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THE PROBLEM OF STRANGENESS IN POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND RHETORIC OF ALTERNATIVE FOR GERMANY AND GERMAN IDENTITARIAN MOVEMENT

ABSTRACT This article aims at analysing the problem of strangeness, fear of and hostility towards representatives of out-groups (namely: foreigners) observed within the extreme right. In the first part it summons up the current state of research on this topic. Then the article presents the political and social context of today's Germany, in light of the so called migration crisis, considering whether the “foreigners’ issue” is supported by the actual numbers. Last but not least, it analyses actual political demands of two far right groupings: a political party Alternative for Germany and the Identitarian Movement. Placing them in the wider global trend, it suggests that the issue of strangeness might have become the most important characteristics of the extreme right.

KEYWORDS *European migrant crisis, Willkommenskultur, the far right, Alternative for Germany, Identitarian Movement*

INTRODUCTION

The so called Europe's migration crisis has had an enormous and various impact on the Federal Republic of Germany. It created an unprecedented political, social and economic tensions and heated discussions in this particular country, often infamously blamed of being a catalyst of the crisis itself due to its open door policy¹, described in German language as *Willkommenskultur*. German Federal Agency for Civic Education, whose role as a government agency is to promote in the German society a proper understanding of social and political issues, defines the *Willkommenskultur* in its dictionary as the openness of the social structures towards foreigners, which consists of a tolerant and open attitude towards foreign individuals but also the openness and transparency of public institutions when it comes to their handling of foreigners' potential and actual issues².

While Germany as a highly developed democratic country seemed well prepared for the accommodation of a huge number of migrants from the Middle East, not the whole German society was ready to warmly welcome refugees and asylum seekers. At the time when numerous volunteering groups, charities, governmental and non-governmental organizations were able to lend a helping hand and get involved in various activities supporting the idea of the open door policy³, others remained dissatisfied with the situation and started to perceive the newcomers as a potential danger. What is more, some of them decided to build their political success on this dissatisfaction. Being afraid of a foreign element in a society triggers especially populist and extreme groupings from the right side of the political spectrum and the Federal Republic of Germany does not break this pattern. Currently we can point out several parties, associations and other less formal groupings which fit into this trend, starting with the famous Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident (PEGIDA) and ending with less popular groups such as Hooligans against Salafists (HoGeSa).

This article aims at analysing the issue of strangeness, being one of the crucial elements of the political ideology of radical activists on the right side of the political spectrum. In the first introductory part I would like to focus on the category of the enemy in the ideology of the far right as a whole. Then I will move on to the actual historical and current data on immigration and perception of immigration in the Federal

¹ Particularly blamed for the crisis has been the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who through her public statements and political actions was meant to invite the refugees from the Middle East and Africa. An overview of these statements could be found in: V. Bau, "Angela Merkel und die Flüchtlinge: Ein Rückblick in Zitate", *Berliner Morgenpost*, 29 December 2015, [online] <http://www.morgenpost.de/politik/article206869601/Angela-Merkel-und-die-Fluechtlinge-Ein-Rueckblick-in-Zitate.html>, 16 March 2017.

² "Willkommenskultur", *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*, 19 February 2016, [online] <http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/willkommen-auf-deutsch/215791/glossar?p=20>, 13 March 2017.

³ An informative overview of actual initiatives, starting from the welcome online application up to the scholarships for refugees, can be found in: C. Krug, "Many helping hands – initiatives for refugees", *Deutschland.de*, 30 December 2015, [online] <https://www.deutschland.de/en/topic/politics/development-dialogue/many-helping-hands-initiatives-for-refugees>, 14 March 2017.

Republic. The third part will be tracking the political program and rhetoric of the chosen German groupings from the Right in order to support the working hypothesis that the category of strangeness in the current political situation in Germany is becoming the most important element of the right-wing philosophy. Additional examples from various countries across Europe could also emphasize the possibility that it is a wider European or even global trend in the development of the extreme right⁴.

The chosen groups under scrutiny in this particular paper are the party Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD), categorized by most scholars and public opinion commentators as a right-wing populist group, and an association Identitarian Movement (Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland e.V., IBD). In the Federal Republic of Germany the most influential indicator of the “extremeness” of the party or an organization is its observation by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz). This institution, reporting directly to the Federal Ministry of Interior, cooperates with local security agencies in federal states (Landesbehörde für Verfassungsschutz) when it comes to detection of possible dangers for the democratic order. It is monitoring activities of left- and right-wing extremists, radical groups and individuals. Showing up on the list of banned organizations published by the Federal Office or being observed by this institution usually stigmatizes particular group, not to say: crosses it out from the political debate. It is not yet the case with the AfD, however when it comes to the IBD, after some of its regional groupings started being observed by several regional agencies it is now also being observed by the Federal Office on the national level⁵. The public view on this organization deteriorated since it happened. As already mentioned, no official steps have yet been taken in order to classify the AfD as a radical party. Nevertheless, since the change of political course of the party – outlined below in the article – also this party has no good reputation in the society. Recent opinion polls – for example the one led by the Allensbach Institute in May 2017 – show clearly, that Germans tend to perceive AfD

⁴ In this paper the terms “the extreme right”, “the far right” or “the radical right” are used interchangeably, mainly due to stylistic reasons. It is worth to mention however, than in research focused purely theoretically on the phenomenon of the extreme right, those terms could mean different things. Those differences are even clearer in Germany, where since the 70s an important differentiation has been made both in academia and in federal administration. Since then, the term “the radical right” (*Rechtsradikalismus*) is being used for all those groupings and ideologies that are indeed in opposition to the rules of a democratic state but do not break them; while the term “the extreme right” (*Rechtsextremismus*) is being used when an individual, a group or a thought is clearly hostile towards rules of the constitution. In German-speaking political research the differentiation between “the far right” and “the extreme right” is not so visible. For more consideration on this topic see: H.-G. Jaschke, *Politischer Extremismus*, Wiesbaden 2006, pp. 16-26; S. Salzborn, *Rechtsextremismus. Erscheinungsformen und Erklärungsansätze*, Baden-Baden 2015, pp. 14-19; or in English: R. Eatwell, C. Mudde (ed.), *Western Democracies and the New Extreme Right Challenge*, London 2004, pp. 6-10; P. Ignazi, *Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe*, Oxford 2006, pp. 26-30; C. Mudde, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*, Manchester 2000, pp. 12-15.

⁵ “Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz beobachtet Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland”, *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*, [online] <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/aktuelles/zur-sache/zs-2016-001-maassen-dpa-2016-08>, 6 February 2018.

as a radical party. On the 0-100 scale, going up to 100 to the right and up to 100 to the left, AfD has been scored with 82 towards the extreme right. In 2015 it was scored with around 74⁶, which outlines the trend in the perception of this party. Surprisingly, it did not prevent this political group from running in German federal election of 2017 and obtaining more than 12% of votes.

To sum up, as both of these political organizations are relatively new phenomenon on the German political scene, a lasting scientific categorization of them has not yet been fully conducted⁷. Due to a different purpose this paper also does not pretend to create one. Nevertheless being aware that the media opinion of the extremeness of these two groups is not an efficient reason for their selection, I find a short justification of this particular choice an important element of this introductory chapter.

The most important key for comparison of the AfD and the IBD is the fact that both these organizations appeared in the Federal Republic of Germany almost at the same time (2012, 2013), which is not by coincidence connected to the growing number of foreigners crossing German borders. Both organizations decided to make their political capital on the particular issue of the migrant crisis⁸ and they both are situated visibly more to the right of the political spectrum in comparison to the ruling coalition, at least (but not only) when it comes to the issue of migration and asylum policy of Germany. Both of these groupings are also sometimes put together into one category

⁶ "Allensbach-Umfrage: Wahrnehmung der AfD als rechte Partei nimmt zu", *Finanz Nachrichten*, 25 May 2017, [online] <http://www.finanznachrichten.de/nachrichten-2017-05/40809685-allensbach-umfrage-wahrnehmung-der-afd-als-rechte-partei-nimmt-zu-003.htm>, 27 May 2017.

⁷ For example Oscar Niedermayer defined AfD in 2014 as a party with a national-conservative profile, especially when it comes to the socio-cultural conflicts. See: O. Niedermayer, "Der Aufstieg der Alternative für Deutschland", *Revue d'Allemagne et des pays de langue allemande*, no. 1 (2014), pp. 235–236. In the further discussion around the alleged right-wing populism of the AfD, he claims that this party does not fit into this category and at the beginning of 2017 – observing the development of the party's profile – he calls it a "national-conservative" one but with "bridges to the extreme right". See: A. Häusler, O. Niedermayer, "Ist die Alternative für Deutschland eine rechtspopulistische Partei?", *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*, 17 January 2017, [online] <http://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/rechtspopulismus/240956/debatte-alternative-fuer-deutschland>, 18 April 2017. Alexander Häusler on the other hand, claims rather constantly that the AfD fits into the category of the extreme right populist party. See: Ibid. When it comes to the Identitarian Movement there is a more clear agreement that it does belong to the extreme right mainly due to the fact that it does belong to the New Right current of thought, considered to be a part of the extreme right. See e.g.: "Die Identitären. Vorübergehendes Phänomen oder neue Bewegung?", *Friedrich Ebert Stiftungs Expertisen für Demokratie*, no. 1 (2014); A. Häusler, O. Niedermayer, "Ist die Alternative..."; K. Liebhart, "Visuelle Repräsentationen antipluralistischer Politik am Beispiel der Islam- und MuslimInnenfeindlichkeit", *Austrian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 44, no. 2 (2015), pp. 87–103, doi: 10.15203/ozp.513.v0144iss2. As mentioned in the main text, the fact that IBD is observed by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution in German political reality also indicates the "extremeness" of the Movement.

⁸ Although, as it will be presented below, AfD started from a different political concept which developed in the course of time.

of modern groupings ideologically connected to the New Right current of thought⁹. Finally, it is worth to mention that while the researcher is often being put in a difficult situation investigating the extreme, often very closed, underground and even conspiratorial groupings of the Right, in the analysed two cases the opposite seems to be true. The abundance of material offered by both AfD as a political party and by IBD as a mostly Internet-based group poses a perfect research opportunity for analysis, especially – as it will be highlighted below – when we assume that the actual program of a political group can serve as a source of its ideological outlook. Even if the chosen groups may not be perceived as “extreme enough” in comparison with other far right groupings, like for example neo-Nazi organizations, I would claim that they both do fit into the wider category of the far right family. Pre-emptively resisting the potential objection towards the comparison of the groups which are operating on two various levels of political organization (political party versus association), I would also like to support the rationale of this particular choice by the statement that the far right beliefs and convictions seem to remain the same, regardless of the organizational structures to which their members are aligned. Those radical beliefs may even appear in case of non-unioned or non-attached individuals within the society, as some studies have already proved¹⁰.

Please note that all the translations from German are the author’s unless otherwise indicated.

1. STRANGENESS AND HOSTILITY TOWARDS OUT-GROUPS IN THE RESEARCH ON THE EXTREME RIGHT

The importance of the feeling of hostility towards out-groups among far right activists is to be found in their general outlook on political and social issues. They make an assumption that people in general are not equal. Even in one of the first research on the extreme political attitudes – the study of Theodor W. Adorno, the issue of hostility towards others has been mentioned, although in a particular form of anti-Semitism. This psychologically-driven research of the late 40s claimed that people prone to extreme right political attitudes hold specific type of personality in which prejudices and anger towards foreign groups play an important role. The exasperation connected to the foreign group was explained by the human necessity to give vent to frustration and blame someone or something for the bad situation in which someone is placed. In this “psychological economy” various out-groups can play the role of such a scapegoat¹¹. Interestingly, psychologists claim that the extremeness of attitudes – and also the nega-

⁹ See S. Salzborn, “Renaissance of the New Right in Germany? A discussion of New Right Elements in German Right-wing Extremism Today”, *German Politics and Society*, vol. 34, no. 2 (2016), pp. 36–63, doi: 10.3167/gps.2016.340203.

¹⁰ See below regarding the psychological research.

¹¹ W. Adorno, *Osobowość autorytarna*, trans. by M. Pańków, Warszawa 2010, pp. 118–181.

tive attitude towards foreign groups, being part of political extremism – can also be latent and potential, without an individual realizing it¹².

According to current political science literature, hostility towards others and focus on the issue of strangeness derives mostly from the anti-democratic attitude of the far right extremists¹³. One of the most accessible definitions is the one created by Backes and Jesse where the extreme right stands for *a collective term for anti-democratic dispositions and attempts, that are traditionally positioned at the extreme right of the left-right spectre*¹⁴. While being situated at the right end of the political spectrum does not have to automatically indicate any xenophobic attitudes, its combination with anti-democratic attitudes may do so – at least according to the significant amount of modern political scientists. The “anti-democratism” of the far right could serve as an umbrella term for several core ideological elements of these groupings. Of course, scientists vary when it comes to naming them¹⁵, nevertheless in vast majority of the studies a specific attitude towards out-groups is being listed as such a core ideological element. For example, for Armin Pfahl-Traughber an anti-democratic attitude consists not only of absolutistic tendencies, dogmatism or anti-pluralism but also of *friend vs. foe stereotypization*¹⁶ and anti-egalitarianism explained as a mechanism of giving the in-group a higher status than any other group to which an individual does not belong, which automatically introduces a negative assessment of those belonging to other groups¹⁷. Piero Ignazi on the other hand thinks that hostility towards foreigners, primacy of the “ethnos” and repulsion of divisions characterise anti-democratic stance.¹⁸ Cas Mudde’s famous five core elements of the right wing political ideology names among others racism and xenophobia¹⁹, although it is worth to mention that racism as a characteristic of the far right ideology is often contested in the scientific discussions as being an out-dated term, fitting mostly to the Nazi and fascist regime or their direct ideological inheritors²⁰. Hans-Georg Betz concludes that nowadays *the majority of the radical right espouses a “post-racist” position of ethnopluralism, which aims at the protection and preservation of “one’s own” society, culture and way of life rather than the disparagement, subjugation and extinction*

¹² U. Jakubowska, *Ekstremizm polityczny. Studium psychologiczne*, Gdańsk 2005, p. 7.

¹³ Which shall not be seen as an attempt to underestimate the psychological record of research on xenophobia and negative attitudes toward foreigners. The further arguments in this article derive from political science.

¹⁴ U. Backes, E. Jesse, *Politischer Extremismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Berlin 1993, p. 40.

¹⁵ Cas Mudde undertook a challenge of listing all ideological characteristics of the extreme right which came to his attention while going through the literature and ended up with the number 58 characteristics. See P. Ignazi, *Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe*, Oxford 2006, p. 27.

¹⁶ A. Pfahl-Traughber, *Rechtsextremismus in der Bunderepublik*, München 2006, p. 12.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*; P. Ignazi, *Extreme Right Parties...*, p. 33.

¹⁹ C. Mudde, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*, Manchester–New York 2000, p. 17.

²⁰ H-G. Betz, *The Growing Threat of the Radical Right*, in P. Merkl, L. Weinberg (eds.) *Right-wing Extremism in the Twenty-first Century*, London–Portland 2003, pp. 76-77.

of other cultures²¹. Roger Eatwell also echoes these concerns, claiming that the “new racism” is not the hierarchical one any longer, focusing on superiority or subordination of races but rather differences between and their incompatibility²².

All things considered, according to the abovementioned and numerous other studies, strangeness as a political and social issue is to be found easily in the extreme right wave of thought. We could trace it both on an individual level of the psychological construction of an individual far right activist but also on a higher level of extreme right as a political player, whose one of the most important characteristic was hostility towards out-groups, constructing its wider anti-democratic attitude. In the coming chapter I will reference a set of statistics concerning Germany in order to see whether the actual numbers could support the radical right’s claim of them being “threatened” by the out-groups living in or coming to their country.

2. THE NUMERIC SCALE OF THE FOREIGN “THREAT” IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Already in the 90s – a heyday of extreme right studies in Germany²³ – several researchers have tried to prove the existence of a connection between the number of foreigners living in the Federal Republic and the popularity of the extreme right in this country. For example the study of Politbarometer’s surveys in the period 1989–1998, combined with trends in voting intentions and statistics on the number of foreigners and asylum seekers in Germany of the 90s, led Marcel Lubbers and Peer Scheepers to the conclusion that the larger the number of asylum seekers, the larger the possibility of voting for the extreme right parties. Surprisingly, it was not even the unemployment rate which was the main reason for far right voting, in contrary to several previous studies²⁴. The study also supports the thesis that the radical right is tightly connected to the issues of immigration, asylum seekers and foreigners in general and that Germany fits into this trend²⁵.

²¹ Ibid., p. 85.

²² R. Eatwell, *Introduction*, in R. Eatwell, C. Mudde (eds.), *Western Democracies and the New Extreme Right Challenge*, London–New York 2004, p. 10.

²³ An extended research of that time was an effect of the popularity of right wing populist parties (Die Republikaner and Die Deutsche Volkunion in particular) but also the aftermath of the so called *Asyldebatte* in the late 80s and early 90s when main parties on the German political scene discussed heavily the changes to the asylum right, which were supposed to stop the liberal course in the German migration policy. See also: E. Zimmermann, *Right-Wing Extremism and Xenophobia in Germany: Escalation, Exaggeration, or What?*, in: P. Merkl, L. Weinberg (eds.) *Right-wing Extremism in the Twenty-first Century*, London–Portland 2003, pp. 220-250.

²⁴ M. Lubbers, P. Scheepers, “Explaining the Trend in Extreme Right-Wing Voting: Germany 1989-1998”, *European Sociological Review*, vol. 17, no. 4 (2001), pp. 431–449, doi: 10.1093/esr/17.4.431.

²⁵ This, however, should not lead to the conclusion, that right wing organisations are focusing only on the subject of immigration. In my opinion, they are far more than just a single-issue political phenomenon.

The current attitudes towards foreigners seem to match above conclusions. Federal Office for Migration and Refugees informed that while the number of immigrants in 2006–2009 remained at the same level (360 000 – 390 000), it began to grow in the following years (600 000 in 2011 and 2 million at the end of 2015)²⁶. The number of asylum submissions increased also from around 30 000 in 2007 to 745 000 in 2016 and almost tripled in the last two years counted²⁷ – the period described by the media and public opinion as a migration crisis. If the growing number of immigrants is the fuel for extreme right, then the German right definitely could have reached at that time its fool bloom.

It is however worth to mention that concerns about the situation of immigrants and asylum seekers affected a wider German society, not only the radical parts of it. It is visible in responses to the Eurobarometer questions. German respondents were asked to name the most important issues of their country in 2005 and 2010 pointed out unemployment (81%) and economic situation (only 6% selected immigration at that time). In 2015 and 2016 they decided with significant majority that it is the immigration problem that matters the most (almost 50%)²⁸. Since 2014 the Eurobarometer includes the question on the perception of immigration thus the results provided here may also be important in light of the below analysis of AfD and IBD. While immigration from EU countries was perceived both in 2014 and in the latest survey from November 2016 as “fairly positive”, the immigration from outside of the EU was assessed as “fairly negative” in 2014 (40%), 2015 (38%) and 2016 (36%)²⁹. These numbers show that indeed political actors focused on the immigration issue may find a significant support from the society for whom it is also a source of concern.

3. ATTITUDES TOWARDS FOREIGNERS IN RHETORIC AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY OF THE GERMAN RIGHT WING ORGANIZATIONS

The above divagations laid down a theoretical basis for the analysis of the actual phenomenon resulting from the increased number of foreigners coming to the Federal Republic of Germany in the form of development of the far right political scene. A closer look at the two selected German groupings from the right end of the political

²⁶ “Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2015. Asyl, Migration und Integration”, *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*, 2016, p. 73, [online] http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Broschueren/bundesamt-in-zahlen-2015.pdf?__blob=publicationFile, 16 March 2017.

²⁷ “Schlüsselzahlen Asyl”, *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*, 2016, [online] http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Flyer/flyer-schluesselzahlen-asyl-2016.pdf?__blob=publicationFile, 16 March 2017.

²⁸ “Two most important issues facing (our country) at the moment”, *Eurobarometer interactive*, 2016, [online] <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/index.cfm>, 16 March 2017.

²⁹ “Immigration”, *Eurobarometer interactive*, 2016, [online] <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/index.cfm>, 16 March 2017.

spectrum will now enable us to see how the fear of foreigners and the hostility towards them is actually articulated by the extreme right.

The conviction that a detailed analysis of these groupings' ideological program would enable us to understand their point of view on this particular issue is supported mainly by the pattern suggested by Mudde. This researcher claims, that while the vast majority of studies concerning political groups focuses on analysing their political successes presented by the number of votes or seats in parliaments, it is actually the ideology of the party that may decide whether a political organization is successful or not. In order to find this ideology we should research electoral program, political origins of the leader of a given group, interviews with groups' members and activists and other internal and external documents produced by the political groups³⁰. Alternative for Germany as a political party obviously possess a party program. Identitarians on the other hand are very active in promoting their beliefs in the form of leaflets, online publications – articles, posts and videos. All of them will come under scrutiny in the following chapters.

3.1. Alternative for Germany

AfD's appearance on the German political scene came as a surprise and its quick and far-reaching success was even more astonishing. Many researchers and journalists claim that the fact that AfD needed only few months of preparation between its launch in February 2013 and its 4.7% score in general elections to Bundestag in September that same year is of no precedence in the whole history of the Federal Republic of Germany³¹. Even being allowed to take part in elections on a national basis usually takes more time only for administrative preparation purposes³². Results of the election did not enable AfD to get into Bundestag at that time, it was however an impressive start for a newly-founded party in a political system of Germany, traditionally difficult for any new parties.

The party capitalised the social dissatisfaction with the handling of the European financial crisis. It was against the idea of financial aid for economically weaker countries like Greece which was unfairly financed from "German peoples' taxes". The name of the party was established as an opposition to the words of Chancellor Merkel who in 2010 expressed that there is and may not be any alternative to the political course chosen by the German government and the EU when it comes to the financial crisis³³. Focusing on economics in the first phase of AfD functioning as a party was not a coincidence – it was created by the professor of economics Bernd Lucke and among its first 64 supporters one could find 18 other professors of that field of studies³⁴. The party

³⁰ Ibid.; C. Mudde, *The Ideology...*, p. 20.

³¹ A. Häusler, "Die AfD. Partei des rechten Wutbürgertums am Scheideweg", *Friedrich Ebert Stiftungs Expertisen für Demokratie*, no. 1 (2015), p. 5.

³² O. Niedermayer, "Der Aufstieg..."

³³ P. Kubiak, "Alternatywa dla Niemiec (AfD) – nowa siła na niemieckiej scenie politycznej?", *Biuletyn Instytutu Zachodniego*, no. 127 (2013), p. 1.

³⁴ D. Bebnowski, L.J. Förster, "Wettbewerbspopulismus. Die Alternative für Deutschland und die Rolle der Ökonomen", *Otto Brenner Stiftung Arbeitspapier*, no. 14 (2014), p. 4.

seemed indeed competent enough to pursue its political goals which at that time were concentrated on: dismantling or at least dividing the Eurozone, pursuing return of national currencies in European countries and making sure that global financial organizations take responsibility for the economic crisis instead of the regular citizens. Trying to break the image of a one-issue party, AfD gradually included further topics into its political program, thus expanding its electoral chances. It seemed unavoidable in light of the existence of the so called “right” or “conservative wing”, which was visible within the party already at the beginning of 2014.

The liberal mindset in economy was gradually accompanied by conservative stands on family and social issues, starting from sharing anti-homosexual attitudes and popularizing traditional family model up to the severe critique of the multiculturalism³⁵. This dichotomy of different political thoughts combined under one party banner became unendurable in the long term. Lucke’s vision of the party was no longer keeping pace with the fact that the conservative wing, in light of the slowly starting migration crisis, was gaining visibly in strength. In the summer of 2015 Lucke resigned from its position and Frauke Petry, a leader of the conservative wing within the AfD, became the chair of the party, leading its political program into completely new direction and by doing so, moving the party even more to the right on the political spectrum³⁶. All the ideas presented below are a part of the “new edition” of AfD’s political program, launched after Petry’s election³⁷.

When it comes to the profile of this party it is worth noticing that while German media tend to call AfD an extreme right party³⁸, a great doze of populism has always been visible in its political style from the beginning of party’s existence, especially in its anti-establishment rhetoric³⁹. As a side note, the traditional parties on the German political scene have always avoided AfD even in public statements as a party labelled with an “extreme” adjective. Their tactic was to ignore the party and not to get involved in

³⁵ Ibid.; A. Häusler, “Die AfD...”, p. 2.

³⁶ See e.g.: O. Niedermayer, “Die AfD als Partei ist nicht populistisch”, *Tagesspiegel Causa*, 1 February 2017, [online] <https://causa.tagesspiegel.de/politik/wie-rechts-ist-die-afd/die-afd-als-partei-ist-nicht-rechts-populistisch.html>, 18 March 2017.

³⁷ Internal disputes and disagreements last within the AfD till now. While Petry seemed to represent the more extreme wing under Lucke leadership, she struggles now with even more radical individuals, for example Björn Höcke, representing AfD in Thuringia. Also, her cooperation with AfD’s federal spokesman – Alexander Gauland – is not an easy one. A perfect example of the internal issues within the party was Petry’s announcement that she will not be running in the coming elections as a lead candidate of AfD. See: M. Fiedler, “AfD-Chefin Petry tritt den Rückzug an”, *Der Tagesspiegel*, 19 April 2017, [online] <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/verzicht-auf-spitzenkandidatur-afd-chefin-petry-tritt-den-rueckzug-an/19691098.html>, 27 May 2017.

³⁸ D. Deckers, “Rechts? Rechtspopulistisch? Rechtsradikal? Rechtsextrem?“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15 September 2016, [online] http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/afd-rechts-rechtspopulistisch-rechtsradikal-rechtsextrem-14430780.html?printPagedArticle=true#pageIndex_2, 17 March 2017.

³⁹ Ibid.; A. Häusler, “Die AfD...”, p. 3.

any political disputes with AfD's party members. This became difficult, especially when in the state elections the party received up to one-quarter of the votes⁴⁰.

3.1.1. AfD's political demands regarding foreigners' issue⁴¹

AfD's standpoints on immigration policy, although from the very beginning quite radical ones, became with time dramatically different to those offered by the German government. As the attitudes regarding economics in times of Euro crisis were alternative to the "mainstream" ones, so are the AfD's attitudes towards foreigners in times of migration crises.

The party's standpoint on asylum and migration cannot be missed. On one hand it is directly and indirectly included in each chapter of their party program, on the other hand it is repetitively audible in party leaders' public statements. Already on the homepage of AfD we can see what the party's goals for the coming election in 2017 are. AfD claims to be the only political power in Germany offering alternative solutions to the following issues: asylum and migration, Islam and identity, EU, security of citizens and future for families and children⁴². Assuming that the order of issues is also an indicator for their relevance for the party, we can notice that the immigration policy and the presence of people of different religion stand in the centre of AfD policies.

The whole party program is steeped with an idea of protecting Germany and German citizens from decay. According to AfD this devastation is to be seen in the condition of country's democracy, where the power is not properly divided among political organs, parties have become disproportionally strong and the power of the state as a whole has witnessed noticeable loss of sovereignty in favour of international organizations⁴³ (chapter one of the program: 'Democracy and core values')⁴⁴. The greatest contribution to the political, social and cultural decay of the Federal Republic is however ascribed to masses of foreigners. It is visible in the party program in several chapters, especially: migration and asylum, family and children, culture and identity. AfD decided to concentrate on this particular issue due to the prevailing political cor-

⁴⁰ In 2016 few federal states went through elections – AfD managed to gain almost 25% of votes in Sachsen-Anhalt and 15% in Baden-Württemberg.

⁴¹ The article is based on the party materials from 2016 and beginning of 2017, before new election program was launched in April 2017 and AfD received several seats in the German Bundestag in September elections. It is also worth to mention that Frauke Petry resigned from AfD's membership and all her offices within the party, after the results of elections were announced. See: K. Connolly, "AfD leader quits party caucus hours after German election breakthrough", *The Guardian*, 25 September 2017, [online] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/25/afd-leader-frauke-petry-quits-party-german-election-breakthrough>, 6 February 2018.

⁴² "Unser Ziel", [online] <https://www.alternativefuer.de/>, 17 March 2017.

⁴³ These institutions and especially the EU contribute further to the loss of German's power. Therefore AfD demand is that the EU should give back a great amount of its competencies to European national countries (See chapter two of their program: "Europe and Euro").

⁴⁴ "Programm für Deutschland. Das Grundsatz Programm der Alternative für Deutschland", 2016, [online] https://www.alternativefuer.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/111/2017/01/2016-06-27_afd-grundsatzprogramm_web-version.pdf, 17 March 2017.

rectness of other actors on the German political scene, for whom protection of immigrants seems more important than the right of German citizens to openly express their opinion on immigration. First of all AfD assumes that the Federal Republic due to its geographical location, history and already dense population is not an ideal place for foreigners and shall not be seen as an immigration country. The decision to welcome refugees in such a great amount does not correspond with its potential but also with the preparation of institutions and administration (chapter nine: 'Immigration, integration and asylum'). Therefore their first appeal would be to reduce the amount of foreigners already living in Germany but also to change the rules regarding acceptance of future requests for stay in the country.

If political claims of AfD were limited only to these cold and fairly rational arguments, it will not be perceived yet as extreme. Unfortunately the party goes further in its argumentation. To begin with, the foreign cultures brought into Germany by the newcomers are perceived by the party as a danger to its own culture. We can read: *The ideology of multiculturalism, which equates the imported cultural currents with indigenous culture, relativizing in this way its [own] values, is treated by AfD as the most important danger to the social peace and maintenance of the nation as a cultural entity. Contrarily, the state and the civic society have to defend the German cultural identity as a dominant culture*⁴⁵. Consequently the protection of German culture, literature, music and art for future generations is one of the essential goals of the party. Same counts for the protection of German language, endangered by internationalization and various loanwords coming from different foreign languages (chapter seven: 'Culture, language and identity'). Paradoxically AfD welcomes to the German job market *qualified immigrants with high integration dispositions* (chapter nine: 'Immigration, integration and asylum')⁴⁶. Integration on the other hand should not be limited only to learning the German language – *each immigrant have the inalienable obligation [literally: debt – A.K.] to become integrated; he has to adjust to the new home country and not the other way round* (chapter nine: 'Immigration, integration and asylum')⁴⁷. From the AfD's perspective the massive immigration cannot be excused even by the widespread opinion that German ageing society needs a rapid demographic growth. Accepting newcomers is not a solution to the undesirable development of German demography; it is just an illusion of making things better. The focus shall be put on supporting the German families and the traditional model of a family (chapter six: 'Families and children').

AfD's demands become more radical especially when it comes to the protection of religion and I would claim that at least due to this particular standpoint it should be regarded as the extreme right party. Although the party suggests it is a supporter of the freedom of belief and the freedom of worship, as it is stated in the party program⁴⁸, at the same time it demands putting limits on the Islamic worshipping traditions, *which are against the free*

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 47.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 62.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 63.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 48.

and democratic basic order, our constitution and Judeo-Christian and humanistic foundation⁴⁹. The most heated discussion when the party program has been published in May 2016 arose around the statement included in the statute that *Islam does not belong to Germany*⁵⁰. Such an explicit and open outrun from the fairly correct political language and practice in Germany is of no precedence in this country. AfD explain its standpoint by the following: *In the spread and presence of the constantly growing number of Muslims, AfD sees a great danger for our country, our society and our values. Islam, which does not respect our legal framework or even defends it and claim its power as the only valid religion, is not reconcilable with our legal order and our culture*⁵¹. Respectively, specific postulates of the party are the following: to stop the irregular immigration, to consequently send the non-qualifying asylum seekers back to home countries or to the third countries, to ban the full-face veil, not to allow the Islamic religious organization to gain any entities or corporate body status and at the very end to allow the freedom of critique towards Islam (chapter seven: 'Culture, language and identity'). The Qur'anic schools should be closed down and the Islamic teaching system should be allowed only under the condition that the teachers were educated on German universities, loyal to the German constitutional order and not influenced by Islamic religious associations (chapter eight: 'Schools, universities and research').

All the above political claims listed in the party program are constantly supported by the public statements of AfD's members and especially its controversial leaders. As a most striking example it is worth to mention that at the beginning of 2016, when the migration crisis experienced its peak, Petry bewildered German public opinion with her statement that the border service's members should be allowed to use weapons against the newcomers in case of emergency during the border crossing⁵². Knowing that the eastern parts of Germany are more prone to the right-wing attitudes, which is actually confirmed by the distribution of the electoral support for AfD across Germany⁵³, leaders of the regional branches in this region go for even more radical statements. It is especially Björn Höcke, representing AfD in Thuringia, who from time to time amazes the German public with his statements, for example on the German Nazi-past, from which he is not willing to distance himself, in contrary to what is commonly established in the Federal Republic.

When it comes to political strategy it is worth to highlight that the party seeks its potential strength in the ambivalent attitude of traditional parties towards it. It was

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 49.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² "Sie können es nicht lassen!", *Das Nachrichtenportal Rhein-Neckar*, 30 January 2016, [online] <http://www.morgenweb.de/sie-können-es-nicht-lassen-1.2620328>, 17 March 2017.

⁵³ Till now, AfD obtained its best scores in regional elections in Eastern federal countries: 24,3% in Saxony-Anhalt in 2016 and 20,8% in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in the same year. Just for comparison, the numbers in Western federal countries were much lower – for example 12,6% in Rhineland-Palatinate in 2016. See: *Landtagswahlen 2017 und 2018. Landtagswahlen 2018: Bayern und Hessen, Wahlen in Deutschland*, [online] <https://bundestagswahl-2017.com/landtagswahlen/>, 17 March 2017.

even noted in one of AfD's strategic papers that the party is going to use this dislike for its own advantage⁵⁴. In the same document, the party clearly states who its target groups are, for example: Eurosceptics, protest voters and those who usually do not vote. Some of the party members were also seen on various occasions at the demonstrations of the islamophobic Pegida movement⁵⁵. Also, the party leader Petry used to hold strong political relationships with the representatives of the radical right in other European countries like France and Russia⁵⁶. It is worth to mention that AfD's party congresses are usually accompanied by demonstrations of the anti-AfD activists. The German police reported more than a thousand demonstrating activists during the party congress in Stuttgart in April 2016⁵⁷.

3.2. Identitarian Movement

On the far right political scene the Identitarian Movement takes enormously interesting standpoint and chooses non-standard practices. In case of Germany, it attracts significant part of younger generation for several of reasons. The attractiveness of IBD's activities and its constant presence online is one of the simplest explanations. *As 'digital natives', the Internet-oriented generation, which operates comfortably in social networks, forums of online newspapers and video-channels, they were able to get the publicity, without being dependent on formal public relations or high attendance in their campaigns*⁵⁸ – wrote Bruns, Glösel and Strobl in one of the newest monographies about the Movement. Another reason for their success may be the fact that identitarians are not a party, instead they have chosen a loose form of political activism, namely an association. Deepened studies on political attitudes in Germany as a whole show however that the identitarians may also gain on the loss of attachment among Germans towards the traditional parties. While parents of identitarians may have still felt a strong linkage to the mainstream parties, due to their origins, class or occupation, they themselves do not feel this kind of attachment. They feel unrepresented by the traditional political powers. A member of a trade union in the past couple of decades naturally would join the socialist party and

⁵⁴ "AfD will im Wahlkampf gezielt provozieren", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19 December 2016, [online] <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/bundestagswahl-2017-afd-will-im-wahlkampf-provozieren-14582830.html>, 27 May 2017.

⁵⁵ S. Weiland, "AfD und Pegida. Da haben sich zwei gefunden", *Spiegel Online*, 20 May 2016, [online] <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/afd-und-pegida-da-haben-sich-zwei-gefunden-a-1093081.html>, 18 April 2017.

⁵⁶ "Gauland und Meuthen tadeln Frauke Petry", *Zeit Online*, 22 February 2017, [online] <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2017-02/afd-frauke-petry-kritik-marine-le-pen-bjoern-hoecke>, 18 April 2017.

⁵⁷ "Parteitag in Stuttgart. Leuchtraketen und brennende Autoreifen gegen die AfD", *Spiegel Online*, 30 April 2016, [online] <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/afd-parteitag-in-stuttgart-leuchtraketen-und-brennende-autoreifen-gegen-die-afd-a-1090221.html>, 18 April 2017.

⁵⁸ J. Bruns, K. Glösel, N. Strobl, "Die Identitären. Handbuch zur Jugendbewegung der Neuen Rechten in Europa", Münster 2017, p. 13.

raise his or her children in the same political spirit. Nowadays it rarely becomes a rule⁵⁹. What is more the younger generation seems to enjoy this situation and is willing to choose less-biding organizations than a political party in order to fulfil its need for political participation.

IBD entered the political sphere at the end of 2012 as a Facebook group based on a French model of identitarianism⁶⁰. First meeting of its supporters took place in December of that same year in Frankfurt am Main. In that moment IBD's entrance from the online sphere into reality has been announced, although, as we will notice in the next paragraphs, IBD's main the Internet remains the movement's main focus. Since 2014 the Movement has been registered as an association. It is hard to give a precise number of IBD's members and supporters. According to the media, about 400 people belong to the movement⁶¹. IBD's Facebook portal is currently followed by more than 64 000 people⁶².

Identitarians describe themselves as young Germans without migrant origins, which in the current demographic situation and political atmosphere in the Federal Republic looks like a sufficient introduction⁶³. As a political power they like to be named as a *counterculture from the Right* or *new, forgotten generation*⁶⁴. They want to praise and keep alive the values of homeland, freedom and tradition by means of *peaceful actionism, political educational work and social and cultural activities*⁶⁵ and make patriotism an attractive idea. Identitarians believe also that the most important and deciding aspect of the social and political life in the XXI century is the issue of identity. Since the beginning they claimed that the German and European culture is in danger. They wanted to raise awareness and called for contribution and activism which could save the tradition and culture. They were at risk due to demographical problems, globalization (*the utopia of one-world-ideology*⁶⁶), foreign ideologies ("islamisation") and other external influences. In the long term

⁵⁹ O. Niedermayer, "Die goldene Zeit der Mitgliederparteien ist vorbei", *Zeit Online*, 12 December 2013, [online] <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2013-12/interview-niedermayer-parteien/seite-2>, 17 March 2017.

⁶⁰ In France the identitarians appeared as a youth organization of Block Identitaire. French identitarians and their other European branches, including IBD, are strictly connected to the ideology of the New Right (Nouvelle Droite).

⁶¹ A. Tieg, "Identitäre Bewegung. Alarmstufe gelb", *Zeit online*, 30 August 2016, [online] <http://www.zeit.de/2016/36/identitaere-bewegung-hamburger-verfassungsschutz/komplettansicht>, 17 March 2017.

⁶² As of February 2018.

⁶³ A discussion around the so called *Migrationshintergrund* plays in Germany an important role. For a short explanation of the term see: F. Ataman, "Muss der »Migrationshintergrund« neu definiert werden?", 3 May 2016, [online] <https://mediendienst-integration.de/artikel/wie-wird-der-migrationshintergrund-im-mikrozensus-erfasst.html>, 17 March 2017.

⁶⁴ "Die Identitären. Vorübergehendes Phänomen...", p. 1.

⁶⁵ "Wer oder was ist die Identitäre Bewegung?", [online] <https://www.identitaere-bewegung.de/category/faq/>, 17 March 2017.

⁶⁶ "Erhalt der ethnokulturellen Identität", [online] <https://www.identitaere-bewegung.de/category/politische-forderungen/>, 17 March 2017.

the retrieval of European and national tradition should be obtained by means of cultural revolution. They believe that a starting point for a successful rebirth is realizing one's identity and raising awareness of this identity's value.

3.2.1. Identitarians' political demands regarding foreigners' issue

IBD as a loose political grouping does not formulate its political expectations as clearly as it could have been noticed in the case of AfD. They are independent from voters and can juggle with political slogans, without the need to have an opinion on every aspect of political and social life⁶⁷. Practical solutions of the migration issue are rarely seen in their program. Remigration and on-site help are their main demands. They also focus on the security of German and European borders. Besides that, their program consists mainly of ideological, if not philosophical, digressions on the nature of identity and society.

Identitarians introduce many new terms and definitions, enabling them to describe how they see the world. One of these terms, related to the issue of mass immigration, is "Reconquista". By using this slogan identitarians present a point of view that today's high number of Muslim immigrants in Germany and Europe can be compared with the Islamic conquest and crusades of the Middle Ages and Christians' defence of the European continent⁶⁸. While the comparison is strikingly exaggerated, IBD dedicates a whole chapter on its website to explain this subject. They stress that the battle they mean is rather an ideological and political one. "Reconquista" should be seen as a fight over terms and political positions and also for more space on the political scene for those whose positions are not mainstream⁶⁹. The selection of this particular slogan is rather astonishing – out of numerous different historical connotations they have chosen the one which is connected directly to the clash of Christianity and Islam. Another term coined by IBD to describe the current situation is the "Huge exchange", meaning *a gradual process of suppression and replacement of the indigenous society by non-European immigration*⁷⁰. The process is escalated by the dominant idea of multiculturalism which should be stopped as soon as it is possible and replaced by concern about one's own culture.

Political scientists describe Identitarian Movement with a term "ethnopluralism". It is a belief that ethnic groups are equal in their variety; none of them is better or worse. Ethnic groups should focus on nurturing their identities and values. However, they flourish only when they live on their own territory, use their own lan-

⁶⁷ For example their economic demands or any expectations towards Germany's foreign policy are hardly seen in their program. Their frequent usage of the term "the third way" shall also not be perceived in economic terms – it has a cultural and social meaning.

⁶⁸ Ibid. J. Bruns, K. Glösel, N. Strobl, "Die Identitären...", p. 271.

⁶⁹ "Was bedeutet der Begriff »Reconquista«", [online] <https://www.identitaere-bewegung.de/category/faq/>, 17 March 2017.

⁷⁰ "Großer Austausch", [online] <https://www.identitaere-bewegung.de/kampagnen/grosser-austausch/>, 17 March 2017.

guage and do not mix with other groups⁷¹. Obviously such a separation is not possible in today's globalized world; hence ethnopluralism is only an ideological demand. Researchers claim that while this theory is indeed far away from biological racism it still poses a danger of discrimination, especially when the groups start to mix with each other⁷². Ethnopluralism is therefore perceived sometimes as "racism without races"⁷³.

It is not easy to find any public statements of individual identitarians other than their online posts. There is no actual leader of the Movement, nor are the members of IBD willing to make any public statements. Therefore tracking identitarians' practice is of a significant importance. In accordance to our main topic, it is worth to mention that there has been no action of IBD which would not be connected to the problem of immigration. For example in June 2015 IBD occupied locals of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, member of the ruling coalition, with banners condemning SDP's standpoint on migration policy⁷⁴. In August 2016, an open day of governmental institutions, dedicated in that particular year to the topic of immigration and integration, they climbed on the Brandenburg Gate with an enormously big banner *Secure borders – secure future* and respective logotypes of the Movement⁷⁵. One of their action, run simultaneously in several locations, was a live gallery of German females allegedly being in danger of islamisation. Three female activists were standing next to each other with banners showing numbers of: 2006, 2016 and 2026. The first one looked like a regular German female and was representing a peaceful year of 2006, the second one was characterized as a beaten and abused woman of 2016, the third one was wearing the full-face veil which was supposed to be a vision of the gloomy future of the country⁷⁶. They also happened to publish pictures of German girls with a comment: "Too beautiful for a veil"⁷⁷. In May 2017, together with identitarians from different European countries, IBD took part in the action conducted in the Mediterranean Sea. They wanted to stop the ship belonging to the non-governmental organization SOS Mediterranee,

⁷¹ G. Hentges, G. Kökgiran, K. Nottbohm, "Die Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland (IBD) – Bewegung oder virtuelles Phänomen?", *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen*, no. 3 (2014), p. 3.

⁷² Ibid.; S. Salzborn, "Renaissance of the New Right...", pp. 41–42.

⁷³ "Ethnopluralismus", *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*, 3 February 2014, [online] <http://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/rechtsextremismus/173908/glossar?p=17>, 17 March 2017.

⁷⁴ "Rechtsextreme besetzen Balkon der SPD-Zentrale", *Spiegel Online*, 29 June 2015, [online] <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/spd-zentralen-in-berlin-und-hamburg-rechte-besetzen-balkon-a-1041130.html>, 17 March 2017.

⁷⁵ "»Identitäre« klettern auf das Brandenburger Tor", *Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg*, 27 August 2016, [online] <http://www.rbb-online.de/abendschau/index.htm/doc=!content!rbb!rbb!politik!beitrag!2016!08!brandenburger-tor-besetzt-berlin-identitaere-bewegung.html>, 17 March 2017.

⁷⁶ This action was a response to the events of the New Year's Eve of 2015/2016 in Cologne, where a big group of men of "oriental", "Arab" appearance surrounded and assaulted women during the celebrations. See: "Germany shocked by Cologne New Year gang assaults on women", BBC News, 5 January 2016, [online] <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35231046>, 17 March 2017.

⁷⁷ A. Zillmer, "»Likes« für Rassisten: Wie die Identitären im Internet für sich werben", *Blog Zeit Online*, 12 February 2013, [online] http://blog.zeit.de/stoerungsmelder/2013/02/12/likes-fur-rassisten-wie-die-identitaeren-im-internet-fur-sich-werben_11343, 7 February 2018.

claiming: *with this action the Identitarian Movement wants to point to the criminal activities of several so called "humanitarian" organizations in the Mediterranean. Since several months they have been smuggling hundred thousands of illegal Immigrants from the Libyan coast to Europe and don't even shy away from working together with human traffickers*⁷⁸. They also wanted to force their way into the Ministry of Justice in Berlin, in protest against the minister Heiko Maas. Maas fell from right-wing activists' grace due to his activity in the field of tracking and banning the "hate speech" on the Internet⁷⁹.

Researchers ascribe to the identitarians a strong tendency to use pop-cultural elements in their activism. For example, in light of the abovementioned inspiration of Reconquista they popularize its idea by selling out T-shirts and other gadgets with a proper symbolization of this historical event. Also their official symbol – a Greek letter lambda – is to be seen during each and every of their public actions. It refers to the ancient heroism of the Spartan army in their fight against the Persian Empire⁸⁰.

It is worth to mention that although only a handful of identitarians take part in this particular actions, they are always echoed and multiplied via Internet (videos, posts, detailed reports of actions). Their actions aim mostly at raising awareness and expressing deep dissatisfaction with German politics. In comparison to other far right groupings these actions are rather non-aggressive but also non-standard ones.

CONCLUSIONS

It is feasible to point out various differences between AfD's and IBD's political views. First of all, since AfD has chosen the organizational structure of a political party it functions in a different way than identitarians do⁸¹. AfD produces a political and electoral program which cannot be limited to the selected issues. In order to be attractive to the widest possible electoral group it needs to be inclusive and touch on various socially important topics. We could see that AfD's program is indeed a very comprehensive one, nevertheless steeped by the far-right political demands on each and every level. On the other hand, IBD as a loose association is not limited by any electoral constraints. It selects the ideological material freely and makes use of its attractiveness to the young German generation in various ways. All the same, one very radical political demand comes to the first place in identitarians activism. Interestingly, both groups try

⁷⁸ "Italien: Identitäre blockieren NGO-Schiff im Mittelmeer", [online] <https://www.identitaere-bewegung.de/presse/italien-identitaere-blockieren-ngo-schiff-im-mittelmeer/>, 27 May 2017.

⁷⁹ "»Identitäre Bewegung« marschiert vor Justizministerium auf", *Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg*, 19 May 2017, [online] <https://www.rbb-online.de/politik/beitrag/2017/05/identitaere-bewegung-justizministerium-berlin.html>, 27 May 2017.

⁸⁰ Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Inneres und Sport – Verfassungsschutz, "Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland (IBD). Ideologie & Aktionsfelder", Hannover, November 2016 [online] <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/publikationen/pb-rechtsextremismus/publikationen-landesbehoerden-rechtsextremismus/broschuere-ni-2016-11-identitaere-bewegung-deutschland>, 27 May 2017.

⁸¹ Ibid., C. Mudde, "The Ideology...", p. VIII.

to present themselves as a completely new political power, distancing itself clearly from the extremists, especially neo-Nazi, chauvinistic and anti-Semitic groups. As Bruns, Glösel and Strobl pointed out: *Identitarians officially distance themselves from the [idea of] extreme right or extreme right parties like (...) the NPD, from National Socialism, from anti-Semitism and racism, just to emphasize in the very same breath, that they are everything else but Marxist or leftist*⁸². IBD coined even a catchy slogan saying that they are neither right nor left – simply identitarian⁸³. They show however more than a few ideological and tactical linkages with the extreme right current of thought. For example their perception of the world being in danger is a popular characteristic of the whole far right family.

In both cases the adoration and care about the German country is also striking. It is expressed by the need to protect each and every aspect of the German tradition, wealth, resources, good image and well-being of its citizens. Nevertheless the other side of the same coin is the directly or indirectly expressed hostility towards all the possible dangers of the German identity. The possible enemies of the country are seen in the form of international institutions, political correctness, and exaggerated need for equality in various aspects of the public life, homosexuals or political indoctrinations. However, the most important danger of the German identity is everything that is strange, which comes from the outside or has not grown on the German foundations. Since this possible danger from the “others” may be currently experienced on a daily basis, due to globalisation and in particular in the high numbers of foreigners living in the country, the fear of strangeness in the case of AfD and IBD is articulated and concentrated on the anti-foreigners rhetoric and intolerant political demands. This other – xenophobic – side of the nationalistic coin enables us to firstly place them both on the far right of the political scene and secondly gives an uncounted material supporting the abovementioned thesis, that the extreme groupings tend to concentrate on the issue of strangeness more than on any other socially important topic, especially in times of high immigration flow. We can also predict that this focusing on strangeness will determine the subject matter of any future local and national elections and that the right wing organizations may profit from such political current.

The migrant crisis fired up an enormous debate across and outside of Europe. Decisions around specific quotes for accepting refugees among the EU countries showed clearly that there is much more care about countries’ own wealthy and well-being than tolerance and understanding. Although the famous cases of Donald Trump’s immigration policy, heated discussions in France with Front National being a main catalyst of them, recent elections in Netherlands with Geert Wilder’s Party of Freedom or in Austria with Heinz-Christian Strache’s Freedom Party still come to the forefront, this tendency is way much bigger within less known, underground extreme right parties and non-party groupings. Even in countries with allegedly weak right-wing scene, for example Czech Republic or Slovakia, the anti-immigrant extreme right groupings

⁸² Ibid. J. Bruns, K. Glösel, N. Strobl, “Die Identitären...”, p. 13.

⁸³ Ibid.; “Die Identitären. Vorübergehendes Phänomen...”, p. 2.

started to gain on popularity in the recent years, taking both the partisan (i.e. the Czech right-wing populist party Dawn – National Coalition or Slovak Kotleba – People’s Party of Slovakia) and non-partisan form (i.e. Bloc Against Islam with its leader Martin Konvička in Czech Republic). The heated atmosphere accompanying terrorist attacks across Europe may strengthen the right-wing scene in the coming years. There is an urgent need for a balanced and honest analysis of this trend, which could counteract with dominant media transfer. The above analysis, restricted to only one country and a specific period of time, with its conclusion that new far right in Germany does favour the problem of strangeness above other political topics, aims at contributing to the much needed wider research on this issue.

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