory, “A Theory of Resonance,” *Sociological Theory* 35, no. 1 (2017).

⁷³ Bart Bonikowski, “Ethno-Nationalist Populism and the Mobilization of Collective Resentment,” *The British journal of sociology* 68 Suppl 1 (2017).

⁷⁴ Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 22–23.

threatening to the homogenous nation-state.”⁷⁵ Mudde stresses that nativism is always differentiating between insiders and outsiders of the nation on the ground of cultural differences. Authoritarianism is defined as “the belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely.”⁷⁶ Mudde argues that these authoritarian, populist and nativist attitudes are widespread among the European populations anyway. Hence, he suggests examining mainly the supply side to explain the success of PRRPs in the 21st century.⁷⁷ However, this narrow focus on the supply side has been harshly criticized for “reducing all aspects of politics to party ideology”⁷⁸, and Rooduijn could show that there is a strong connection between holding populism, authoritarianism and nativist attitudes and voting for a PRRP in the Dutch context.⁷⁹

The other way of conceptualizing the relationship of populism and nationalism is perceiving it as two sides of the same coin. Since populism, also perceived in an ideological neutral way, is automatically distinguishing the world in ingroups (“the people”) and outgroups (“the elite”),⁸⁰ it only seems logical to ask who else is excluded from the people. In particular, right-wing populist discourse often defines the people not only against the elite but also against minorities or those at the bottom of the society.⁸¹ Jagers and Walgrave distinguish between these two forms of populist exclusion by constructing it as a two-dimensional space whereby the vertical dimension refers to anti-elitism and the horizontal dimension refers to the exclusion of groups that are internal to ‘the people’.⁸² This approach seems fruitful, but unfortunately Jagers

⁷⁵ Mudde, *Populist radical right parties in Europe*, 19.

⁷⁶ Mudde, *Populist radical right parties in Europe*, 23.

⁷⁷ Cas Mudde, “The Populist Radical Right: A Pathological Normalcy,” *West European Politics* 33, no. 6 (2010).

⁷⁸ Bonikowski, “Ethno-nationalist populism and the mobilization of collective resentment,” 183.

⁷⁹ Matthijs Rooduijn, “Vox Populismus: A Populist Radical Right Attitude Among the Public?,” *Nations and Nationalism* 20, no. 1 (2014).

⁸⁰ Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser, “Introduction: the ideational approach,” 9.

⁸¹ Jan-Werner Müller, *What Is Populism?* (Philadelphia, Pa: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 15–16.

⁸² Jagers and Walgrave, “Populism as political communication style: An empirical study of political parties’ discourse in Belgium,” 324.

and Walgrave do not dive deep into this matter and understand these internal enemies merely as the respective political enemies of different ideological positions.

More recently, Rogers Brubaker came up with a similar conceptualization that allows a more detailed analyses of the matter. He also proposes a two-dimensional space composed of a vertical dimension of inequality, meaning economic, political and cultural inequality; and a horizontal dimension of difference, meaning a difference of cultures, values and ways of life.⁸³ This concept combines nationalism and populism on the basis of their common reference to “the people” either as plebs (populism) or as a bounded community (nationalism) and emphasizes their practical interwovenness in populist discourses.⁸⁴ Brubaker’s conceptualization is considerably more detailed and sophisticated and, while placing an emphasis on the right, also allows the analysis of left-wing populist discourse.

While neither of these two concepts argues for an entire analytical blending of nationalism and populism, they stress different aspects and implicitly entail differing approaches to the definition of ‘the people’ in nationalist terms. Brubaker’s definition foresees merely a negative definition of ‘the people’ that is constructed against the perceived otherness of outgroups (on the horizontal and on the vertical dimension). This approach builds largely on the chameleonic nature of the populist ‘people’, which remains deliberately vague in order to include as many possible supporters as possible. While anti-outgroup attitudes are also an important part of Mudde’s definition of nativism, his definition also entails a positive conceptualization of the people as a native group that lives at its place of origin. Of course, such a native group needs outsiders against which it can be defined and, thus, stressing negative outgroup views is a vital part of its discursive construction. However, nationalism is not necessarily a purely negative concept but an often unformulated, latent construct that nonetheless informs much of

⁸³ Rogers Brubaker, “Populism and Nationalism,” *Nations and Nationalism* 26, no. 1 (2020).

⁸⁴ Brubaker, “Populism and nationalism,” 53.

understanding of the order of the world and the society and allows individuals to place themselves in this order.⁸⁵

Following Mudde, such a positive conceptualization of the nation is part of the nativist strategy of PRRPs and hence should be an observable attitude among their voters. Although, most scholars follow Mudde's definition when studying right-wing populism, they all conceptualize nativism merely as the negative perception of either specific outgroups, like Hungarians in the case of Slovakia,⁸⁶ or outgroups in general, like immigrants or refugees.⁸⁷ While nationalism can be accepted as an essential characteristic of PRRP, it can be examined whether a negative or a positive definition of the own national identity is more influential in explaining right-wing populist success.

1.4 Socio-economic Approaches to Populism

The so-called *Downsian* approach offers an economically based explanation for the rise of populist parties by establishing a connection between personal economic decline and the likelihood to vote for populists.⁸⁸ The most important example for this approach is the so-called 'losers of globalization' thesis by Kriesi et al., which supposes that people that are economically and culturally disadvantaged by globalization are more likely to vote in favor of populist parties. According to this theory, the effects of globalization, i.e., market liberalization and the increasing mobility, produces winners and losers within a society. The 'winners' are the well-educated, economically secure segments of society, who can either adapt to the new situation of international competitiveness or are protected by a secured job in public service, while the 'losers' are less educated, unqualified employees who have a strong attachment to their national community. The latter are threatened by economic and status loss due to the liberalization of the job

⁸⁵ Michael S. Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, Repr (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2010).

⁸⁶ Ben Stanley, "Populism, Nationalism, or National Populism? An Analysis of Slovak Voting Behaviour at the 2010 Parliamentary Election," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 44, no. 4 (2011).

⁸⁷ Rooduijn, "Vox populismus: a populist radical right attitude among the public?."

⁸⁸ Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser, "Introduction: the ideational approach," 13–14.

market and have to compete with migrants about low-paying jobs and social benefits. Next to the economic competition, the ‘losers’ are assumed to feel culturally threatened by migrants. While the determining factors are socio-economic, Kriesi et al. assume that the ‘losers’ mainly define themselves in cultural terms and, thus, opt for right-wing alternatives to the established mainstream parties.⁸⁹

Empirical evidence shows different results for the losers of globalization theory. By comparing seventeen European countries Sara Hobolt and James Tilley show that people who suffered economically in the wake of the euro crisis are more likely to vote for populist challenger parties⁹⁰, even if the mainstream party they previously voted for was in opposition. Furthermore, Hobolt and Tilley show that economic losers do not opt automatically for the right. Their electoral defection is rather based on their ideological positioning.⁹¹ A study of Greek voters shows similar results for distinctively populist voting decisions: low levels of education and low levels of income are connected to populist attitude. Mediated through ideological positions, they lead to populist voting behavior in favor of right-wing or left-wing populist parties respectively.⁹²

Other studies are less optimistic about the empirical validity of the Downsian approach. Comparing different theoretical approaches to explain populist success, Castanho Silva concludes that the Downsian approach has only very low explanatory power.⁹³ Others criticize that this approach cannot explain the absence of populist parties in countries that have been hit the

⁸⁹ Hanspeter Kriesi et al., “Globalization and the Transformation of the National Political Space: Six European Countries Compared,” *European Journal of Political Research* 45, no. 6 (2006); Hanspeter Kriesi et al., “Globalization and Its Impact on National Spaces of Competition,” in *West European Politics in the Age of Globalization*, ed. Hanspeter Kriesi et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁹⁰ Hobolt and Tilley refrain from using the term populist because they are not convinced of the conceptual clarity of the term. However, the parties they consider to be challengers are usually considered populist and fit the above described definitional criteria of populism following the ideational approach.

⁹¹ Sara B. Hobolt and James Tilley, “Fleeing the Centre: The Rise of Challenger Parties in the Aftermath of the Euro Crisis,” *West European Politics* 39, no. 5 (2016).

⁹² Emmanouil Tsatsanis, Ioannis Andreadis, and Eftichia Teperoglou, “Populism from Below: Socio-Economic and Ideological Correlates of Mass Attitudes in Greece,” *South European Society and Politics* 23, no. 4 (2018).

⁹³ Bruno Castanho Silva, “Populist Success: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis,” in Hawkins et al., *The Ideational Approach to Populism*.

hardest by the financial crisis like Portugal.⁹⁴ Mark Elchardus and Bram Spruyt also find no connections between the personal economic situation and populist attitudes. However, building on the ‘losers of globalization’ thesis they propose another economically based explanation that seems to be more fruitful. Analyzing a Belgian sample, they show that feelings of relative deprivation, a perceived situation of declinism, meaning the economy of a country or region is performing poorly, and low levels of education are directly connected to high levels of populist attitudes.⁹⁵ They argue that political choices are “less influenced by ‘egocentric motives’ related to the personal life situation, more by ‘sociotropic considerations’ concerning the way society is evolving and is likely to evolve as a consequence of the political choices that are made. [...] That attitude can also be described as persistent republicanism”.⁹⁶

Philipp Manow puts a similar but more sophisticated theory forward. He introduces a politico-economic theory to explain populism based on the accelerated movement of goods and people due to globalization. Manow argues that the presence and form of populism is conditioned by the economic system of a country. When a country is struggling economically in a globalized world, people opt for left-wing populists to seek protection from a globalized market through expanded social benefits and clientelism. When a country is doing economically well, this will lead to higher migration rates. Manow assumes that high immigration rates result in a perceived social and/or economic status threat by a segment of the population. However, the latter might not be typical ‘losers of globalization’. Which part of the population is affected, is rather conditioned by the strength of the welfare state. In Anglo-Saxon countries, where the welfare state is weak, migration is primarily a threat for market outsiders meaning those who have no secured occupation and stand in permanent competition for low-paying jobs. In

⁹⁴ Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser, “What the (Ideational) Study of Populism Can Teach Us, and What It Can't,” 527–28.

⁹⁵ Mark Elchardus and Bram Spruyt, “Populism, Persistent Republicanism and Declinism: An Empirical Analysis of Populism as a Thin Ideology,” *Government and Opposition* 51, no. 1 (2016).

⁹⁶ Elchardus and Spruyt, “Populism, Persistent Republicanism and Declinism: An Empirical Analysis of Populism as a Thin Ideology,” 115.

contrast, in North- and Continental European countries, where the welfare state is strong and accessible, market insiders perceive migration as a threat. If they lost their jobs, they would be degraded to the same economic level as recently arrived migrants with a low social status. Additionally, they fear that migration burdens the welfare state and leads to a decrease of social services. Both these groups, market outsiders in Anglo-Saxon countries and market insiders in North and Continental European countries, are hence more likely to vote for right-wing populists to protect their interests.⁹⁷

Manow uses this theory to analyze the electoral success of the *AfD* in the 2017 elections. He compares regional economic and election statistics and finds a relationship between economically struggling districts and strong electoral performance of the *AfD*. Furthermore, he shows that high levels of unemployment in the past also have a strong effect on voting behavior. Manow assumes that a previous experience of unemployment increases the fear of another status loss and accordingly leads voting behavior in favor of the *AfD*. However, he finds no connection between unemployment rates and strong *AfD* performance, which seems to confirm his thesis that in the German case it is mainly the market insiders who support right-wing populism.⁹⁸

While Manow makes some good points, he is extremely dismissive when it comes to sociocultural approaches to explain populism. In this context, Manow speaks derogatively about the “culturalization of politics”⁹⁹. He even blames social scientists and politicians for a moralization of the debate about right-wing populism. However, while his empirical study seems to be promising he does not use individual data but only probes the correlation between economic factors and the success of the *AfD* on a district level. Since his argument mainly bases on the perception of an economic threat, it would be more beneficial to take into account

⁹⁷ Philip Manow, *Die politische Ökonomie des Populismus* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2018), 38–69.

⁹⁸ Manow, *Die politische Ökonomie des Populismus*, 70–102.

⁹⁹ Manow, *Die politische Ökonomie des Populismus*, 32.

individual survey data to probe his theory. Furthermore, the consideration of individual survey data allows for a direct comparison of cultural and structural factors.

1.5 A Holistic Approach to Populism

While populism and conditional factors have been studied quite extensively during the last years, these studies often lack a holistic approach to the topic. First and most important, populism is either studied on the supply or on the demand side. However, following the functional approach populist parties are expected to be successful only when already prevalent high levels of populist attitudes combined with dissatisfaction with the government are rallied by a populist actor. Thus, it is necessary to take into consideration both the supply and the demand side to understand the electoral success of populist parties like the *AfD* or *DIE LINKE*. Still, published studies rarely consider both the demand and the supply side.¹⁰⁰ As long as only one of both sides is studied, it cannot be finally concluded whether the decisive link between populist parties and their voters is really populism or the often radical policy proposals of populist parties.

Second, as the debate about the significance of socio-economic and cultural explanations for the success of the *AfD* among German scholars and Manow's provoking dismissal of cultural explanations shows, there is no consensus how strong the explanatory power of these two approaches is and how they relate. While several studies showed that there is no clear direct relationship between economic shortcomings like low levels of income or unemployment and populist voting behavior, scholars like Elchardus and Spruyt or Manow show that structural contexts can induce fear of material and status losses. These factors still lack empirical validation on an individual level and can be juxtaposed against socio-cultural explanations to populism.

¹⁰⁰ For a notable exception see Hawkins, Rovira Kaltwasser and Andreadis, "The Activation of Populist Attitudes."

Third, nationalist attitudes have often been considered as adjacent factors of right-wing populist voting behavior. However, national identity is in most studies only defined via negative outgroup attitudes by measuring the rejection of refugees, specific groups, foreigners in general or Islam. The perspective on the own ethnic or cultural group is rarely considered. Following Mudde's understanding of nativism as the congruence between cultural and territorial borders, national identity could also be defined positively by both the populist party and its supporters. Alternatively, nationalist attitudes could manifest mainly in form of negative-outgroup attitudes like in Brubaker's conceptualization of the interacting effects of nationalist and populist discourse.

Based on these insights, a number of hypothesis can be formulated. First, I assume that populist voting behavior results out of the resonance of a populist campaign strategy on the supply side and widespread populist attitudes on the demand side. However, according to the ideational approach high levels of populism are widespread among the population in general. The *Populismusbarometer* confirms this assumption. Therefore, these attitudes must be "activated" by populist politicians to lead to an actual populist voting decision. Following Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser's theory this activation is caused by massive disappointment over the political system and the established parties. Accordingly, it should be possible to find similarities between the strategies and the voters of the right-wing populist *AfD* and the left-wing populist *DIE LINKE*.

H1a: The AfD and DIE LINKE both try to activate populist attitudes among voters by using populist discourse and high levels of negative campaigning.

H1b: Voters of the AfD and DIE LINKE can be clearly distinguished from other voters through a combination of high levels of populism as well as high levels of dissatisfaction with all established parties and the general democratic system.

Second, I take a closer look at adjacent factors that according to the literature condition right-wing populist voting behavior. Like previous studies, I consider structural as well as cultural factors and compare their respective explanatory power. However, in contrast to other studies I do not assume that voters of the *AfD* are low qualified ‘losers of globalization’ that cannot compete with others on the labor market. Instead, following Manow I expect *AfD* voters to be market insiders that are afraid of a possible status loss. Accordingly, the second hypothesis states:

H2: AfD voters market insiders that are worried about a potential status loss rather than ‘losers of globalization’.

According to Manow, worries about the own status are a considerably stronger explanation for the success of right-wing populist parties than socio-cultural reasons like the rejection of outgroups. Thus, voting in favor of a right-wing populist party that rejects immigrants can be understood rather as a rational choice than as an expression of cultural rejections of outgroups. Accordingly, the *AfD* can be assumed to rally against immigration mostly in economic terms. Therefore, the last set of hypotheses states:

H3a: The AfD emphasizes immigration as an economic rather than as a cultural threat in its campaigning strategy.

H3b: Factors that indicate worries about a potential job loss have a stronger explanatory power for understanding voting behavior in favor of the AfD than cultural factors.

Cultural factors are understood as nationalism following Mudde’s definition. However, there are two different ways of conceptualizing these nationalist attitudes – a positive way following a literal interpretation of Mudde’s definition, and a negative way that is best illustrated by Brubaker’s conceptualization of nationalism and populism. I consider both and test their respective explanatory power against each other.

Finally, I consider differences between East and West Germany. There are several possible explanations why the *AfD* performs considerably stronger in eastern regions. For example, differences on the supply side, i.e., the candidates running in East Germany are more or less populist or they put different emphases on certain issues. But differences in the demand side could be possible as well, i.e., voters in East Germany are more populist, more dissatisfied or they are more worried about possible status loss. Additionally, the disparities between West and East Germany could origin in different economic circumstances or in different historical and sociological backgrounds that condition higher levels of nationalist attitudes. The broad approach to populist dynamics allows to find answers for this different voting behavior as well.

Chapter 2: Methodology

To test the formulated hypotheses a structured approach to both the strategy of the *AfD* and its candidates as well as to the opinions and attitudes of the individual voters is necessary. The most adequate approach to study the demand side on a mass level is to analyze opinion polls. For the supply side there are different options available. Since I aim to provide a holistic picture of the *AfD*'s campaigning strategy I decided against using utterances of single politicians in speeches or interviews. Instead, I opted for a two-step approach to the supply side. First, I examine the party manifestos for the 2017 election. As March argues, many voters may not read party manifestos, still “they are the document that most succinctly summarize party stances for the benefit of a wider audience”¹⁰¹. Thus, party manifestos constitute an adequate source for the general campaigning strategy of the parties. Second, I analyze candidate surveys to study the prevalence of populist and nationalist attitudes on the individual level of the supply side. This is not only a hitherto barely used method to study populism,¹⁰² but in combination with the party manifestos offers a broad basis for studying the supply side of the political system. Furthermore, it allows to detect differences between ideological and policy related positioning between East and West German candidates.

Due to the limited time and financial resources of this thesis project, it was necessary to rely on secondary data. Thus, I had to choose between closed surveys that are accessible to researchers. For the candidate side there have been barely any options. The only structured survey among the candidates for the 2017 federal elections is the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) Candidate Survey. For the demand side, several surveys are available, for example the *Politbarometer*, the German General Social Survey, or the GLES cross. Thus, I

¹⁰¹ March, “Textual Analysis,” 52.

¹⁰² Ioannis Andreadis and Saskia P. Ruth-Lovell, “Elite Surveys,” in Hawkins et al., *The Ideational Approach to Populism*, 113.

predefined a set of criteria based on which I could choose the best-suited survey: First, the survey should have been conducted in close temporal proximity to the elections taking place in September 2017; second, it should include questions on populist attitudes as well as on, third, nationalist tendencies; and, fourth, it should provide a larger set of questions on socio-economic conditions and perceptions. The only survey that fulfilled all these criteria was the GLES Cross Section study, which entails a representative sample and a large and profound set of socio-economic variables. Working with the GLES for both the candidates and the voters also ensures a certain degree of similarity between the structure and the phrasing of the question and consequently raises the degree of comparability between those two sides. All analysis and visualizations are performed with R, an open-source software environment for statistical computing.

2.1 Sources

Campaign Manifestos

I consider the campaign manifestos of all parties that have been elected to the *Bundestag*. Thus, I take a look at the manifestos of *CDU*, *CSU*, *SPD*, *FDP*, *Die Grünen*, *DIE LINKE* and *AfD*. The programs are between 31 (*CSU*) and 248 (*Die Grünen*) pages with an average of 121 pages. The *CSU*, which only runs in the federal state of Bavaria, is a special case because it usually campaigns together with the *CDU* and the two parties act as one fraction, the *Union*, in the *Bundestag*. Thus, the *CSU* published a joint campaign manifesto together with its sister party *CDU*. On the other hand, the *CSU* was highly critical of Angela Merkel's immigration and asylum policies and wanted the *Union* to adopt a harsher stance in this regard. They released a separate campaign program, albeit a rather short one, to compete with the *AfD* over right-wing voters.¹⁰³ To prevent confusion I always refer to the joint program as the manifesto of the *CDU*

¹⁰³ Clay Clemens, "The CDU/CSU's Ambivalent 2017 Campaign," *German Politics and Society* 36, no. 2 (2018).

and name the *CSU* manifesto separately. The campaign manifestos of all major parties for the 2017 election are available online.¹⁰⁴

Candidate Study¹⁰⁵

The GLES has been conducted since 2009. It was initiated by the German Society for Electoral Studies (»*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Wahlforschung*«) and was funded by the German Research Foundation up until 2019. The Berlin Social Science Center conducted the survey in the months after the election between October 2017 and February 2018. The GLES candidate survey is part of the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS), a joint multi-national project. Accordingly, the questionnaire of the GLES candidate survey was developed as part of the second module of the CCS, which covered the years 2013 to 2018 in all participating countries. This ensures the comparability and also reliability of the measures, which have been used in a variety of contexts.

The survey was sent to all candidates with realistic chances to reach the 5% threshold. Realistic chances were assessed through the performance of the respective parties in the polls. Consequently, all parties that were already represented in the *Bundestag* (*CDU*, *CSU*, *SPD*, *Die Grünen* & *DIE LINKE*) as well as the *FDP* and the *AfD* were asked to participate. Of the 2516 candidates approached, 803 answered enough questions (at least 75 %) to be included in the survey.¹⁰⁶ The questionnaire contained five question blocks on *political background and political activities*, *election campaign*, *political topics*, *democracy and representation* and *personal information*. Other information about the constituencies of the candidates were obtained from official statistics and added to the dataset. The questionnaire and the study description are available on the website of the GESIS.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.bundestagswahl-bw.de/wahlprogramme-2017>.

¹⁰⁵ Sigrid Roßteutscher et.al, „GLES 2017 Kandidatenstudie,” *GESIS Data Archiv, Cologne*. ZA6814 Data file Version 3.0.0 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.4232/1.13089>.

¹⁰⁶ Table 7 in the Appendix shows the number of survey participants sorted after party and region.

¹⁰⁷ <https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/sdesc2.asp?no=6814&db=e&doi=10.4232/1.13089>.

Since only about a third of the candidates answered the survey some sampling errors occur, which manifest mainly in an overrepresentation of candidates running for *Die Grünen* and an underrepresentation of candidates running for the *CDU* and the *CSU*. Even though there are weights available, which accommodate for those sampling errors, I decided against using them since I will execute mostly descriptive statistics on this survey. Thus, the over- and underrepresentation of some parties should not distort the results.

Cross Section¹⁰⁸

The Cross Section Study was conducted in two waves, taking place in the course of eight weeks before and after the 2017 election respectively. Both samples have about the same number of participants (N = 2179 for the pre-election sample and N = 2112 for the post-election study) and are representative of the population besides a deliberate overrepresentation of East Germans. The pre- and post-election study differ since the latter was conducted as part of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems. Thus, some of the questions were taken from the pre-election study; others were part of questionnaire of the fifth module of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems. In the following sub-chapter, I discuss the respective variables in more detail. I only consider the post-election study since it contains questions on national identity and outgroup-attitudes that are vital for answering the hypotheses formulated above. I excluded all answers that did not indicate the party they voted for. This left me with N = 1895)

The interviews were all conducted by professional polling companies and took on average an hour. The questionnaire includes a huge number of questions on voting decisions, political involvement, attitudes, salient problems, rating of political actors, media usage, contact to parties, preferences on coalitions, socio-demographic and personal characteristics. The full

¹⁰⁸ Sigrid Roßteutscher et.al., „GLES 2017 Post-election Cross-Section,” *GESIS Data Archiv, Cologne*. ZA6801 Data file Version 4.0.1 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.4232/1.13235>.

datasets, the questionnaires and the study description are available on the website of the GESIS.¹⁰⁹

There is a post-stratification weight available for the post-election study that compensates for the oversampling of East Germans as well as for an underrepresentation of people with a lower level of educations in the survey. This weight is applied to all analyses.

2.2 Variables and Indexes¹¹⁰

Candidate Study

For the analyses of the surveys, I included only items on populist attitudes and negative campaigning. While there are very specific questions on populism in the cross section study, the questions in the candidate study are more general. However, the available questions are still specific enough to give a sense of the candidate's positions, in particular in combination with the manifestos.

First, I consider items asking for the party and the federal state for which the candidates ran. Finding items measuring populist attitudes or opinions among the candidates which was the most challenging task since the questionnaire does not include specific questions on that matter. However, a number of items on the state of democracy incorporate the populist subcategories – anti-elitism, popular sovereignty, and a Manichean worldview – implicitly: A. *The citizens have sufficient options to contribute to political decision making.* B. *The legislative reflects the interest of the majority of the people.* C. *The political parties are the central arbitrators between citizens and the state.* D. *Interest groups are too influential on the legislature.* E. *The parliament, not the voters, should make the final decisions on law and politics.* F. *Citizens should be able to cause a binding referendum on the federal level.* G. *Usually, referenda*

¹⁰⁹ <https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/sdesc2.asp?no=6801&db=e&doi=10.4232/1.13235>.

¹¹⁰ Tables with all used variables, their respective labels and values for both the Candidate study and the post-election study can be found in the Appendix (Table 8 and 9). Thus, I will not refer to the answer options for all listed variables in the text.

are not thought-through and lead to bad laws. H. Our democracy is about to lose the trust of the citizens.

I decided to include the statement A, B, E and H since they are directly concerned with the role of citizens and voters and their position in the political system. These statements deal implicitly with anti-elitism (statement E), homogenous classifications (statement B and E) and sovereignty of the people (all four statements). The statements C and D deal neither implicitly nor explicitly with the position of ‘the people’ in contrast to ‘the elite’ but rather ask for the position of parties and interest groups. Statement F and G deal with direct democracy. While there are conceptualizations of populism that place an emphasis on direct democracy as an instrument to fulfil the will of the people, the framework employed in this thesis does not perceive direct democracy as a necessary condition of populism. Thus, those statements will be excluded as well. Since statement H is phrased negatively, I reversed all answer options to maintain comparability. Afterwards, I created an index by calculating the mean of these four items. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) indicates an acceptable model fit (CFI = 0.990, TLI = 0.969, RMSEA = 0.079, SRMR = 0.019) and shows that all items have satisfyingly high loadings (see Table 1).

Table 1: Factor Loadings of populism items (candidates)

Items	Factor Loadings
Statement A	0.781
Statement B	0.787
Statement E	0.652
Statement H	0.596

Additionally, I consider an item asking based on which authority elected MPs should cast their votes when they themselves, their party and their voters have diverging opinions on the matter. The populist choice would be to follow the wish of the voters because it creates a homogenous image of ‘the’ voters as a clear entity with an unanimous and clear-cut opinion.

Moreover, claiming to side always with the opinion of the voters reveals a self-understanding of the respective candidates as the unmediated voice of ‘the people’. This self-understanding can be identified as inherently populist. It must be noted, however, that this self-understanding differs from direct democracy, which allows the voters to actually decide on policy issues themselves via referenda. After all, the candidates once elected to the *Bundestag* still act in a representative system. To check whether the candidates try to rally on the disappointment of voters, I include a negative campaigning variable that asks how strongly the respective candidates have criticized the performance of other parties.

Cross Section Study

For the analysis of the cross section study, I included items asking whether the survey participants have voted at all and if so, for which party.¹¹¹ In contrast to the candidate survey, the cross section study entails items asking directly for populist attitudes. The set of populist variables, which was used in the survey, was first developed by Hawkins et al.¹¹² and later advanced by Akkerman et al. Understanding populism as characterized by anti-elitism, popular sovereignty and a Manichean worldview, the latter proposed six survey items to detect populism. Compared to earlier populism surveys, this scale was more precise and could clearly distinguish between different concepts like populism, pluralism and elitism.¹¹³ This scale was long perceived as the gold standard for measuring populist attitudes on the mass-level and many scholars used it, albeit sometimes in slightly adjusted forms, to study the demand side of populism.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ I will consider the second vote only since every party gets their share of seats in the *Bundestag* according to their share of second votes. The first vote is for the direct candidates that represent an electoral district. They need a plurality of votes to get elected. Therefore, voters often cast their first vote for a bigger party since small parties rarely have a chance to win the plurality of votes in their electoral district. On the contrary, the second vote leads to a stronger representation of the parties in the *Bundestag* as long as the 5% threshold is reached. Thus, it shows who the voters want to be represented in the *Bundestag* without any further strategic considerations.

¹¹² Kirk Hawkins, Riding Scott, and Cas Mudde, “Measuring Populist Attitudes,” *Political Concepts Committee on Concepts and Methods Working Paper Series*, no. 55 (2012).

¹¹³ Agnes Akkerman, Cas Mudde, and Andrej Zaslove, “How Populist Are the People? Measuring Populist Attitudes in Voters,” *Comparative Political Studies* 47, no. 9 (2014).

¹¹⁴ E.g., van Hauwaert and van Kessel, “Beyond protest and discontent: A cross-national analysis of the effect of populist attitudes and issue positions on populist party support”; Andreadis and Ruth-Lovell, “Elite Surveys”;

Of course, this scale has not been uncontested¹¹⁵ and a number of other scales have been developed over the last years, that claim to be more apt to capture populism on the mass level.¹¹⁶ All of these scales treat populism as a multidimensional latent construct that is not directly measurable through survey questions but only through its underlying dimensions.¹¹⁷ Scholars of populism often claim that their populism concept is a so-called attitudinal syndrome, meaning it can only be observed and detected when all its sub-components can be found. This can also be labeled a “concept specification that treats the concept components as non-compensatory”¹¹⁸. However, the scales differ in whether these different dimensions should be measured separately by specific items or whether all dimensions should be measured in a single scale whereby items refer to several dimensions.¹¹⁹ The Akkerman et al. scale uses the latter option, which automatically leads to some form of a non-compensatory concept. Capturing the different dimensions separately or through one set of items has different (dis)advantages.¹²⁰ However, in a comparison of different scales the Akkerman et al. scale performs quite well. Only when it comes to measuring populism in a multi-country setting it has some weaknesses.¹²¹ However, since this thesis only deals with one country, using the Akkerman et al. scale should not pose any problems and should not limit the validity of this study.

Meléndez and Rovira Kaltwasser, “Political identities: The missing link in the study of populism”; Oliver and Rahn, “Rise of the Trumpenvolk.”

¹¹⁵ For a critique see: Steven M. van Hauwaert, Cristian Schimpf, and Flavio Azevedo, “Public Opinion Surveys: Evaluating Existing Measures,” in Hawkins et al., *The Ideational Approach to Populism*, 138–39.

¹¹⁶ Anne Schulz et al., “Measuring Populist Attitudes on Three Dimensions,” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 30, no. 2 (2018); Bruno Castanho Silva et al., “Public Opinion Survey: A New Scale,” in Hawkins et al., *The Ideational Approach to Populism*; Oliver and Rahn, “Rise of the Trumpenvolk.”

¹¹⁷ Alexander Wuttke, Cristian Schimpf, and Harald Schoen, “When the Whole Is Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts: On the Conceptualization and Measurement of Populist Attitudes and Other Multidimensional Constructs,” *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 2 (2020): 356.

¹¹⁸ Wuttke, Schimpf and Schoen, “When the Whole Is Greater than the Sum of Its Parts: On the Conceptualization and Measurement of Populist Attitudes and Other Multidimensional Constructs,” 358.

¹¹⁹ Bruno Castanho Silva et al., “An Empirical Comparison of Seven Populist Attitudes Scales,” *Political Research Quarterly* 73, no. 2 (2020): 410.

¹²⁰ For a discussion of these (dis)advantages see Castanho Silva et al., “An Empirical Comparison of Seven Populist Attitudes Scales.”

¹²¹ Castanho Silva et al., “An Empirical Comparison of Seven Populist Attitudes Scales.”

The items measuring populism are: A. *What people call compromise in politics is really just selling out on one's principles.* B. *The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions.* C. *The politicians in the German Bundestag need to follow the will of the people.* D. *Differences between the elite and the people are larger than the differences among the people.* E. *I would rather be represented by a citizen than by a specialized politician.* F. *Politicians talk too much and take too little action.* A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) indicates an acceptable model fit (CFI = 0.962, TLI = 0.937, RMSEA = 0.077, SRMR = 0.032). However, the CFA also showed that item C has a loading of only 0.386 on the latent populism variable (see Table 3).¹²² Thus, I excluded this item and formed an index by calculating the mean of the remaining five items.

Table 2: Factor Loadings of populism items (public)

Items	Factor Loadings
Statement A	0.691
Statement B	0.663
Statement C	0.386
Statement D	0.524
Statement E	0.626
Statement F	0.690

Additionally, I included items that ask how satisfied the survey participants are with the state of democracy in Germany, with the performance of the governing parties and the performance of the opposition parties. For the latter two set of variables, I calculated the mean to obtain an item that indicates the (dis)satisfaction with the government and the opposition respectively.

¹²² Item C stated that the representatives in the *Bundestag* need to follow the will of the people. Its low loading could be explained with its relatively unoffensive phrasing. The other five items usually entail direct negative statements or at least negative implications about politicians/elites. In contrast, item C could also be approved by voters who want their own opinions represented in parliament or have a literal understanding of the word representative.

The post-election study contains four respectively five items to measure the perception of national identity and outgroup attitudes. All of them were developed and pretested as part of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems. The national identity items measure how important the following attributes are for being “truly German”: 1A. *To have been born in Germany*. 1B. *To have German ancestry*. 1C. *To be able to speak German*. 1D. *To follow Germany’s customs and traditions*. The outgroup attitude items entail the following statements: 2A. *Minorities should adapt to the customs and traditions of Germany*. 2B. *The will of the majority should always prevail, even over the rights of minorities*. 2C. *Immigrants are generally good for Germany’s economy*¹²³. 2D. *Germany’s culture is generally harmed by immigrants*. 2E. *Immigrants increase crime rates in Germany*. These sets of items correspond to the theoretical distinction between a positive definition of a German identity and a negative definition that is based on the demarcation against outsiders. To test whether the items really load on two separate latent factors, I submitted them to an exploratory factor analysis using the promax rotation method and the maximum likelihood method for factor extraction while setting the number of extracted factors to two. The results, which can be seen in Table 4, show that the outgroup attitudes indeed measure the same phenomenon. However, when it comes to the national identity items, only the first two items load strongly on the same factor. The third item, that asks for language abilities, loads only very weakly on the nativism factor and rather strongly on the outgroup-scale; the fourth item that asks for customs and traditions loads only weakly on the anti-outgroup scale. Due to the different measurements, it was impractical to add the third and fourth national-identity item to the outgroup index. Thus, I excluded them from the analysis. To test the reliability of the indexes with only two nativism items, I additionally performed a CFA on the remaining items, whereby I allowed the items to load only on their respective latent

¹²³ I reverse the answer options for this item since it is the single item phrased positively.

factor. Since the CFA also shows a good model fit (CFI: 0.978, TLI: 0.964, RMSEA: 0.058, SRMR: 0.031), I created two indexes by calculating the mean of the respective items.

Table 3: Factor Loadings of Nativism and Outgroup Items

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2
1A	-	0.673
1B	-	0.937
1C	0.555	0.130
1D	0.307	
2A	0.650	
2B	0.458	
2C	0.512	
2D	0.782	
2E	0.760	

To test Manow's assumptions, I included items that are indicating market a fear of a prospective status loss of market insiders. I consider questions that ask for the perception of the general economic situation of the country and the personal economic situation. Furthermore, I included items asking for the employment status. Following Manow, I distinguish here between market insiders, defined as fulltime employees, and market outsiders, defined as those who are currently unemployed. Manow, who has more specific data in this regard, considers marginally employed as outsiders as well. Other scholars even suggest considering part-time employees, who work for less than 30 hours a week, market outsiders.¹²⁴ However, this seems impractical in a high-wage country like Germany, where working only parttime does not necessarily indicate being a market outsider. Fulltime employment and unemployment are the most straightforward indications of being a market insider respectively outsider. I also consider whether survey participants have been unemployed during the last ten years. Since short-term

¹²⁴ Patrick Emmenegger, "Barriers to Entry: Insider/outsider Politics and the Political Determinants of Job Security Regulations," *Journal of European Social Policy* 19, no. 2 (2009): 137.

unemployment periods can occur between a job change or after graduation, and it is likely that those periods of unemployment will not have an effect on the attitudes of an individual, I consider only those unemployed who report to have been unemployed for at least three months. Furthermore, I included an item asking whether the voters are afraid of globalization.

Finally, I consider a number of control variables: items asking in which federal state the survey participants live, whether they live in East or West Germany, their gender, their age and to what kind of school they went.¹²⁵

2.3 Methods

Campaign Programs

For the analysis of the campaign programs, I rely on a structured qualitative content analysis following the system of Udo Kuckartz.¹²⁶ The development of categories is elementary for this system. The content is assigned to the different categories to describe and analyze it in a systematic manner. Following Kuckartz, the categories can be derived a priori from a theoretical framework and previous research and can subsequently be adjusted to the content of the material. There are two final categories that have been used to code the manifestos: First, *populism* with the subcategories *popular sovereignty* and *anti-elitism*. Even though I treat the components of populism as different subcategories, it is important to notice that a statement can only be considered populist when both subcategories are present. Thus, while I used the categorization to code the sources, I present only those statements that incorporate references to both *popular sovereignty* and *anti-elitism*. I do not consider the *Manichean outlook* as a distinct subcategory because it appears rather implicitly through the juxtaposition of *popular sovereignty* and *anti-elitism* and proved to be impractical for the qualitative analysis. The second

¹²⁵ As most studies on the German context do, I take into account the tripartite secondary school system that yields in different leaving certificates. Thus, the lowest levels of education are those without a certificate, followed by those with the lowest secondary school certificate, the intermediary secondary school certificate and finally those with the highest certificate.

¹²⁶ Udo Kuckartz, *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. Methoden, Praxis, Computerunterstützung*, 4. Auflage, Grundlagentexte Methoden (Weinheim, Basel: Beltz Juventa, 2018).

category is *anti-outgroup discourse* with the subcategories *cultural rejection* and *economic rejection*.

Surveys

For the analysis of the Candidate Study, I only use descriptive statistics to explore the dataset and give a sense of the positions of the candidates. Thus, I will look at the means of the respective items and present them together with the qualitative analysis of the campaign programs. Next to party affiliation, I examine whether there are profound differences between candidates running in East and West Germany. Additionally, since the means alone would be overly sensitive to radical outliers, I take into account the distribution of the answers by considering the variance.

For analyzing the cross section study, I start with descriptive statistics as well. Additionally, I construct multivariate logistic regression models with the voting decision as the dependent variable and the respective indexes or items as the independent variables to measure their effect on voting behavior independently. In order to simplify the interpretation of the results, I present them as average marginal effects (AMEs). AMEs indicate the change of likelihood that an individual votes in favor of the *AfD*. For continuous variables, this means an increase of 1 increases the likelihood that an individual votes in favor of the *AfD* by x . For categorical variables, this means that the likelihood than a respective group votes in favor of the *AfD* differs from the reference group by x .

The control variables were entered in all models. Furthermore, I construct full models in which the influences of all factors are tested together. Two full models had to be constructed since the nativism and the outgroup index correlate strongly and cannot appear in the same model. Finally, to check whether there are indirect effects as well, I calculate linear regressions whereby the populism index and the outgroup index serve as dependent variables and the socioeconomic variables Manow proposes were entered as independent variables.

Chapter 3: Analysis and Results

3.1 The Supply Side: Populist Campaigning Strategies of Parties and Candidates

In the following, I present the results of the qualitative and quantitative analysis. Since the analysis of the party manifestos and of the candidate survey complement each other, I present them in one sub-chapter. I start with outlining how populist parties appear via their manifestos and their candidates. Second, I consider anti-outgroup statements in the campaign manifestos.

Populism

Concerning their level of populism, the considered parties can be sorted in three groups. First, there are the three parties that have formed the governing coalition before (and after) the 2017 election: the *CDU*, the *CSU* and the *SPD*. Not a single populist statement can be found in their campaign manifestos. This is hardly surprising since using populist discourse implying a wrongdoing of the ruling government would have strongly delegitimized their own performance.

The second group comprises the *FDP* and *Die Grünen*. While they are criticizing the governing parties, they are rarely using populist language. In the case of the *FDP*, only the introductory statement of the manifesto could be considered as an instance of popular sovereignty. After listing a number of challenges and threats like digitalization, rising numbers of incoming refugees and political and religious extremism, the campaign program states: “We need to take action – let us no longer just stand aside.”¹²⁷ But while the used “we” implies a homogeneous conception of the people and could, thus, be understood as a form of people centrism, the lack of any anti-elitism makes it hard to conceive this statement as populist. While the *FDP*

¹²⁷ FDP, *Denken Wir Neu: Das Programm Der Freien Demokraten Zur Bundestagswahl 2017: "Schauen Wir Nicht Länger Zu."* (2017), 15.

criticizes the governing parties in some parts of the manifesto,¹²⁸ they are never portrayed or condemned as representatives of the elite or the establishment. Therefore, the manifesto of the *FDP* can hardly be understood as populist. The same conclusion can be drawn from the manifesto of *Die Grünen*. While harshly criticizing the previous coalition government of CDU/CSU and SPD, for example, by claiming it would “paralyze our country”¹²⁹, there is no systematic use of homogenizing or anti-elitist language in the manifesto. In summary, the second group’s manifestos are characterized by partly harsh critique of the ruling parties but populist language is absent.

The third group of parties entailing *DIE LINKE* and the *AfD* is making ample use of populist language. *DIE LINKE* often uses homogenizing language and clearly juxtaposes the people, referred to either as we/us or through pars-pro-toto terms like “the poor”, against an evil and conspiratorial elite. This becomes apparent in statements like “to fight the concentrated power of enterprises, the rich and their political parties we need a revolution of social justice,”¹³⁰ or “the rich have many allies in politics. They can make their voices heard. We fight against that.”¹³¹ *DIE LINKE* repetitively describes connections between powerful elites in politics and business that work only for their own interests against the will of the majority and even against democratic participation.¹³² The result of this is, according to the manifesto of *DIE LINKE*, a loss of trust in democracy and the rise of right-wing populism.¹³³ Interestingly, *DIE LINKE* also claims to be the only party in the *Bundestag* that understands itself as the representative of the people in East Germany.¹³⁴ This refers again to the powerful elite ignoring the interests and wishes of a homogenous group of citizens and can be understood as a form of populism.

¹²⁸ See for example: FDP, *Denken wir neu*, 17–18.

¹²⁹ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Zukunft Wird Aus Mut Gemacht: Bundestagswahlprogramm 2017*, 8.

¹³⁰ DIE LINKE, *Wahlprogramm Der Partei DIE LINKE Zur Bundestagswahl 2017*, 10.

¹³¹ DIE LINKE, *Wahlprogramm der Partei DIE LINKE zur Bundestagswahl 2017*, 37.

¹³² DIE LINKE, *Wahlprogramm der Partei DIE LINKE zur Bundestagswahl 2017*, 80; DIE LINKE, *Wahlprogramm der Partei DIE LINKE zur Bundestagswahl 2017*, 102.

¹³³ DIE LINKE, *Wahlprogramm der Partei DIE LINKE zur Bundestagswahl 2017*, 108.

¹³⁴ DIE LINKE, *Wahlprogramm der Partei DIE LINKE zur Bundestagswahl 2017*, 61–62.

The *AfD*'s use of populist language focuses less on a conspiracy of business and politics but emphasizes alleged undemocratic conditions and political failure of the established parties. The title of the very first point of the manifesto states “without sovereignty of the people no democracy,” and depicts the loss of sovereignty of the people and of the rule of law as a consequence of European integration and the treaties of Maastricht and Lisbon.¹³⁵ Furthermore, the *AfD* manifesto clearly distinguishes between a homogenous people and a self-serving and incompetent elite. Its anti-elitism is mainly directed against all political parties, which are depicted as a conspiring group that undermines the democratic sovereignty of the German people. For example, the manifesto states that the “secret sovereign in Germany is a small, powerful political oligarchy, which established itself in the existing political parties.”¹³⁶ According to the manifesto this elite holds all power and controls the state, the education system as well as the media and is responsible for the ostensibly illegal asylum policy of the coalition government. The manifesto concludes that “[o]nly the constitutive people of the federal republic of Germany can end this condition through the means of unmediated democracy.”¹³⁷ In a perfect populist manner, the *AfD* constructs established political parties as assemblies of corrupt elites that only aim to benefit themselves. The representatives are accused of being loyal only to the party chairs and not to the citizens.¹³⁸ Like *DIE LINKE*, the *AfD* blames the elites to minimize democratic participation to retain their own power base.¹³⁹

In summary, it can be hold that both the *AfD* and *DIE LINKE* employ a strong populist discourse. However, while the populist discourses of both parties show similarities, they differ in some nuances that relate to their ideological positioning. *DIE LINKE* mainly blames the ruling elite for conspiring with the rich and global enterprises to maximize their profit while the

¹³⁵ *AfD, Programm Für Deutschland: Wahlprogramm Der Alternative Für Deutschland Für Die Wahl Zum Deutschen Bundestag Am 24. September 2017* (2017), 7.

¹³⁶ *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 8.

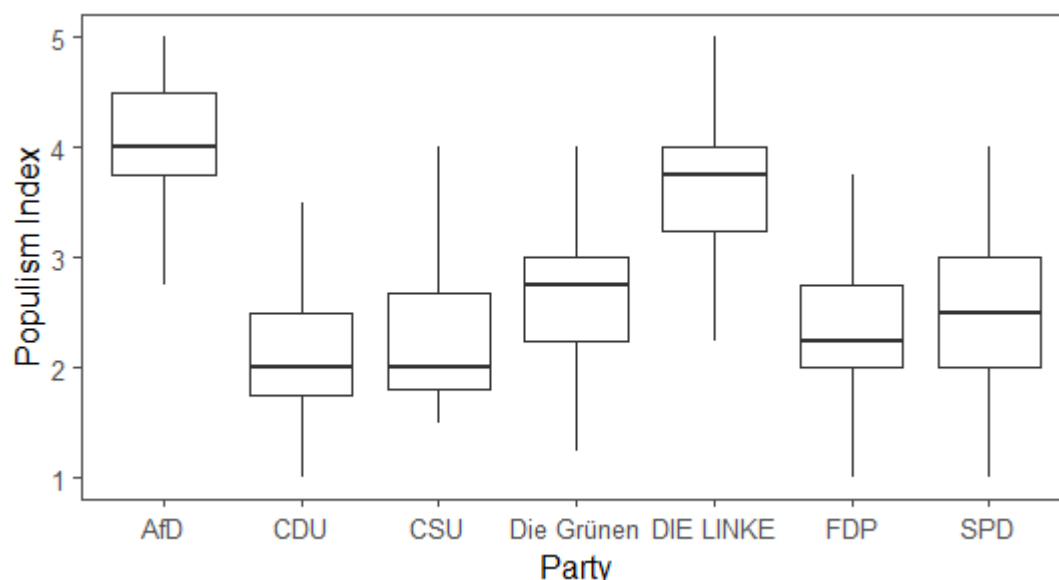
¹³⁷ *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 8.

¹³⁸ *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 9.

¹³⁹ *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 10.

AfD blames European integration and a self-centered political elite for disempowering the truly sovereign people.

Figure 1: Populism Index according to Party Affiliation¹⁴⁰
(high values represent approval of populist statements)

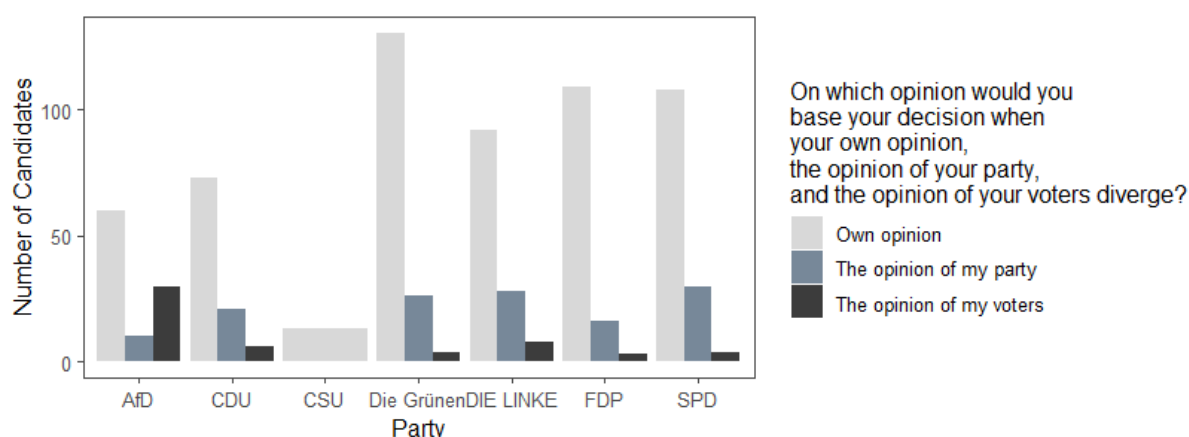


The descriptive analysis of the candidate survey confirms the results of the qualitative part. The box plots in figure 1 show the distribution of the candidates on the populism index sorted according to party affiliation. A clear trend is observable with only two parties scoring high on the populism index: the *AfD* and *DIE LINKE*. Candidates of the other parties hold on average only low populist tendencies. Candidates running for the *CDU* report the lowest values. Furthermore, the polarization for all parties is similar. Only the *CSU* candidates are slightly more polarized than the candidates of other parties. This can be explained through the rather small number of *CSU* candidates represented in the sample, which makes single values more influential. Additionally, I checked for differences between East and West German candidates. However, since the differences were marginal for all parties, I did not include them here.

Figure 2 shows how the candidates would cast their vote in the parliament if their own opinion, the opinion of their party and the opinion of their voters diverged. The absolute majority of the

¹⁴⁰ A table containing the corresponding means and variances can be found in the Appendix (Table 10).

Figure 2: Populist Voting Behavior according to Party Affiliation



candidates of each party would vote according to their own opinion and would follow the official regulations, which states that elected representatives are only bound by their own conscience. However, there are profound differences between the relative distribution of these opinions among the parties. The *AfD* stands out since it is the only party in which a relatively high share of candidates (31%) indicated they would rather follow their voters' opinion than their own or their party's. Only a small fraction (in no case more than 6%) of the other parties' candidates shows the same attitude. There is again barely a difference between candidates from East and West Germany.

Of course, these are only self-reported claims by the candidates and these numbers might not be congruent with their actual voting behavior. However, these claims reveal a lot of the candidates' self-understanding. Among the *AfD* there is a significant share of candidates that at least claim to represent merely the will of their voters in parliament. This constitutes a largely populist self-understanding since it assumes a homogenous will of the voters and neglects internal differences. In addition, it emphasizes the sovereignty of the people and reduces the role of the representatives to pure mediators of a popular will. It is important to notice that also a majority of the *AfD* candidates rejects such a populist approach to the role of elected representatives. Still, the relatively high share of candidates that holds such populist attitudes indicates at least strong tendency among *AfD* candidates, in particular in connection with their high scores

on the populist ranking. Candidates of *DIE LINKE* also score high on the populist index but their self-understanding as representatives does not confirm this assumption. Regarding populism, it can be concluded that these two parties can be perceived as populist; with the *AfD* slightly more than *DIE LINKE*.

Lastly, I checked how strongly the candidates made use of negative campaigning, i.e. how severely they criticized the earlier performance of other parties. This time the results are presented as a table with the means and variances sorted after party affiliation because the relatively high variances do not allow for a proper presentation in form of a box plot.

Table 4: Negative Campaigning according to party affiliation
(high values represent strong use of negative campaigning)

	AfD	CDU	CSU	Die Grünen	DIE LINKE	FDP	SPD
Means	4.18	2.68	2.50	3.43	3.84	3.32	2.90
Variance	1.01	1.36	1.81	1.17	1.30	1.26	1.18

Unsurprisingly, the candidates of the previously governing parties *CDU*, *CSU* & *SPD* reported that they only moderately criticized the performance of other parties, while the opposition candidates all reported higher values. On average, *AfD* candidates indicate that they have criticized other parties most severely and also show the lowest polarization on the scale. They are closely followed by candidates of *DIE LINKE*. Candidates of *FDP* and *Die Grünen* range somewhere between the two populist parties and the governing parties. Again, this goes hand in hand with the findings from the qualitative analysis. *FDP* and *Die Grünen* criticize the governing parties, but in a less radical manner than the *AfD* and *DIE LINKE* who blame the governing parties to exploit ‘the people’ for different reasons. In summary, the two parties that are expected to act as populists, the *AfD* and *DIE LINKE* do so. Even though the *AfD*’s candidates report even higher populist values than candidates of *DIE LINKE*, both parties stand out from the others. Thus, hypothesis 1a can be confirmed.

Anti-outgroup discourse

The parties also strongly differ concerning the discursive use of anti-outgroup language, that I describe in the following. I start with the cultural justified rejection of outgroup and consider the economic arguments in a second step. Regarding cultural rejection, the parties can be sorted in three groups that employ different levels of (anti-) outgroup attitudes in their campaign manifestos. The first group entails *Die Grünen*, *DIE LINKE* and the *FDP*. Their manifestos are characterized by a lack of any anti-out group claims and even by positive references to people with diverse backgrounds. For example, the *FDP* takes a clear stance against “group related enmity like Antisemitism and Islamophobia”¹⁴¹, rejects any form of maximum cap for the acceptance of asylum seekers¹⁴² and calls for an immigration law that allows “qualified and diligent people from other parts of the world to come”¹⁴³. *Die Grünen* also position themselves against any form of discrimination¹⁴⁴ and speak out in favor of migration.¹⁴⁵ The unambiguous pro-refugee stance of *Die Grünen* is a particular salient aspect of their campaign manifesto. *Die Grünen* mention multiple times that *they* want to support refugees, that they condemn any attempts to vilify them¹⁴⁶ and that they only want to fight the causes of flights¹⁴⁷. Further, the manifesto of *Die Grünen* shows a clear pro-Islam stance.¹⁴⁸ *DIE LINKE* pictures itself as an ally and a fighter for the rights of discriminated people¹⁴⁹ and takes a staunch position pro migration¹⁵⁰ and pro refugees.¹⁵¹ Like *Die Grünen* they condemn Islamophobia and label it as

¹⁴¹ FDP, *Denken wir neu*, 82.

¹⁴² FDP, *Denken wir neu*, 107.

¹⁴³ FDP, *Denken wir neu*, 68.

¹⁴⁴ See for example Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Zukunft wird aus Mut gemacht*, 117.

¹⁴⁵ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Zukunft wird aus Mut gemacht*, 111.

¹⁴⁶ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Zukunft wird aus Mut gemacht*, 10; Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Zukunft wird aus Mut gemacht*, 99.

¹⁴⁷ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Zukunft wird aus Mut gemacht*, 7; Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Zukunft wird aus Mut gemacht*, 67.

¹⁴⁸ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Zukunft wird aus Mut gemacht*, 122.

¹⁴⁹ DIE LINKE, *Wahlprogramm der Partei DIE LINKE zur Bundestagswahl 2017*, 69.

¹⁵⁰ DIE LINKE, *Wahlprogramm der Partei DIE LINKE zur Bundestagswahl 2017*, 65.

¹⁵¹ DIE LINKE, *Wahlprogramm der Partei DIE LINKE zur Bundestagswahl 2017*, 97.

mobilization strategy that comes from the “center of the society” and is used by right-wing parties.¹⁵²

The second group of parties, entailing the *SPD* and the *CDU*, also speak positively about outgroups and diversity. However, in contrast to the first group their support is somehow restricted in particular concerning Islam. For example, the *CDU* claims to advocate a “patriotic commitment that excludes no one and is directed against no one”¹⁵³ and speaks out against Antisemitism and racism.¹⁵⁴ However, Islam is mentioned in a separate point of the manifesto in more negative terms. While the *CDU* acknowledges Muslims as part of the German society and states that “it has started a dialogue with the Muslims living here and their organizations”¹⁵⁵, the party also implies that these dialogues have not been productive yet by stating that they “expect concrete successes”¹⁵⁶. Furthermore, the manifesto of the *CDU* states “we want to help that the peaceful and integrable Islam organizes itself in Germany on the basis of the constitution in a manner that it can be a negotiating and dialog partner of the state and the society”¹⁵⁷. Directly after that statement, the *CDU* warns of the “abuse of Islam for hate, violence, terrorism and oppression”¹⁵⁸. By this implication, the *CDU* denies that Muslims are a proper part of the German society and makes them responsible for their own integration. By connecting this appeal to integrate themselves with warnings against Islamic terrorism the *CDU* insinuates that Muslims constitute a generally dangerous force.

The manifesto of the *SPD* uses a similar argumentation. On the one hand, the *SPD* endorses a humanitarian asylum policy¹⁵⁹ and speaks out in favor of national minorities¹⁶⁰. On the

¹⁵² DIE LINKE, *Wahlprogramm der Partei DIE LINKE zur Bundestagswahl 2017*, 9–10.

¹⁵³ CDU/CSU, *Für Ein Deutschland, in Dem Wir Gut Und Gerne Leben Wollen: Regierungsprogramm 2017 - 2021* (2017), 70.

¹⁵⁴ CDU/CSU, *Für ein Deutschland, in dem wir gut und gerne leben wollen*, 70.

¹⁵⁵ CDU/CSU, *Für ein Deutschland, in dem wir gut und gerne leben wollen*, 73–74.

¹⁵⁶ CDU/CSU, *Für ein Deutschland, in dem wir gut und gerne leben wollen*, 73–74.

¹⁵⁷ CDU/CSU, *Für ein Deutschland, in dem wir gut und gerne leben wollen*, 73–74.

¹⁵⁸ CDU/CSU, *Für ein Deutschland, in dem wir gut und gerne leben wollen*, 73–74.

¹⁵⁹ SPD, *Zeit Für Mehr Gerechtigkeit: Unser Regierungsprogramm Für Deutschland* (2017), 74.

¹⁶⁰ SPD, *Zeit für mehr Gerechtigkeit*, 78.

other hand, while agreeing that Muslims are “a part of our country”¹⁶¹ the *SPD* pledges to support only the “development of Muslim communities and organizations when they are founded in Germany following German law respecting the free and democratic order.”¹⁶² Exactly like the *CDU*, the *SPD* implies that Muslims are a potentially dangerous force and can only be welcomed when explicitly told to subject to German law.

The third group comprises the *AfD* and the separate manifesto of the *CSU*. These manifestos are characterized by clearer rejection of Islam than group 2 and strong anti-outgroup attitudes that are communicated either implicitly or explicitly. The *CSU* devotes a whole chapter with the title “so Germany stays Germany”¹⁶³ to the topic of migration and German identity. The manifesto refers to the *Leitkultur*, which they describe as “values with Christian leaning, our customs and traditions and the basic rules of our cohabitation”¹⁶⁴ without giving a clearer definition. The manifesto also calls to “actively defend our cultural identity”¹⁶⁵. Furthermore, the *CSU* wants to monitor integration of foreigners more closely and wants to establish negative consequences for those who refuse to be integrated.¹⁶⁶ Referencing to the so called ‘refugee crisis’, the *CSU* pledges that “the situation of 2015 must not happen again”¹⁶⁷ and states that it “works continuously to hold the rate of migration on a low level”¹⁶⁸. Regarding Islam, the *CSU* explicitly rejects the introduction of Islamic holidays and emphasizes that “in Germany only German law should apply, not the Sharia”¹⁶⁹. Thus, by implication the *CSU* creates a threat scenario whereby German values have to be actively defended against the cultural threat of immigrants and in particular Islam, which allegedly tries to replace German laws.

¹⁶¹ SPD, *Zeit für mehr Gerechtigkeit*, 88.

¹⁶² SPD, *Zeit für mehr Gerechtigkeit*, 88.

¹⁶³ CSU, *Der Bayernplan: Klar Für Unser Land* (2017), 13.

¹⁶⁴ CSU, *Der Bayernplan: Klar Für Unser Land* (2017), 13.

¹⁶⁵ CSU, *Der Bayernplan: Klar Für Unser Land* (2017), 13.

¹⁶⁶ CSU, *Der Bayernplan*, 14.

¹⁶⁷ CSU, *Der Bayernplan*, 15.

¹⁶⁸ CSU, *Der Bayernplan: Klar Für Unser Land* (2017), 15.

¹⁶⁹ CSU, *Der Bayernplan*, 14.

The *AfD*'s manifesto is even more radical in terms of nativist tendencies. Migration is portrayed as huge threat to the existence of Germany for example in the following paragraph:

“[...] it is obvious that that migratory movement from Africa to Europe in the expected extent could destabilize our continent in a few years. [...] The goal of the *AfD* is the self-preservation not the self-destruction of our state and people. The future of Germany and Europe must be secured in the long term. We want to leave our descendants a country that is still recognizable as Germany.”¹⁷⁰

The *AfD* does not only insinuate but clearly states that there is a threat to the (cultural) existence of Germany and the German people. Moreover, by explicitly pointing out that the *AfD* aims for the self-preservation, not the self-destruction, it insinuates that other parties might want to do exactly that. Here a clear connection between the populist and the nationalist “people” as Brubaker argued can be perceived. ‘The people’ are under attack from both the vertical outsiders whose arrival poses a threat to the cultural existence of Germany and from the horizontal elites who welcome and support the outsiders instead of ‘the people’. Such a connection between populism and nationalism is also established in the way the *AfD* argues for the establishment of referenda on the federal level. The manifesto states that the “fundamental crisis of currency, energy supply and migration as well as the confrontation with Islam can neither be handled by the government nor by the *Bundestag*. This can and must not happen without the unmediated participation of the citizens.”¹⁷¹ Here the *AfD* demands that ‘the people’ labeled as ‘the citizens’ must be directly involved in deciding over the “confrontation with Islam”. Hence, the *AfD* is combining its populism with clear nationalist attitudes.

In general, Islam is portrayed as an immediate and already present threat to Germany. The *AfD* states that “Islam does not belong to Germany. In the spread of Islam and the presence of over 5 million Muslims, a number that is on the rise continuously, the *AfD* sees a huge danger for our state, our society and our values. [...] [Islamic States] wage and support a cultural war

¹⁷⁰ *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 28.

¹⁷¹ *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 9.

[in Germany]”.¹⁷² Using martial language the *AfD* emphasizes the confrontational situation between Islam and the German people. It is also noteworthy that the *AfD* depicts “Islamic states” as the aggressors. Accordingly, the German people represented by the *AfD* only defend themselves against the cultural attacks of outsiders. To fight against the cultural overtaking by migrants and Muslims, to whom the *AfD* assigns a higher criminal activity¹⁷³, the manifesto proposes to naturalize only those “who do not leave a doubt about their successful assimilation and loyalty to their new home country”¹⁷⁴. Thus, only culturally assimilated migrants should be allowed to become permanent members of the German society. Simultaneously, the *AfD* wants to prevent the “abolishment of Germany” by increasing the birth rate of the “native population”.¹⁷⁵

Compared to the culturally justified rejection of out-groups, there are significantly less references to the economy in the campaign manifestos. For example, the *SPD* and the *FDP* do not mention economic consequences of globalization and immigration at all. *DIE LINKE* and *Die Grünen* acknowledge that globalization might negatively affect the life of individuals through increased pressure on the labor market and the fear of losing their social position. However, they do not instrumentalize this as an argumentation to reject migration or outgroups. On the contrary, they propose a stronger welfare state and compensation via social benefits to soften the consequences. For example, *Die Grünen* acknowledge that globalization might causes fears of job loss¹⁷⁶ and that such a fear is “poison for social cohesion”¹⁷⁷. As a solution they suggest raising social benefits for unemployed to cover a “socio-cultural subsistence minimum”¹⁷⁸ that enables unemployed to continue social participation. *DIE LINKE* explicitly mentions that migration might lead to pressure on the labor market that affects individuals.

¹⁷² *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 34.

¹⁷³ *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 23.

¹⁷⁴ *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 32.

¹⁷⁵ *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 37.

¹⁷⁶ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Zukunft wird aus Mut gemacht*, 171.

¹⁷⁷ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Zukunft wird aus Mut gemacht*, 197.

¹⁷⁸ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Zukunft wird aus Mut gemacht*, 204

However, in its campaign manifesto *DIE LINKE* does not try to mobilize against migrants but proposes a “social offensive for everyone”¹⁷⁹. *DIE LINKE* actively includes migrants in their social policy suggestions and wants to support them in accessing the labor market.¹⁸⁰ *DIE LINKE* does not juxtapose native market insiders and immigrating market outsiders against each other but tries to establish an alliance between those groups that is, following a populist manner, directed against elites.¹⁸¹ For example, *DIE LINKE* blames the German government for creating social inequality that hurts those who already live in Germany as well as those who have to flee from their countries of origin.¹⁸²

Only the *CDU*, the *CSU* in particular and the *AfD*, want to tackle the upheavals caused by globalization by excluding migrants. The *CDU* wants to allow in only highly qualified migrants that have a secured job. They explicitly reject migration “into the social security system”¹⁸³ and want to “reduce the attractiveness of illegal immigration and migration considerably”¹⁸⁴. The *CSU* is even more concrete and wants to limit social benefits for migrants as long as they have not worked in Germany for all their lives.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, the *CSU* wants to make sure that “asylum seekers do not obtain social benefits by fraud”¹⁸⁶. Thus, the *CDU* and in particular the *CSU* draw at least implicitly a threatening picture of immigrants who could compete with natives over jobs and social benefits and must be prevented from doing so.

Similarly, the *AfD* suggests preventing migrants from coming to Germany merely to obtain social benefits and places an emphasis on refugees.¹⁸⁷ The *AfD* argues that refugees must be rejected because “there is a high chance the majority of these people will live from social

¹⁷⁹ *DIE LINKE, Wahlprogramm der Partei DIE LINKE zur Bundestagswahl 2017*, 12.

¹⁸⁰ *DIE LINKE, Wahlprogramm der Partei DIE LINKE zur Bundestagswahl 2017*, 66.

¹⁸¹ *DIE LINKE, Wahlprogramm der Partei DIE LINKE zur Bundestagswahl 2017*, 10.

¹⁸² *DIE LINKE, Wahlprogramm der Partei DIE LINKE zur Bundestagswahl 2017*, 8.

¹⁸³ *CDU/CSU, Für ein Deutschland, in dem wir gut und gerne leben wollen*, 11–12.

¹⁸⁴ *CDU/CSU, Für ein Deutschland, in dem wir gut und gerne leben wollen*, 11–12.

¹⁸⁵ *CSU, Der Bayernplan*, 17.

¹⁸⁶ *CSU, Der Bayernplan*, 17.

¹⁸⁷ *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 29–30.

benefits permanently”¹⁸⁸. Whenever the *AfD* speaks about the social security system it depicts its functionality to be threatened by migrants or refugees.¹⁸⁹ Thus, the *AfD* proposes a zero-immigration policy¹⁹⁰ or even negative migration meaning the emigration of foreigners that already live in Germany.¹⁹¹ The *AfD* also proposes an economic policy that protects the jobs of locals from international concurrence.¹⁹²

In summary, only *Die Grünen* and *DIE LINKE* entirely refrain from using anti-outgroup discourse. The *SPD* and the *CDU* exclude Islam implicitly from the German people. The *CSU* and in particular the *AfD* reject various outgroups and depict a threat scenario whereby German cultural values must actively be defended against outsiders. Regarding economic rejection, the *CSU* and the *AfD* are also the most explicit, even though the *CDU* expresses economically based outgroup rejection as well. Thus, economically and culturally based rejection seem to be closely interwoven. However, the *AfD*, which uses by far the most and strongest anti-outgroup discourse, devotes considerably more text in its manifesto to an alleged cultural threat. While warning against the overburdening of the welfare state through migrants and refugees, the *AfD* uses martial language when speaking about the cultural threats of immigration and even implies that Germany and the German people are in imminent danger. Especially in the presence of Islam in Germany, the *AfD* sees a threat for the further existence of a German culture. Accordingly, hypothesis 3a, that assumed that economically justified anti-immigrant arguments are more important than cultural justified arguments, must be rejected.

The analysis of the supply side indicates that there are two populist parties: the *AfD* and *DIE LINKE*. Additionally, there are two parties that openly reject outgroups: the *CSU* and the *AfD*. Accordingly, it can be assumed that it is possible to distinguish *AfD* voters from other

¹⁸⁸ *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 31.

¹⁸⁹ *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 56; *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 60.

¹⁹⁰ *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 31.

¹⁹¹ *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 29.

¹⁹² *AfD, Programm für Deutschland*, 21.

voters through their high levels of populism and negative-outgroup attitudes. In the next subchapter, I examine whether these assumptions can be validated in the analysis of the demand side.

3.2 Demand Side: Populist Market Insiders?

Descriptive Data

In a first step, I compare the means of the variables with each other sorted according to indicated voting behavior in order to check general patterns and compare them with the results of the supply side analysis. The means according to voting behavior are depicted in Table 6. Concerning populist attitudes, there are some unexpected observations. As expected, voters of the *AfD* scored on average very high on the populism index. In contrast, voters of *DIE LINKE* reported populism levels just slightly above the total average despite the strong use of populist language by *DIE LINKE*. To make sure that these results are not distorted by high polarization, I additionally checked for the variance of the populist values. However, the polarization of *DIE LINKE* voters on the populism scale is not considerably higher than that of the *AfD* or of other parties. Thus, it seems like voters of *DIE LINKE* are on average considerably less populist than expected. Instead, voters of small parties, which did not reach the 5% threshold to be represented in the *Bundestag*, and in particular non-voters perform high on the populist index. The latter finding is confirmed by the *Populismusbarometer* that assigns strong populist attitudes to non-voters as well.¹⁹³

Furthermore, *AfD* voters are by far the most dissatisfied with democracy in general and with both the government and the opposition parties. Even non-voters are more satisfied with the parties' performance than *AfD* voters. There is also a huge difference between the satisfaction levels of the *AfD* and *DIE LINKE*. Although the voters of the latter show below-average

¹⁹³ Vehrkamp and Wratil, "A Populist Moment?," 19–20.

Table 5: Mean values according to Indicated Voting Behavior

	AfD	CDU	CSU	Die Grünen	DIE LINKE	FDP	Non-Voter	Other	SPD	Total
Populism Index	4.02	3.11	3.05	2.82	3.37	3.16	3.82	3.55	3.31	3.31
Satisfaction with Democracy	2.10	3.05	3.05	3.04	2.63	3.00	2.57	2.65	2.83	2.82
Satisfaction with the Government	4.44	8.07	8.11	6.54	5.59	6.90	6.31	5.95	6.78	6.74
Satisfaction with the Opposition	3.92	6.03	5.56	7.06	7.47	5.39	5.63	6.38	6.24	6.02
Outgroup Index	4.05	3.22	3.32	2.45	2.79	3.25	3.53	2.86	3.16	3.10
Nativism Index	2.18	2.02	1.92	1.57	1.72	2.01	2.18	1.75	1.96	1.95
Currently unemployed	0.04	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.10	0.01	0.04	0.03
Personal Economic Situation	2.48	2.09	2.15	2.08	2.37	2.12	2.76	2.37	2.42	2.30
Fulltime-employed	0.60	0.39	0.48	0.47	0.50	0.40	0.30	0.50	0.32	0.41
Unemployed in the last 10 years	0.12	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.04	0.08	0.15	0.06	0.06
General Economic Situation	2.20	1.78	1.76	1.72	1.90	1.75	2.36	1.97	1.97	1.93
Fear of Globalization	4.32	3.61	3.80	3.44	3.96	3.64	3.83	3.81	3.83	3.77

satisfaction with the government and democracy in general, they report considerably higher values than the *AfD*. Their high satisfaction levels with the opposition do not come as a surprise, since *DIE LINKE* has been part of the opposition prior to the 2017 elections as well. Still, concerning levels of dissatisfaction and in particular populist values voters of *DIE LINKE* are far less radical than voters of the *AfD*. Especially, because of their low populist levels, hypothesis 1b must be partially rejected. This shows that populist parties can be moderately successful relatively independent of their populism. Also, it confirms the assumption that populist voters must be dissatisfied to actually vote in favor of a populist party. As the high levels of populism among non-voters show, individuals with high levels of populism rather abstain from voting at all when their dissatisfaction does not draw them to the polls.

Another outstanding attitude of the *AfD* voters is their high performance on the anti-outgroup attitude index. The voters of the *CSU*, on the other hand, show only slightly higher anti-outgroup attitudes than the voters of the *CDU* despite the observed differences among the candidates and the programs of the two parties. The high performances of the non-voters on the outgroup index, who report values between the voters of the *AfD* and of the *CSU*, are again salient. It seems like non-voters and *AfD* voters have a quite similar profile concerning populist and anti-outgroup attitudes.

However, when it comes to nativist attitudes, there is barely any difference among the voters of different parties. While voters of the *AfD* still show the highest nativist attitudes, again closely followed by the non-voters, the differences between the respective voters are rather small. Judging merely based on the descriptive data, it seems unlikely that these attitudes constitute a major influence on voting behavior in favor of the *AfD*.

Regarding economic indicators, there are clear differences between the structure of the parties' electorates. With 60% reporting to be fulltime employed a majority of the *AfD* electorate can be clearly perceived as market insiders. Only *DIE LINKE* has similarly high numbers

with 50% indicating fulltime employment. No other party has such a high share of market insiders among its voters. Unemployed individuals, that can be perceived as market outsiders, clearly tend to abstain from voting at all. With 4% of its electorate being unemployed, the *AfD* also has the highest share of market outsiders among its voters. Still, this number is rather low and compared to the huge number of fulltime-employed voters negligible. Thus, their economic conditions constitute a major difference between non-voters and voters of the *AfD* and the high share of market insiders is a first indicator confirming Manow's theory. The high share of previously unemployed individuals can be understood as a second indicator. Still, on average supporters of the *AfD* report the most negative assessment of both their personal and the general economic situation among all voters. Only non-voters have an even more negative perception of the economic situation. Concerning fear of globalization, voters of the *AfD* seem to be the most worried as well. Voters of *DIE LINKE* also indicate to be more worried about globalization than the average voter. In summary, the descriptive data indicates that Manow's assumptions are true also on the individual level. However, the results insinuate that market insiders as Manow describes them often vote in favor of an extreme party rather than a populist one. This assumption will be tested further with the multivariate models.

Multivariate Analysis:

The results of the logistic regression displayed as the average marginal effects can be found in Table 6. I added the different sets of variables gradually to the models to test their independent effects first and then their effect in the full models. As can be seen in the table, all explanatory approaches contribute to the individual likelihood of voting in favor of the *AfD* as long as they are observed separately. The first model includes only the control variables and shows that male, less educated and East German voters are more likely to cast their vote in favor of the *AfD*. Also, there is a small but significant negative effect of age indicating that it is rather younger people that vote for the *AfD* than the very old. The second model includes pop-

Table 6: Logistic Regression (Average Marginal Effects)
Predictors of voting behavior in favor of the *AfD*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Age (in 10 years)	-0.009 * (0.004)	-0.009 * (0.004)	-0.001 (0.004)	-0.018 *** (0.004)	-0.011 ** (0.004)	-0.002 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.005)
Male	0.065 *** (0.015)	0.068 *** (0.016)	0.048 ** (0.015)	0.059 *** (0.013)	0.067 *** (0.015)	0.060 *** (0.015)	0.019 (0.016)	0.009 (0.016)
Level of Education	-0.019 *** (0.006)	0.008 (0.007)	-0.005 (0.006)	0.016 ** (0.006)	-0.015 * (0.006)	-0.010 (0.006)	0.003 (0.007)	0.014 (0.007)
East German	0.037 * (0.016)	0.019 (0.017)	0.009 (0.016)	-0.007 (0.014)	0.030 (0.016)	0.035 * (0.016)	0.008 (0.016)	-0.007 (0.015)
Populism Index		0.100 *** (0.011)					0.045 *** (0.011)	0.022 (0.011)
Satisfaction with Democracy			-0.056 *** (0.010)				-0.051 *** (0.011)	-0.035 *** (0.010)
Satisfaction with the Government			-0.013 *** (0.003)				-0.011 ** (0.004)	-0.010 ** (0.003)
Satisfaction with the Opposition			-0.021 *** (0.003)				-0.017 *** (0.003)	-0.011 *** (0.003)
Outgroup Index				0.141 *** (0.011)				0.093 *** (0.012)
Nativism Index					0.027 ** (0.009)		0.014 (0.009)	

Currently Unemployed						-0.019 (0.041)	-0.001 (0.036)	0.014 (0.035)
Personal Economic Situation						0.002 (0.009)	-0.015 (0.009)	-0.013 (0.008)
Fulltime-employed						0.053 *** (0.016)	0.064 *** (0.017)	0.069 *** (0.016)
Formerly Unemployed (in the last 10 years)						0.034 (0.023)	0.014 (0.025)	0.016 (0.023)
General Economic Situation						0.033 *** (0.009)	-0.012 (0.009)	-0.017 (0.009)
Fear of Globalization						0.015 *** (0.004)	-0.002 (0.004)	-0.005 (0.004)
Pseudo R ²	0.042	0.308	0.414	0.293	0.071	0.140	0.530	0.593
AIC	1093.082	794.035	678.283	814.255	1062.344	994.282	563.255	491.501

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05. Standard Errors in brackets.

ulism values, which are statistically significant and show a strong effect. The third model shows that dissatisfaction with both the government and the opposition but in particular with democracy has positive effects as well. The fourth and fifth model include outgroup attitudes and nativist attitudes, respectively. While they both have a significant effect, the effect size differs strongly. A one-point increase on the outgroup index increases the likelihood that someone is voting in favor of the *AfD* on average by over 14%. In contrast, the same increase on the nativism scale increases the likelihood to vote in favor of the *AfD* by only 2.7%. As the descriptive variables already indicated, anti-outgroup attitudes are a considerably stronger factor on the voting behavior than nativist attitudes. The models 7 and 8 test both factors in the full models. Here the differences are even more striking since nativist attitudes lose their statistical significance while anti-outgroup attitudes still have the strongest effect of all considered variables. Thus, it can be concluded that a negative definition of ‘the people’ in nationalist terms is clearly more powerful than a positive definition that is based on a common cultural and ethnic background. This confirms Brubaker’s assumption that nationalism and populism closely interact in so far as they both build on ‘the people’ as an empty signifier that is constructed against internal as well as external elites. In contrast, an ethnic understanding of the own national identity seems to be considerably less important.

The fifth model tests for the (perception) of economic factors. While unemployment has no significant effect at all, fulltime employment shows a strong positive effect. Concerning the perception of the economic situation, the evaluation of the personal economic situation is not significant while the assessment of the general economic situation is. Former unemployment has no significant effect while fear of globalization does. As previous literature suggested, a negative perception of the own economic situation and being a market outsider are rather negligible when it comes to right-wing populist voting behavior. Manow’s theory, according to which market insiders are worried about a possible status loss due to the consequences of

globalization, can be confirmed on the individual level as well. Accordingly, hypothesis 2 can be accepted.

To test the goodness of fit of the different models, I consider McFarren's Pseudo R^2 and the AIC. The full model with respect to outgroup attitudes (model 8) shows the highest value for the Pseudo R^2 and the lowest values for the AIC and can, thus, be accepted as the best model. Comparing the different models among each other shows that model 5 that is based on cultural explanatory approaches, i.e., the rejection of outgroups, show a considerably better fit than model 5, which considers only economic factors. In contrast to Manow's thesis, it seems like cultural factors are more apt to explain the individual voting behavior in favor of the *AfD*. This assumption is confirmed when the effects of living in East Germany in the different models are compared with each other. While living in East Germany has a positive significant effect on the likelihood to vote in favor of the *AfD* in the first model, this significance wanes in all models that include cultural factors. The positive effect is nearly nullified when considering dissatisfaction with the established parties and democracy in general and even turns negative when considering negative out-group attitudes (although without being significant anymore). However, the factors considered in model 6 do barely change the effect of living in East Germany on voting behavior in favor of the *AfD*.

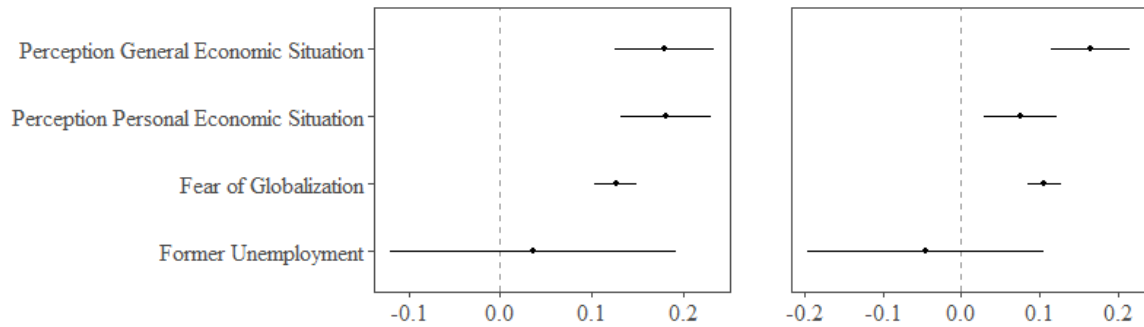
The full model also confirms that most economic factors barely have any influence. Merely fulltime employment has a strong positive impact on the likelihood to vote for the *AfD*. The other structural factors do not show a significant impact at all or even have a negative influence when they are considered in the full model. Therefore, a direct strong impact of structural factors on the likelihood to vote for the *AfD* cannot be found based on this data. In sum, Manow's assumption that structural reasons have more explanatory power than cultural factors formulated in hypothesis 3b must be rejected.

Surprisingly, populist attitudes lose their significant effect in the full model with respect to outgroup attitudes (model 8). In contrast, outgroup attitudes remain the strongest factor explaining the voting intention in favor of the *AfD*. Dissatisfaction with democracy in general as well as dissatisfaction with the opposition and the government have a positive effect on voting for the *AfD* as well (or rather negative satisfaction with the government has a negative effect). Despite the high levels of populist attitudes, distinct features of the *AfD*-voters seem to be their negative outgroup attitudes, their high levels of dissatisfaction and being market insiders. This can be explained with the high level of populism among the non-voters. In fact, an alternative analysis whereby I excluded non-voters from the sample shows that populist attitudes retain a significant effect in the full model as well (see Table 11 in the Appendix). Thus, the multivariate analysis confirms that the distinguishing features between *AfD* voters and non-voters are the level of dissatisfaction and their status in the market. In this regard, Manow's theory adds an important factor to understand populist voting behavior. However, the relevant question in the German case seems to be whether populist voters cast a vote at all, not whether they vote for or against a populist party.

Even though I could not find strong direct effects of structural factors on voting behavior, it is possible that these factors have mediating effects by increasing the populist and anti-outgroup levels of individuals. After all, Manow could show in his analysis that there is a relationship between a certain set of economic factors and the success of the *AfD* on a district level. Also, in the full model these factors show negative effects while they have positive effect in the separated models. Therefore, it is likely that they correlate with other factors in the model that have a stronger direct effect on the likelihood to vote in favor of the *AfD*. Thus, in a next step I consider the relationship between the factors Manow considers and the level of populism and

outgroup attitudes of individuals by performing linear regressions, the results of which can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Results of Linear Regression
(Left side: Populism; Right side: Outgroup Attitudes)



The perception of the general economic situation and the personal economic situation as well as fear of globalization have a positive significant effect on both individual levels of populism and anti-outgroup attitudes. Merely former unemployment does not have a significant effect at all. For the populism level, the significant positive effects are slightly stronger than for the outgroup attitudes. While these results show that factors that might indicate worries about a status loss certainly have an indirect effect on voting behavior through a direct effect on levels of populism and negative outgroup attitudes, the effect is relatively small with coefficient estimates ranging somewhere between 0.1 and 0.2. Furthermore, it is important to notice that non-voters also show high levels of populism and anti-outgroup attitudes. Thus, this indirect effect does not allow to draw an inference about voting behavior in favor of the *AfD*, which is conditioned by the level of dissatisfaction and whether the respective voters are market insiders or not.

Summary and Conclusion

In this thesis I probed the prevalence of populist strategies and populist attitudes with a particular focus on right-wing populism. By mixing a qualitative analysis of campaign manifestos with the quantitative analyses of a candidate survey and a public opinion poll, I provided a holistic analysis of populist dynamics in the context of the 2017 federal elections in Germany. Indeed, the results confirm the importance of taking into account both the supply and the demand side when studying the success of populist parties. After all, analyzing the two sides separately would have led to different results: The analysis of the supply side indicates that both the *AfD* and *DIE LINKE* make ample use of populist language and their candidates show high levels of populism and make use of negative campaigning. While the *AfD* seems to be slightly more populist than *DIE LINKE*, the analysis of the supply side clearly implies that they are both populist parties. Accordingly, hypothesis 1a can be accepted. Since populism is a striking characteristic that clearly distinguishes those parties from others, it seems only logical to assume that their populism is a decisive factor for their success. The analysis of the demand side, on the other hand, shows that *AfD* voters are considerably more populist than voters of *DIE LINKE*, who report levels of populism only slightly above the average. It is rather the non-voters who constitute another second strong populist group. If we considered only the demand side, it would seem like the *AfD* is clearly a populist party while *DIE LINKE* is not.

Only by taking into account both sides, the dynamics of populism can be revealed. As the analysis shows the populist strategies of the *AfD* and *DIE LINKE* yield strikingly different results. Only the *AfD* succeeds in convincing populist voters. Since the rest of my analysis placed a particular emphasis on right-wing voting behavior, huge differences between other factors like anti-outgroup attitudes do not come as a surprise. As previous research has shown, populist attitudes are mediated through other ideological positions meaning a left-leaning voter is rather inclined to vote for a left-wing populist party and a right-wing leaning voter for a right-wing

populist party. Here the comparison of *AfD* voters with the non-voters allows further inferences because they show a similar set of anti-outgroup and populist attitudes. A distinguishing features between these two groups are rather the high levels of dissatisfaction with the democratic system as a whole and with both the government and the opposition of the *AfD* voters. The multivariate analysis confirms this assumption. Thus, regarding the *AfD*, hypothesis 1b can be confirmed.

Second, I tested Manow's hypothesis that *AfD* voters are rather market insiders, who are afraid of a prospective status loss due to globalization and an increased pressure on the welfare state and the labor market due to immigration. The analysis of the demand side confirms that most *AfD* voters are market insiders, who have a more negative perception of the state of the economy and are more worried about globalization than other voters. This indicates a certain degree of worries about a potential status loss and, therefore, hypothesis 2 can be accepted. However, Manow also claims that the structural factors that condition such fear of globalization are far more important than cultural questions regarding the success of right-wing populist parties in general and the *AfD* in particular. The analyses of both the supply and the demand side show that this assumption is largely not true. While partly justifying the rejection of outgroups with economically based arguments, the *AfD* clearly puts an emphasis on a cultural threat in its manifesto. Therefore, hypothesis 3a had to be rejected. On the voters' side, fulltime employment is a strong explanatory factor, but the other factors Manow proposes do not show significance in the multivariate models. Furthermore, the structural factors alone cannot even out the effect of living in East Germany and, thus, Manow's assumption and accordingly hypothesis 3b must be rejected as well. Still, Manow found an interesting pattern and the linear regression analysis showed that the other factors Manow considers have an effect on the levels of populism and the levels of anti-outgroup attitudes of voters. Thus, they have important indirect effects on voting behavior. The distinct set of features of *AfD* voters is being market insiders, being highly

dissatisfied with democracy and the established parties and holding strong negative outgroup attitudes. While worries about a possible status loss have an indirect effect on these factors, this analysis could not confirm that such worries constitute a strong explanation.

Third, I tested whether a positive or a negative definition of nationalism is a stronger indicator for voting behavior in favor of the *AfD*. The analysis shows that the negative demarcation against other groups is clearly more important. It is rather salient that nativist attitudes conceived as a positive definition of the own national identity are not prevalent among all survey participants. Even voters of the *AfD* rather reject an ethnic understanding of being German. On the other hand, concerning outgroup attitudes the survey participants hold more polarized opinions, and they have a strong effect on individual voting decisions. This confirms Brubaker's assumption that nationalism works in interaction with populism by excluding outgroups from an empty signifier – 'the people'. At least in the case of Germany, this constitutes a stronger explanation for the success of the right-wing populists.

4.2 Limitations

Even though the existing surveys entailed questions that together with the qualitative analysis allowed to consider all the posed hypotheses, they had some limitations that are discussed in the following. First, I could not consider all aspects necessary to probe the hypotheses in the best possible way. For example, Manow emphasizes the importance of the perception of the economy in the district of the individual voters rather than the perception of the economy in general. While the perception of the general economy is certainly highly influenced by the performance of the regional economy, some differences still must be expected. Furthermore, the survey did not include questions on specific cultural outgroups. However, the analysis showed that Islam is heavily attacked by the *AfD* but also by established parties like the *CDU/CSU* and the *SPD*. It would have been beneficial to include more specific variables in this regard to get a clearer picture about the perception of cultural threat among voters. Second,

since I could not conduct a new survey, I had to rely solely on pre-formulated variables. This constituted a major restriction, in particular concerning the populism scales. While the Akkerman et al. scale that was used in the GLES post-election study is wide and allows cross-country comparison, it would have been more beneficial to use a more sophisticated measurement like the scale developed by Castanho Silva et al. The latter allows to distinguish between the different populist subcategories – anti-elitism, anti-pluralism and popular sovereignty. For example, it is conceivable that the voters of the *AfD* show a different composition of populist attitudes than non-voters. Also, it would have been possible to be more precise about the indirect effect of structural factors on levels of populism. The candidate survey does not entail items that distinctively asked for populist attitudes. While I nonetheless succeeded in creating a populist index that corresponds with the results of the qualitative part and, thus, seems to measure populist attitudes among the candidates, it would have been more beneficial to rely on items asking directly and precisely for populist attitudes.

4.3 Implications for further research

Some implication for further research can be derived from the findings of this thesis. For instance, it would be important to examine whether populist attitudes are steady characteristics or rather very volatile. To be more precise, is dissatisfaction with the government and the democratic system only a presupposition for the ‘activation’ of already existing populist attitudes or do such attitudes spark the levels of populism among individuals and groups? If populist attitudes were volatile, it could be studied whether there are conditioning personality traits or socio-economic circumstances that can explain which individuals are prone to developing populist attitudes under certain circumstances. Such studies could be conducted over time using panel surveys or they could rely on experimental settings.

Furthermore, the relationship between socio-economic and cultural explanations needs further observations. As the thesis shows, fear of a prospective status loss among market

insiders leads to increased levels of populism and anti-outgroup attitudes. On the other hand, high levels of market insiders among left-wing populist voters indicate that this is not an unambiguous relationship. Further research could examine why only some market insiders are particularly worried about the consequences of migration while others are not.

Appendix

Table 7: Candidate Survey Participants sorted after Party Affiliation and Region

Party	Total Number of Respondents	West German	East German
AfD	107	82	25
CDU	103	83	20
CSU	14	14	-
Die Grünen	166	133	33
DIE LINKE	131	103	28
FDP	132	108	24
SPD	150	116	34

Table 8: Overview of the variables used (Candidate Study)

Variable Name	Variable Label	Values and Value Labels
<i>D6a</i>	The citizens have sufficient options to contribute to political decision making.	1 – Strongly Agree 2 – Somewhat Agree 3 – Neither agree nor disagree 4 – Somewhat Disagree 5 – Strongly Disagree
<i>D6b</i>	The legislative reflects the interest of the majority of the people.	1 – Strongly Agree 2 – Somewhat Agree 3 – Neither agree nor disagree 4 – Somewhat Disagree 5 – Strongly Disagree
Populism		
Items		
<i>D6e</i>	The parliament, not the voters, should make the final decisions on law and politics.	1 – Strongly Agree 2 – Somewhat Agree 3 – Neither agree nor disagree 4 – Somewhat Disagree

			5 – Strongly Disagree
	<i>D6b</i>	Our democracy is about to lose the trust of the citizens.	1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Somewhat Disagree 3 – Neither agree nor disagree 4 – Somewhat Agree 5 – Strongly Agree
Populism Index	<i>pop_ind</i>	Populism Index	1 – Rejection of Populism ... 5 – Subscription to Populism
Representation Norm	<i>D4</i>	In a situation when your opinion, the opinion of your party, and the opinion of your voters do not match, on which basis would you vote?	1 – Based on my opinion 2 – Based on my party's opinion 3 – Based on my voter's opinion
Negative Campaigning	<i>B12b</i>	How much have you criticized the following aspects of candidates of other parties and other parties in general in your campaign: the previous performance of other parties?	1 – Very strongly 2 – Strongly 3 – Moderately 4 – Not so strongly 5 – Not at all
General Items	<i>A1</i>	Party	2 – CDU 3 – CSU 4 – SPD 5 – FDP 6 – Bündnis 90/Die Grünen 7 – DIE LINKE 322 - AfD
	<i>bula</i>	Federal State	Federal States coded from 1 – 16

Table 9: Overview of the variables used (Post-Election Study)

	Variable Name	Variable Label	Values and Value Labels
	<i>q17</i>	Turnout	1 – I did vote 2 – I did not vote
Voting	<i>q19b</i>	Voting decision	1 – CDU/CSU 4 – SPD 5 – FDP 6 – Die Grünen 7 – DIE LINKE

		322 – AfD
		99 – Other
Populism Items	<i>q85a</i>	What people call compromise in politics is really just selling out one's principles. 1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Somewhat Disagree 3 – Neither agree nor disagree 4 – Somewhat Agree 5 – Strongly Agree
	<i>q85b</i>	The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions. 1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Somewhat Disagree 3 – Neither agree nor disagree 4 – Somewhat Agree 5 – Strongly Agree
	<i>q85d</i>	Differences between the elite and the people are larger than the differences among the people. 1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Somewhat Disagree 3 – Neither agree nor disagree 4 – Somewhat Agree 5 – Strongly Agree
	<i>q85e</i>	I would rather be represented by a citizen than by a specialized politician. 1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Somewhat Disagree 3 – Neither agree nor disagree 4 – Somewhat Agree 5 – Strongly Agree
	<i>q85f</i>	Politicians talk too much and take too little action. 1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Somewhat Disagree 3 – Neither agree nor disagree 4 – Somewhat Agree 5 – Strongly Agree
	<i>pop_ind</i>	Populism Index 1 – Rejection of Populism ... 5 – Subscription to Populism
	<i>q33</i>	On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Germany? 1 – Not at all satisfied 2 – Not very satisfied 3 – Fairly satisfied 4 – Very satisfied
	<i>q87a</i>	How satisfied are you with the performance of the CDU? 1 – not at all satisfied ... 11 – completely satisfied

(Dis)- Satis- faction	<i>q87b</i>	How satisfied are your with the performance of the CSU?	1 – not at all satisfied ... 11 – completely satisfied
	<i>q87c</i>	How satisfied are your with the performance of the CDU?	1 – not at all satisfied ... 11 – completely satisfied
	<i>q88a</i>	How satisfied are your with the performance of Die Grünen?	1 – not at all satisfied ... 11 – completely satisfied
	<i>q88b</i>	How satisfied are your with the performance of the DIE LINKE?	1 – not at all satisfied ... 11 – completely satisfied
	<i>sat_gov</i>	How satisfied are your with the performance of the government?	1 – not at all satisfied ... 11 – completely satisfied
Nativism Items	<i>q9a</i>	How important do you think is to have been born in Germany for being truly German	1 – Not important at all 2 – Not very important 3 – Fairly important 4 – Very important
	<i>q9a</i>	How important do you think is to have German ancestry for being truly German?	1 – Not important at all 2 – Not very important 3 – Fairly important 4 – Very important
Nativism Index	<i>nat_ind</i>	Nativism Index	1 – Rejection of Nativism ... 5 – Subscription to Nativism
	<i>q8a</i>	Minorities should adapt to the customs and traditions of Germany.	1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Somewhat Disagree 3 – Neither agree nor disagree 4 – Somewhat Agree 5 – Strongly Agree
	<i>q8b</i>	The will of the majority should always prevail, even	1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Somewhat Disagree

		over the rights of minorities.	3 – Neither agree nor disagree 4 – Somewhat Agree 5 – Strongly Agree
Outgroup Attitudes	<i>q8c</i>	Immigrants are generally good for Germany's economy.	1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Somewhat Disagree 3 – Neither agree nor disagree 4 – Somewhat Agree 5 – Strongly Agree
	<i>q8d</i>	Germany's culture is generally harmed by immigrants.	1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Somewhat Disagree 3 – Neither agree nor disagree 4 – Somewhat Agree 5 – Strongly Agree
	<i>q8e</i>	Immigrants increase crime rates in Germany.	1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Somewhat Disagree 3 – Neither agree nor disagree 4 – Somewhat Agree 5 – Strongly Agree
Outgroup Index	<i>out_ind</i>	Outgroup Index	1 – Positive outgroup attitudes ... 5 – Negative outgroup attitudes
	<i>q55</i>	How would you evaluate your own current economic situation?	1 – Very good 2 – Good 3 – Neither good nor bad 4 – Bad 5 – Very bad
Socio-Economic Items	<i>fulltime_dummy (q137)</i>	Fulltime Employment	0 – Not fulltime employed 1 – Fulltime employed
	<i>unemployed_cur (q137)</i>	Currently unemployed	0 – Not currently unemployed 1 – Currently unemployed
	<i>Q13</i>	How would you evaluate the current general economic situation in Germany?	1 – Very good 2 – Good 3 – Neither good nor bad 4 – Bad 5 – Very bad
	<i>unemployed</i>	Have you been unemployed in the last 10 years? (for at least 3 months)	0 – Not previously unemployed 1 – Previously unemployed

	<i>q73d</i>	How worried are you about globalization?	1 – Not worried at all ... 7 – Very worried
	<i>ostwest2</i>	East or West German	1 – West German 2 – East German
	<i>q1</i>	Gender	1 – Male 2 – Female
Control Variables	<i>q2c</i>	Age	Year of Birth
	<i>Q135</i>	Education	1 – No leaving certificate 2 – Lowest secondary school degree 3 – Intermediary secondary school degree 4 – Certificate fulfilling entrance requirements to study at a polytechnical college 5 – Higher secondary school degree

Table 10: Populism Index Distribution according to party affiliation and region
(values from 1 to 5; high values represent high levels of populism)

Total	AfD	CDU	CSU	Die Grünen	DIE LINKE	FDP	SPD
Means	4.04	2.13	2.32	2.67	3.63	2.39	2.50
Variance	0.34	0.30	0.54	0.35	0.34	0.30	0.35
West German							
Mean	4.04	2.14	2.32	2.67	3.66	2.37	2.45
Variances	0.34	0.32	0.54	0.34	0.38	0.29	0.33
East German							

Total	AfD	CDU	CSU	Die Grünen	DIE LINKE	FDP	SPD
Mean	4.04	2.08	-	2.66	3.50	2.50	2.64
Variances	0.34	0.23	-	0.41	0.19	0.34	0.40

Table 11: Logistic Regression (Average Marginal Effects; without non-voters)
Predictors of voting behavior in favor of the *AfD*

Age (in years)	-0.007 (0.005)
Male	0.017 (0.017)
Level Education	0.006 (0.007)
East Germany (reference: West)	0.001 (0.016)
Populism Index	0.024 * (0.012)
Satisfaction with Democracy	-0.039 *** (0.011)
Satisfaction with the Government	-0.012 ** (0.004)
Satisfaction with the Opposition	-0.011 *** (0.003)
Outgroup Index	0.094 *** (0.013)
Currently Unemployed	0.042 (0.040)
Personal Economic Situation	-0.012 (0.010)
Fulltime-employed	0.060 *** (0.017)
Formerly Unemployed	0.008 (0.025)
General Economic Situation	-0.013 (0.010)
Fear of Globalization	-0.008 (0.004)
Pseudo R ²	0.621
AIC	443.091

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05. N = 1690.

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