Culture and Constitution: An Alternative Identity for Germany

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Abstract

The paper will consider the alternative identity for Germany proposed in 2017 in the electoral manifestos of the right-wing populist party (Ceyhan 2016; Franzmann, 2017; Goerres and Spies, 2017) Alternative für Deutschland (henceforth AfD) for the four state elections: Saarland (AfD SL 2017), Schleswig-Holstein (AfD SH 2017), North Rhine-Westphalia (AfD NRW 2017) and Lower Saxony (AfD LS 2017) and also for the Bundestag elections in September of the same year (AfD BDT 2017).\(^1\) While manifestos do not contain the entirety of views espoused by individual candidates, nevertheless they present parties’ non-deniable positions and represent a common ground and starting point, including for the increasingly important electronic communication on social media etc. (see, for example Vowe, 2016), and particularly during election campaigns (Borucki 2016).

Keywords: Heimat (homeland, native region), Leitkultur (defining culture), national identity, nationalism, election manifestos, Islamophobia, AfD, Grundgesetz, Migration, Late Modernity.

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\(^1\) Henceforth, the different manifestos will be referred to by the name of the state where the election was held, or, in the case of the federal election, by reference to the Bundestag.
Background

Since approximately 1990 there had been a number of short-lived and electorally insubstantial attempts to found nation-wide right-wing populist parties in Germany (Decker and Hartleb 2006). On the other hand, the AfD has become successful, as is demonstrated by its rapid rise to prominence in the German political system following what has been called the “migration crisis” of 2015 in Germany. The party was officially formed in March of 2013 as a reaction to the German Federal Government’s policies supporting the Euro in the financial crisis of 2008 and subsequent years by providing bailouts to faltering economies. The AfD proposed instead, with populist arguments, that Germany leave the Euro (Häusler 2014: 39; Grimm 2015). Working from this starting point and with some of its initial appeal arguably due also to certain of its leading positions being held by economists (Bebnowski, 2016: 14), the AfD obtained its first electoral success the following year in the European Parliament elections and also in some municipal elections. The boost for the party came with the sudden arrival in 2015 of the approximately one million migrants, mainly from the Middle East and other Muslim regions. This added a second and, importantly, visible threat to that of economic collapse or uncertainty. The Far Right and even the Centre-Right had already nurtured a degree of anti-Muslim prejudice (Häusler 2008; Braun et al. 2009; Bahners 2011; Kallis 2018) which the AfD was able to capitalise on. It thus had what any populist party needs for support: a threat due not only to an external Other, but due also to the alleged incompetence of the political elites to manage the two situations (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017: 106; Wodak 2015 passim). It could link a current of nativism with a fully credible narrative of crisis against a background of discontent with traditional parties and policies (Judis 2016; Abromeit et al. 2016). Betz (2018) argues that the successes of the Radical Right in Europe in the early 21st century are due to the parties’ ability to adapt their discourse to new socio-political realities; in parallel with this, Malzahn (2018) indicates that without the sudden arrivals in 2015 and the subsequent distribution of the migrants throughout the country the AfD would exist only on the margins (ein Schattendasein fristen), despite the substrate in the population with nativist views and open to extremist right-wing views – to which the AfD plays (Bebnowski 2016: 17). This is in accordance with other judgements in the academic literature on the exploitation of immigration by the political Right as summarised by Downes (2017). By the end of 2017 the AfD was represented in fourteen of the sixteen state parliaments of Germany: Saxony, Thuringia, Brandenburg (2014); Hamburg, Bremen (2015); Baden-Württemberg, Berlin, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Rhineland Palatinate, Saxony-Anhalt (2016), Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia and also at the federal level in the Bundestag (2017),2 where it holds the third-

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2 The two exceptions are Hesse and Bavaria; in Bavaria no candidates were presented in the 2013 elections.
largest number of seats. This meant that after the formation of the grand coalition government of CDU/CSU and SPD in early 2018 the AfD was the official opposition.

Outline

After an introductory section containing an overview of the fundamentals of late, globalised modernity against which the rise and the existence of the AfD must be viewed, and to which the party has arguably adapted, and after a further section positioning the AfD in respect of the mainstream of the two major parties of CDU/CSU and SPD at the federal level in 2017 / 2018, the analysis will contain two major axes: 1) the ethno-cultural aspect of the AfD’s definition of German identity including the increased importance of the concepts of deutsche Leitkultur (the defining culture of Germany3 – see below for further information) and Heimat (the village, town, region of the individual’s origin and particular emotional attachment – see below for further information)4; and 2) the constitutionalist aspect of the AfD’s definition of German identity. These carry significant implications for attitudes towards the considerable number of non-Germans (ethnically defined) living within Germany and it will also be seen that migration and refugee policies and practices play a significant role in the definition of German identity in all manifestos. Within these considerations, the analyses will also indicate a desire, based on identity-related arguments, to weaken the constitutionally-ordained representative democracy of Germany and will show, also, a degree of disregard for the Constitution.

The paper will extend also the range of countries considered within the ambit of the research project Nacionalismo de estado en democracias multinacionales: el impacto de la Gran Recesión sobre la identidad nacional centred in the Universidad Pablo de Olavide in Seville. No argument is made that Germany is a multinational state within the meaning of the project which focuses above all on two specific EU countries, Spain and the United Kingdom, with established internal nations recognised constitutionally in their different ways. On the other hand, within Germany the AfD is functioning within a social and national framework created by two significant inward population movements in the last sixty years: the labour-market and family reunification immigration which began with the Gastarbeiter from southern Europe and Turkey in the late nineteen-fifties; and, most recently, the wave of almost one million refugees in 2015, principally from the Middle East. In contradistinction to the recognised internal nations in the United Kingdom and Spain, none of these groups, some of whose members are now in the fourth generation in Germany, has any specific constitutional recognition. However, together they do

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3 With the exception of quotations from the Grundgesetz and the new (2018) “Federal Ministry of the Interior, Construction, and Community” all translations are the author’s own.
4 Definitions and discussions are provided below in the section AfD Manifestos for State Elections in 2017.
constitute a part of the German social and political fabric which no political party can now ignore. While it is not possible to speak of a “multinational” Germany in the senses in which the term is used in the United Kingdom or Spain, all parties must think in terms of a very mixed population and be aware that currently there are approximately 6 million voters “with a migration background” (Kösemen, 2013), not to mention at least an equal number of additional permanent residents who are not citizens and thus cannot vote. And, at the time of the arrival of the very many refugees in 2015, the AfD took ownership of the matter, staged a number of public rallies and events, immediately made the arrival of so many refugees part of their populist opposition to what they describe as the incompetent and corrupt elites, and presented the refugees’ arrival as an attack on the identity, culture and *Heimat* of *das Volk* (the ethnic nation, see below) (Geiges 2018).

For the purposes of this paper the definition of national identity is that of the project *Nacionalismo de estado de democracias multinacionales: el impacto de la Gran Recesión sobre la identidad nacional*:

“We define national identity as the subjective feeling of belonging to a territorially-defined political community within which the inhabitants feel that they share certain characteristics or common elements.”

The only distinction is that, rather than looking for the elements of national identity by means of sociological investigations, the object of presentation and analysis here is the set of “characteristics or common elements” which the AfD, a party which owed its original existence to the financial crisis of the *Gran Recesión* (see above), defines as constitutive of German national identity. One indication of the importance of identity, both regional and national, and relating directly to “the subjective feeling of belonging” is the high, and in the case of Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony, very high, frequency of the possessive adjective “our” in the manifestos. The figures are: Saarland 19, North Rhine-Westphalia 43, Schleswig-Holstein 101, Lower Saxony 113. In the federal manifesto it occurs 76 times. In all five manifestos it also has the important function of distinguishing between Germans and what is German on the one hand and what is foreign – particularly Muslim – on the other.

With reference to Germany, Foroutan and colleagues have argued (Foroutan et al. 2014: 16) that in the current period of migration which is a medium- to long-term phenomenon involving a lasting structural, social, cultural and emotional transformation of society, business and politics, there is currently a struggle to be the force which controls the definition (*Definitionshoheit*) of what is German and what constitutes the identity of German society. And now the AfD is deliberately playing an active role in this struggle to

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5 “Definimos la identidad nacional como el sentimiento subjetivo de pertenencia a una comunidad política, definida territorialmente, con la que uno imagina que comparte algunos rasgos o elementos comunes.”
define German identity in the current era in which “unlike in previous times it will be much less easy to tell who is a German just by their name or their appearance” (Gauck 2014).

Introduction: The AfD in late globalised modernity

The following section outlining an important part of the pragmatic situation underlying the manifestos, i.e. late globalised modernity, will indicate trends and issues of modernity which contain particular resonance for the definition of German identity as defined and propagated by the AfD in its manifestos. Betz (2018) comments that given the economic pressures, social disruptions and cultural challenges of the current time, the appeal of the radical right’s nativist and Islamophobic narrative is hardly surprising. The section will thus provide an initial indication of why, in its important presentation of an alternative identity for Germany, the AfD is a) so conservative, b) places such emphasis on rejecting the European Union and all its works, and c) emphasises in the process the pre-existing and emotion-laden concepts widely used in German political life, Heimat and deutsche Leitkultur, as well as the constitutional phrase freiheitlich-demokratische Grundordnung/ the free and democratic rule of law. It will be shown that the characteristics defined by, for example Beck (1997; 2000) or Giddens (1991), can be related directly to the efforts of the AfD to re-shape German identity in an attempt to counter the socio-, politico-, economic forces increasing in intensity in the globalised 21st century.

According to Beck, the predominant characteristics of this globalised modernity are the loss, even the collapse, of past basic certainties concerning personal, social, economic and political life (Beck 1997: 11). This naturally results in insecurity and “the fragility of social positions” (Beck 1997: 12). In addition, “the core of traditional life is being put at stake” (Beck 1997: 69). It can be seen that this calls into question a number of social phenomena previously deemed both immutable and foundational for a well-ordered country and society: heterosexual marriage, children with one parent of each sex, legal restrictions on certain sexual activities, established (traditional) gender roles, and the certainty of the unbridgeable nature of different national identities and cultures. On the broader, group, level the ease of international communication and the rise of a global language (English) to facilitate this ease of international communication call into question the past function of a standardised (German) national language to unite its speakers in a feeling of national solidarity (Beck 1997: 72). In parallel with this is the phenomenon of increased migration: both outward and inward migration. It is not just a question of the fact that, as Beck puts it, “the Alterity, and consequently the familiarity of the indigenous, become blurred and deprived of tradition” (Beck 1997: 75) but that also travel or the diaspora, whether that of German nationals and their consequent increased familiarity with other languages and cultures, or a diaspora of foreign nationals living within the German national culture, can be seen as altering or diluting
the national culture which is an important contributor to what is defined above (in reference to the project *Nacionalismo de estado de democracias multinacionales: el impacto de la Gran Recesión sobre la identidad nacional*) as “the subjective feeling of belonging to a territorially-defined political community within which the inhabitants feel that they share certain characteristics or common elements.”

Particularly for Germany in this current age of modernity with its significant movements of people, and given also its problematic history, the complexity of such feelings of belonging and identity is demonstrated by Honolka and Götz (1999) – a complexity, however, which the AfD never takes into account.

Giddens’ book *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (1991) discusses also many of these ideas, returning repeatedly to the idea that “modernity is essentially a post-traditional order” and emphasising the notion of the “disembedding” of social institutions (17 ff). This process, described as fundamental to modernity, “breaks down the protective framework of the small community and of tradition, replacing these with much larger, impersonal organisations. The individual feels bereft and alone in a world in which she or he lacks the psychological supports and the sense of security provided by more traditional settings” (33). The individual’s response to this is naturally “existential anxiety” (35). In the view of Kenny (2017) this leads also to the importance of nostalgia as found in current ideological discourse, and visible also in the AfD manifestos (see below).

In both Giddens’ and Beck’s views of modernity, the weakening of previously-existing social values and patterns of thinking implicates also political life at anything more than the purely local level. Developing his concept of cosmopolitanism in modern life, Beck significantly comments (2000: 87) that “the principles of territoriality, collectivity and frontier are being questioned”, subsequently raising what he calls the crucial question of the second age of modernity, “What happens to territorially-bounded politics in world society?” (2000: 90). This in turn leads to the question “how to imagine, define, and analyse post-national, transnational and political communities?” (90). In addition, this then implies “What is the number and kind of national identities to citizenship identities? . . . Or is there something like a ‘cosmopolitan nation’ and what does this mean?” (97).

There are two further points to outline arising from these considerations: nation-state patriotic identity and territoriality. Beck argues the point that in the first, nation-state, age of modernity patriotic identity was the only true and legitimate one (Beck 2000: 91). That is, the link to the nation state overwhelms every other consideration, whether ethnic, linguistic, social, regional, or even political. In other words, identity is defined and bounded territorially by and to the larger nation-state entity. Within the EU, the evolution
of the concept of EU citizenship, freedom of movement and residence, the granting of certain active and passive franchise rights, etc. have breached the earlier situation. In addition, the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights of the Council of Europe have replaced a part of the jurisdiction of the nation state and reduced its untrammelled sovereignty. However, certain subjective notions of attachment and self-identification are untouched by these processes. In respect to Germany, they are attachment to the Constitution (Grundgesetz) as a feature of the German state and of German-ness, the notion of deutsche Leitkultur, and that of (the German) Heimat. All of these are both territorially defined and bounded, as well as being important constituent parts of German nation-state patriotic identity if a political party or an individual wishes to make them so. They have that same function also if a party argues that they should or even must be part of individuals’ personal identity linking them more strongly and closely to the nation state of Germany. It will be shown below that this is precisely what the AfD is doing: emphasising the linkage between the German individual and the German nation-state. At the same time, it must be noted that particularly Heimat and even elements of deutsche Leitkultur are essentially inward looking, and even backward looking. The former does contain the implication that Others can accept this defining culture, but in so doing they must cast off completely their former alien identity and become just like Us, in other words, assimilate. But Heimat, on the other hand, and particularly as used by the AfD, looks inward and is clearly, though not explicitly, the deutsche Heimat with its associations with an idealised past upholding notions of a comforting and secure German identity.

In summary, this paper argues and will demonstrate that the alternative identity for Germany being propagated by the AfD for acceptance and adoption by voters is one of renunciation of the major features of modernity as outlined above and plays to the discomfiture forecast by both Beck and Giddens. But at the same time, and as will be seen, it is one of insistence on the paradoxical combination of ethno-cultural specificity combined with an equal insistence on the fundamental constitutional values encapsulated principally within the constitutional expression die freiheitliche demokratische Grundordnung / die freiheitlich-demokratische Grundordnung (the free and democratic rule of law). As will be outlined below, this combination, and particularly on the part of a right-wing party in Germany, is a new phenomenon in political programmes, discourse and thinking. It will also be shown that it contains a real problem.

The above important, and sometimes disturbing, features of modernity provide the general background to the positions concerning national identity taken by the AfD in the 2017 elections, in all of which they either entered the respective parliament or increased their representation. The identity concerns and
statements are embedded in, and are an integral part of, broader views concerning Germany's position in Europe which, if put into practice, would radically change the whole continent. While it is not possible to provide any in-depth analysis of this possibility, the paper will briefly sketch the party’s positions in order to indicate some of the repercussions arising from the re-definition of national identity. Following that, it will proceed to the analytical part.

**German parties and the EU**

In view of the growth and the impact of the AfD in such a short period of time it is imperative and also revealing to provide an initial perspective and indication of the extent to which the AfD’s view of German identity, including its relationship to the EU, breaks with German governmental practices and policies since the establishment of the Federal Republic in 1949, and particularly since the creation and later development of the European Union. As a proxy for the German governmental position on the EU this paper takes, first, the preliminary coalition agreement between the CDU/CSU and the SPD signed on January 12\(^{th}\), 2018 (CDU/CSU SPD 2018). These three long-established parties together achieved 552 seats out of a total of 709 in the election of 24 September 2017, and, sometimes together, sometimes with a different coalition partner, sometimes individually, each has been in, or has formed, the federal government since 1949.

a) The Preliminary Coalition Agreement

- The three major parties (CDU/CSU and SPD) are in agreement on the significant benefits which the European Union has brought both to Germany and Europe.
- In view of international developments, they agree also that Germany must contribute to strengthening European integration. This includes both the promotion of liberal values within the rule of law and also the commercial competitiveness of the EU in the context of globalisation. Consequently, the parties oppose any protectionist, isolationist or nationalist tendencies.
- The European Parliament is to be strengthened.
- Within Europe there should be an increase in the comparability of educational standards.
- The EU should play a prominent and exemplary role in the area of climate protection, including effective implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement.
- To help achieve its goals and strengthen the EU’s ability to act, fiscal control and economic cooperation are urged both within the Eurozone and also within the EU as a whole. This field includes solidarity between member states, just as it embraces also solidarity in budgetary matters, including within the EU budget.
- The economic goals include also strengthening and reforming the Eurozone, which means the transformation of the European Stability Mechanism into a European Monetary Fund.
- Among the measures proposed to strengthen the EU economically is a willingness to increase Germany’s contribution to the Commission budget.
- The shared goals include promotion of the fundamental principle of gender equality, workplace equality, and particularly within the public service as a model.
- In the areas of refugee and migration policies the EU must fulfil its humanitarian obligations.

b) The AfD Bundestag Manifesto
- The future of Europe does not lie with the European Union in its current state and certainly not in further centralisation. It lies rather in a Europe of sovereign nation-states working together in partnership.
- This means that the European Union should return to being a loose confederation of sovereign states. The key notion of national sovereignty is closely linked to essentialist principles of ethnicity and heritage (see below for more information on the latter points).
- Fiscal or economic solidarity between EU member states is rejected, as is also the European Central Bank. Consequently any “EU Economic Government” is also to be rejected.
- This, in turn, leads to the conviction that Germany should terminate the Transfer Union and leave the Eurozone.
- Supranational courts are rejected.
- The value of climate protection policies is denied.
- The Bologna Process has failed. Germany must return to Diplom and Magister programmes.
- The value of the “traditional family”, which implicitly but clearly includes and promotes the idea of stay-at-home mothers, is repeatedly emphasised.
- The importance of “Equal pay” is rejected, as are also measures to promote the proportion of women in the work place.
- There is no support for immigration; quite on the contrary.

It is fair to say that the two positions are diametrically opposed. The major parties of CDU/CSU and SPD are advocating unrestricted support for the EU. They also wish to promote liberal values, further European integration and Germany’s role within the EU. The latter is carefully balanced with repeated references to cooperation with France on important issues. Their joint position represents a continuation
of the policies which have guided German politics over approximately the last half century: active participation in the European Union and contribution to its strengthening and development.

On the other hand, the AfD is advocating what is tantamount to a programmed debilitation of the EU and its value-system, counterbalanced by an increase in the importance of “national sovereignty” and conservative social values. It is, in fact, a denial of the developments in Western and (later) Central Europe over the past fifty years. It represents an atavistic return to the status quo ante in Europe, not simply before the creation of the EU out of the EEC, but also a return to the Europe of the pre-globalising and pre-globalised era.

Much of the positions of the two political rivals, i.e. the coalition government and the AfD as official opposition, contain by implication questions of group and national identity. For the CDU/CSU and SPD, Germany is above all EU-European and forward looking; for the AfD, Germany is European in a very different sense: i.e. European by culture, religion and language, and also backward looking. The difference is immense.

**AfD Manifestos for State Elections in 2017 (Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, the Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein)**

**Introduction**

After an introduction to the manifestos, the paper will present an overview of the salient points concerning national identity to be found in the AfD manifestos for the 2017 state elections. These are: the foundational concept of popular sovereignty (Volkssouveränität) arising from the ethnic nation (das Volk), the cultural and other values deriving therefrom including the importance of the German family for the German people, and the liberal constitutional state as a constituent part of German national identity. Taken together, these all underlie and emphasise the rejection of Islam as a possible part of German identity despite the fact that between 5.4% and 5.7% of the German population is Muslim by culture and / or religion (Stichs 2016). Following this, the paper will turn to the manifesto for the Bundestag election and will seek to demonstrate that this represents an intensification of many of the features in the state manifestos.

As initially stated, the source documents are election manifestos, which have both a descriptive and a persuasive function. These functions are being exercised within a particular pragmatic situation: late
modernity – against which the party is arguably reacting and even rejecting, and within the ethnically-, culturally- and confessionally-mixed Germany of the early twenty-first century. Beyond outlining a party’s policies and convictions it is the function of a manifesto also to provide arguments to reinforce the views of those already convinced and to convince those who do not yet share those views. Because of this important persuasive function some attention will also be paid to the manner of presentation. It will be demonstrated that the manifestos follow the populist, or as Rydgren (2017) terms it, the ethnic-nationalist practice of presenting their position (here, specifically their view of German identity) not only in contrast to a polar opposite, Islam (and also the EU), but as endangered by it (Fekete 2006; Yilmaz 2016; Pratt 2016).

As is to be expected, the state manifestos are often concerned with local issues: questions of state-level government, the organisation of local government, internal tax policy, payment for federally-mandated programmes, etc. However, it can be stated that, counterintuitively, the state-level manifestos also contain significant topics directly related to national identity, indicating both the importance and the appellative/emotional function that the party attributes to this question. For the AfD there is thus no sharp separation between the two electoral levels, to the extent that they clearly hold the view that voters in state elections can be motivated by questions of national identity as formulated by the party, even those questions over which their respective state parliaments and governments have no control. This is even made explicit in the preambles of the manifestos for the Saarland and Lower Saxony, each of which points out that its principles and state-level programme contain material which involves the whole nation (Volk); in other words, what is above all important in this context is the nation as a whole framed principally as a nation, rather than as a purely political entity in the form of a country.

It will be shown that the features of national identity which are presented in the state-level manifestos prepare the way for the more intense presentation of the same features in the national manifesto. At the same time, it is important to make clear that none of the local issues addressed in the manifestos, even that of disadvantageous revenue flows or lack of federal investments (e.g. Saarland: Autonomy of the Saarland) is related in any way to a repudiation of the fundamental federal structure of the German state or to the assertion of a local or regional identity in any way in opposition to German identity (see, for example, Lower Saxony: “Strengthening and Extending local Self-Government”). Thus, while local/regional/state identity is strong (though not to be discussed in this paper), it in no way conflicts with national identity. On the contrary, regional / state concerns or identity markers overlap with national concerns or identity markers and are presented in such a way as to coincide with and reinforce national concerns and markers. Local or state-level identity is firmly nested within German identity.
This overlap, and sometimes indistinguishability, of state identity and national identity is promoted by the use of the terms *Land* and *Volk*. The former can mean both “state” in the sense of the particular constituent state (e.g. Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, etc.) and also “country” in the sense of Germany as a whole. Similarly, *Volk* is used to indicate the “people” of e.g. Lower Saxony or Schleswig-Holstein and also the German nation as a whole. In addition, the manifestos do also argue explicitly and in a variety of ways for German values, policies and identity, most importantly in connection with (im)migration which is outside the control of any state parliament: e.g. the manifesto for North Rhine-Westphalia contains a section “The AfD will shape immigration policy for Germany” (Section 6); see also below for more information in connection with this important topic.

**Analysis**

i) **Popular Sovereignty (*Volkssouveränität*)**

In the sense of direct democracy, the notion of popular sovereignty emerges in all states in the repeated insistence on facilitating direct votes and referenda (*Bürgerbefragungen, Referenden, Volksbegehren, Volksentscheide*), often with reference to Switzerland as a model (Saarland, North Rhine-Westphalia, Schleswig-Holstein). In the case of Lower Saxony, direct democracy along the lines of the Swiss model is stated to be a “central demand” of the party. It is also made explicit that this is being proposed to reduce the power of parties (Schleswig-Holstein: Democracy and Fundamental Values) and the state parliament (Lower Saxony: Strengthening Citizenship Rights, Facilitating Referenda) which itself should be reduced in size -- a proposal made also elsewhere (Saarland: State Parliament to become Part-Time or Parliament to be reduced in Size).

In the sense of sovereignty lying with the whole German people, the manifesto for North Rhine-Westphalia insists that the ministers of the state government should swear their oath of office neither on the state constitution, nor on the wellbeing of the people of North Rhine-Westphalia, but on the German nation, because “members of a state government are beholden (*verpflichtet*) to the Sovereign, and this is ‘the German nation’” (*das Deutsche Volk*) (Rule of Law, Democracy and Freedom).

Latent in the idea of popular sovereignty is opposition to legislation or influence from outside the country, particularly the EU. It will be seen that this emerges in a number of ways, from border control (e.g. Schleswig-Holstein: For our Way of Life, for our State) to the universal opposition to “gender mainstreaming” (see below) arising from EU directives.
In these state election manifestos the notion of national sovereignty as lying with the people is not extended as part of a definition of other peoples and other countries in Europe. However, the principle itself is extendable and will be developed in the manifesto for the federal election. Its inclusion there has the effect of emphasising the importance of the principle itself, the claim to German specificity, and opposition to the European Union.

ii) Language and Culture

In all the manifestos these two concepts are viewed as fundamental for identity, including German national identity as a whole. Culture is understood to be the complex of mutually-reinforcing values and practices which constitute shared characteristics or common elements (see the project definition above) linking the German in-group together and separating them from the out-group (migrants – principally Muslims) which is already within Germany and also constitutes a threat from outside the country. The common denominator in the presentation of these concepts referring to national identity, local and national culture, and the German language shared by all is that they are under very real threat both from inside and outside the country. The threat also comes from the existing parties and their harmful policies (particularly their immigration and refugee policies) and from outside Germany as a result of globalisation, and particularly from population movements from areas of non-European culture, specifically Moslem countries. The extent of the danger is such that not just Germany but the whole of Europe is threatened also (North Rhine-Westphalia: Inward Migration, Integration and Asylum). In addition, modernity in the form of “our automated and highly interconnected world” (Preamble, Schleswig-Holstein), is stated to be a further element in the complex of factors menacing fundamental German and European values and hence identities.

Language

The manifesto for Schleswig-Holstein explicitly includes the German language in its definition of identity, putting “German Culture, Language and Identity” together as a section heading. This leads to a short sub-section entitled “The German language as the centre of our identity” defining the language, including its regional forms, as a “unifying inheritance of our ethnic nation (Volk)” urging resistance to the advance of English in educational institutions and government offices. This centrality of language to German identity is evident also in Lower Saxony. In the opening paragraph of the preamble, which is headed “What we stand for” (Wofür wir stehen) and forming a complex intertwining of essentialist-tinged features, “the language which has evolved with us” is linked to “our nation, the German people, our long and rich history, our culture and tradition, our Christian-Occidental culture, and our regional culture”. With its repetition of “our” this definition of identity, from which virtually everything else proceeds, is
exclusionary, and in the particular context of the inward movements of 2015 is intended to separate natives from newcomers. This idea is repeated in Section 13 “Stop the Massive Inward Migration: Protect our Identity”. Here national culture, the German language, and the “centuries-old identity of Germany” with their constituent concepts of “popular sovereignty and democracy developed since the Enlightenment” and “the free and democratic rule of law” are all significantly endangered by the growing presence of migrants.

A further aspect of the identity-factor ‘language’ is to be found in the opposition to “Gender ideology” (see below: Family) which insists on the creation of gender-neutral nouns referring to professions or people, or of forms which incorporate both masculine and feminine grammatical genders (Saarland, Section 25; Schleswig-Holstein, Section 4). The argument is that the German language is being disfigured (verunstaltet) by outside pressures. As will be seen below, part of the ‘attack’ on the German language and thus on identity, comes from the European Union with its policy of gender mainstreaming.

Culture

In all cases local and German culture is asserted to be based on one or more elements of: Western (abendländisch) values, Greek and Roman antiquity, Judaism [!], Christianity, humanism, and Enlightenment – a set of concepts which is repeated with slight variations and related not only to ethno-social or ethno-cultural values but also to constitutional values (see below). This particular constellation thus largely or completely places German identity in total contrast to that of many persons who have been legally resident in the country for years or even decades, above all Turkish immigrant workers and the families they brought from their homeland. In addition, it emphasises the distinction between German identity and that of the nearly one million refugees who arrived in 2015 and in their majority remained in the country in 2017. In addition, adding a further element to German culture and also separating German values and identity from those of recent migrants, the Schleswig-Holstein manifesto urges “exploration and recognition of the ancient Germanic (altgermanisch) roots of our culture” (Education and Culture).

Heimat and (deutsche) Leitkultur

There is a rich literature on Heimat, its definition (Ecker 1997; Gebhart et al. 2007), its function (Applegate 1990; Fleischer 1996; Blickle, 2002; Kühne and Schönwald 2015), and its appeal (Boa and

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6 The author cannot refrain from expressing his scepticism about the validity of this assertion and notes it is also made across the party spectrum.
7 Compare the AfD manifesto for the state election in Saxony-Anhalt in 2016 (AfD SA 2016). The Preamble drew attention to the ancient Germanic origins of the area and also noted that the northern part of the state coincides with the heartland from which Prussia developed.
Briefly, Heimat (very approximately: homeland / cultural homeland), expresses above all a very positive emotional tie to an idealised location, often a rural or regional past in the town or area where the individual was born and grew up surrounded by its people and their regional values and customs. It communicates a source of comfort, of security, of personal and group values, of personal and group identity, of ontological certainty, and always includes a strong affective dimension. It has been seen as a “symbol of the collective” (Ecker 1997) which has taken on new urgency in an era of immigration (Costadura and Ries 2016: 17). It contains, also, a strong element of nostalgia for an idealised past, a powerful force in an age of migration and globalisation (Kenny 2017). All these elements, and others, including a political dimension for Germany in an age of migration, emerge in Kronenberg (2018). Although more regional than national, Heimat can refer to Germany as a whole and become “die deutsche Heimat”, just as Leitkultur becomes nation-specific referring to Germany as opposed to Europe (see below). Although favoured on the right and centre-right, the use of Heimat in political discourse is neither recent nor confined to the AfD: for example, in the CSU statement of fundamental principles of 2016 (CSU 2016) it occurs 37 times. Its use continues: in early 2018, as part of the negotiations for the new cabinet, and following above all the example of Bavaria, the German Federal Ministry of the Interior became the Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat (official English translation: Federal Ministry of the Interior, Construction, and Community).\footnote{See, also, the use of the term by the right-wing Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs. The appeal of Heimat for the political right is such that in its manifesto for the 2017 elections for the Nationalrat (lower house of the federal parliament) branded itself as “Die soziale Heimatpartei” and repeated the slogan at the head of every page. (FPÖ 2017)} However, given the strong positive emotive content of Heimat referring to all or a part of Germany, it follows logically that persons from outside this Heimat are, at the best, neutral, and certainly can be viewed as having a negative evaluation. This is certainly the case, for example, in the manifesto sections refusing their incorporation into the German welfare network (see below under welfare nationalism).

Leitkultur (frequently, deutsche Leitkultur) is “defining culture”. The term Leitkultur was initially propagated by the scholar Bassam Tibi (Tibi 1996) and then developed further in 1998 (Tibi 1998) as an attempt to forge a consensus on European values in an age of inward migration. Proposed components were: secular democracy, human rights, dominance of reason over religion, separation of religion and politics in a civil society in which tolerance is practiced by all parties (1998: 56). Spurred by the proposed changes in the concept and availability of citizenship, particularly the introduction of an element of jus soli contained in the Citizenship Act of 2000 (the previous Act was passed in 1913), the debate quickly, and often acrimoniously, turned to one on German identity in which two largely irreconcilable ideas clashed: German identity as acceptance of a set of European political and cultural values; and German identity arising from ethnicity (Tibi, 2001). Also, because the term became intermingled with
ideas of superiority and inferiority (above all: German v. Moslem) it has remained a highly politicised, and even polemical, term used over the past twenty years principally by parties on the Right and Centre-Right in the continuing debates over immigration and national identity (Hentges, 2002; Pautz 2005a, 2005b; Gould 2012; Manz 2004; de Maizière 2017, CSU 2016).\(^9\) Both *Leitkultur* and *Heimat* are loaded with emotional overtones and consequently have particularly strong appeal as important terms in the still contested area of identity-definition in a period when past certainties are being eroded (see above: Late Globalised Modernity). At the same time, many of the constituent components of *deutsche Leitkultur* as defined by the AfD are not new in German political discourse. They are to be found in the Heidelberg Manifestos of 1981 - 1982 (Schröcke and Schmidt-Kahler 1981): German identity based on the Christian occidental heritage, German language, culture and way of life, the catastrophe of multicultural societies; the numerical preservation of the ethnic German nation in the face of the internal culturally-inferior foreigner can only be ensured by intact viable Families. And alongside the preservation of German values in the Heidelberg Manifestos is also the preservation of European values.

It can be seen that any discussion of culture and language in relation to national identity cannot be separated hermetically from *Heimat* and *Leitkultur*. The appeal of *Heimat* is such that in Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein and North Rhine-Westphalia the AfD incorporates the term into the title of its manifesto, thus not only foregrounding it but placing the party and everything it stands for, including its conception of group identity, under the aegis of this powerful backward-looking and conservative identity-conferring reference (AfD NS 2017; AfD S-H 2017; AfD NRW 2017).\(^10\)

It is evident from the brief definition above that *Heimat* has a fundamentally exclusionary function: the in-group has its *Heimat*, and outsiders / Others have theirs. If the *Heimat* of each of Lower Saxony, of Schleswig-Holstein, of North Rhine-Westphalia is essentially regional and German without any contradiction between the two, then the *Heimat* of Other people marks them and the customs and values associated with that country or region as non-local and non-German. This opposition is present in the cases of North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony where the term is repeatedly used to mark the separation between groups or even the harm done to Germany in the sense that Other people bring with them “conflicts from their homelands (*Heimatländer*)” (Section 6.01). In Schleswig-Holstein, on the other hand, which has very few foreigners (2015, 180,000 i.e. 6.3% (Statistisches Amt 2017: 14), and is

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\(^9\) The written statement by Thomas de Maizière, then (CDU) Federal Minister of the Interior, contains items very comparable to, or even identical with, ones included in identity statements of the AfD (de Maizière 2017). However, those views cannot be analysed here.

\(^10\) The Saarland manifesto (AfD SL 2017) does not use this term, but on the other hand it contains multiple references to the specificity of the region and its links to France, but never placing it in any way in contrast to Germany as a whole. See also Foroutan (2014) above on the AfD’s desire to define the debate on national identity.
largely rural (70% agricultural land use: Statistisches Amt 2017: 287), *Heimat* is strongly related to local, even rural, values (Preamble (3 times); Section 9).

As indicated above, *Heimat* expresses a whole complex of individual and shared values associated with group identity, and both implicitly and explicitly also with *deutsche Leitkultur*.

Although this term itself does not occur with any high frequency in the manifestos and, other than in the titles just mentioned, only in two of them (Lower Saxony three times; North Rhine-Westphalia twice), it is to be found at significant points and always as an expression of resistance to, or in contrast with, immigration and the need to preserve *deutsche Leitkultur*. Its fundamental position in the definition of identity is very palpable: the emphases on tradition, culture, humanism, Christianity, Judaism [!], democracy, freedom of religion, separation of religion and reason, separation of religion and the state, German constitutional values, female emancipation (but see also below), and Western values. As Tibi (2002) regretted was happening even before the creation of the AfD, these foundational German values are by implication superior to those of Muslim countries and Muslims themselves, or explicitly so: Moslem societies are “pre-modern” (Schleswig-Holstein, Preamble “For our Way of Life -- For our State”), or “archaic” (Saarland, Section 29 “Reduce Immigration: Suspend Schengen). Additionally, as will be developed later, these superior German identity values are all significantly threatened by both Islam and its believers.\(^{11}\)

Welfare Nationalism and Prosperity Nationalism

Keskinen (2016) distinguishes between the closely-related phenomena of welfare nationalism, welfare chauvinism, and welfare exclusion. The former refers to the intertwining of welfare and national identity, and “welfare provision is based on national membership” in discourses where “the welfare state and its future are presented as a national concern that should be the focus of politics and economy.” With Suszycki (2011: 56) she relates this to “welfare-related national interests and ideas”. What distinguishes welfare nationalism from welfare chauvinism is above all the foregrounding of the preservation of the system for the national in-group, in this case, ethnic Germans.

The linking of these topics to the culture and identity, and framing them as products of the culture, is developed more fully in the manifesto for the federal election (see below).

1) Welfare Nationalism

\(^{11}\) Norocel (2016) demonstrates a very similar pattern on the part of the right-wing *Sverigedemokraterna / Sweden Democrats.*
An important phenomenon arising from the valuations present in Heimat and deutsche Leitkultur is that persons originating from regions outside their ambit do not deserve and should not receive the benefits of the German welfare state. In addition, if they were to be granted these benefits, because of their numbers they would seriously endanger it even to the extent of causing its collapse. This phenomenon of “welfare nationalism” is present in all four manifestos, almost exclusively in connection with the arrival of the wave of refugees in 2015, although in the Schleswig Holstein manifesto “the redistribution of prosperity within Europe” (Preamble) is also seen as problematic. In the case of Lower Saxony the exclusion from benefits would include all non-Germans who had not paid social insurance premiums in Germany for at least five years (Subsection: Preventing Abuse of our Social Welfare Net), thus also disadvantaging EU citizens and undermining the principle of non-discrimination of European citizens.

2) Prosperity Nationalism

I am arguing also that in these definitions of German identity there is a counterpart to welfare nationalism, i.e. prosperity nationalism. I define prosperity nationalism as the desire to defend against external forces and at all costs the internally developed politico-economic system which has worked well and brought prosperity specifically to Germany. The development and realisation of the economic doctrine of soziale Marktwirtschaft (Social Market Economy) associated above all with the then Federal Finance Minister and later Federal Chancellor Ludwig Erhard (credited in the manifestos of the Saarland and Lower Saxony with its realisation) has been incorporated as the accepted designation for the distinct nature of the German economic system (Zweynert 2008; Peters, 2000: 47f), and consequently is a feature specifically of German identity. In the AfD manifesto for the 2017 federal election, Social Market Economy is directly related to deutsche Leitkultur and stated to be a product of it (see below). This “guarantee of economic progress and social prosperity” (North Rhine-Westphalia: Section 13.05) is set off against Anglo-Saxon neo-liberalism and the EU (Lower Saxony: Section 4, Strengthen the Economy, Promote Employment), and it is stated that it “no longer exists . . . eliminated by lobbyists in Berlin and Brussels” (Saarland: Section 23, Combat Poverty). Thus, economic success with a human face, a particular feature of German identity and product of its national culture, has been destroyed by foreign influences, including the impact of modernity, and for the sake of the nation must be restored to preserve both prosperity and identity.

The Constitution

The high frequency of references to the Grundgesetz, whether in the form of quotations or near-quotations, citations of particular articles, paragraphs and individual sentences, the assertion of the unconstitutionality of policies, practices and acts on the part of the federal government or others, the
support for strengthening the Federal or State Office for the Protection of the Constitution (
Verfassungsschutz), and judgements of the Federal Constitutional Court, to support a range of assertions concerning different aspects of national identity are an indication of the important role the federal constitution plays even at the state level. It will be seen that the same holds true for the federal manifesto. The use of constitutional values and arguments raises three points: 1) the new phenomenon of its use by a radical right-wing party within an identity discourse; 2) the uses to which it is put; and 3) the phenomenon of constitutional patriotism and the problem which it reveals (to be discussed below in the section on the manifesto for the Bundestag elections).

1) Use by a radical right-wing party
In the past, conservative or right-wing viewpoints on German identity focussed very much on traditional or essentialist elements (present in the AfD in 2017), as is evidenced, for example, by the so-called Heidelberger Manifeste (Schröcke and Schmidt-Kahler 1981), two manifestos for the protection of the German ethnic nation and its values in the face of increasing immigration. They were formulated and first published in 1981 by a group of professors at the University of Heidelberg. The extent to which this conception of identity contrasted with the majority scholarly and political view of German identity founded on the Grundgesetz in the pre-unification Federal Republic of Germany is to be seen in Isensee (1986). There was no German nation-state; instead there was a provisional state, the Federal Republic of Germany, whose existence was founded on the legal document of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz), and not on any justification arising from the country being the “homeland” of an ethno-cultural nation. The Grundgesetz was thus the only source of legitimacy of the political community of those under its jurisdiction. It brought a rational, not a traditional or in any way emotional, legitimacy to attributes of the state. In addition, this situation was accompanied by widespread revulsion at the hyper nationalism of the Nazi period and everything it had wrought. To the writer’s knowledge, these AfD manifestos, including the AfD manifestos for earlier state elections in 2016, are the first examples in Germany of a (far) right-wing party incorporating significant and repeated references to the Constitution so centrally into its conception and presentation of German identity. As indicated already, and as will be shown at more length below in connection with the federal manifesto, for the AfD a state derives its primary source of legitimacy from the ethno-cultural nation and its culture, not from a document. In the present case, the interweaving of constitution and national culture in the enunciation of national identity thus represents a step away from past practices in the pre-unification Federal Republic of Germany, and also in the immediate post-unification Germany as a whole.
The question must now be asked why this is occurring. A number of hypotheses suggest themselves: 1) Isensee (1986) argues that in the pre-unification Federal Republic every party sought to legitimise its position by reference to the Constitution. The AfD can thus be following this pattern and at the same time be providing itself with a set of safeguards sheltering it from legal action by the Verfassungsschutz, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, which exists at both the federal and state levels; 2) Isensee points out that constitutional concepts and terminology are widely used in non-legal discourse, in popular rhetoric, in philanthropic, economic and cultural contexts. In short, the Constitution has become, he says, a “political integration programme” applicable not just to the state, but to society as a whole. Thus, since unification and the extension of the Grundgesetz to the whole of Germany and consequently to the whole of the German people, the notion of state legitimacy deriving from the ethnic nation, and state legitimacy deriving from a constitution which originated quite separately, have fused together. In different terms, the Nation is the Constitution made flesh, the Constitution is the nation expressed as words; 3) thirdly because many of the Constitution’s turns of phrase are so well known, including, but not only, ‘the free and democratic rule of law’, using them has a strong persuasive and legitimising impact with large sections of the population, particularly among the middle classes to which the AfD explicitly appeals or from which it defines itself as having sprung (Preamble: Schleswig-Holstein; Preamble: Lower Saxony). The Constitution provides a valuable reference point in its public argument that fundamental German values, culture and identity are under constant threat; 4), and further to point 3), it provides a set of references with which to attack Islam in particular; 5) if one accepts point 2) – that Constitution and Nation are now viewed as inseparable -- then the constitutionally permissible (see CONCLUSION) transfer to the EU of certain legislative and regulatory competences anchored in the Grundgesetz represents a diminution not only of national sovereignty (see Isensee 2003:6) but, the AfD would consequently argue, also of the German nation. However, as will be seen below, the AfD’s selective use of the Constitution and over-riding of certain articles point in the direction that the party is using the Constitution for electoral ends, and that what is of fundamental importance is in fact the essentialist ethno-cultural component of national identity.

2) Uses of the Constitution

Introduction

The degree to which constitutional values are incorporated into the presentation of German identity emerges textually in, for example, the manifestos for the Saarland and Lower Saxony. Echoing Article 1 of the Grundgesetz, the Preamble of the Saarland manifesto states “We acknowledge the inviolability of

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12 Grundgesetz, Article 1: Human dignity shall be inviolable. To respect and protect it shall be the duty of all state authority (Deutscher Bundestag 2014).
human dignity and later adds “the Grundgesetz is the guide and measure of all our actions” (Reduce Inward Migration, Suspend Schengen). At an important point (Section 13, Stop Mass Immigration: Protect our Identity), the Lower Saxony manifesto asserts “Conscious of our responsibility to a great Kulturnation and for our children . . . we demand an end to the policy of immigration”.13 The absolutely fundamental constitutional value and phrase “the free and democratic rule of law” (die freiheitlich-demokratische Grundordnung: see below), known to all Germans, is cited a total of 13 times in the state-level manifestos.

The principal constitutional aspects of German identity to be discussed are: a) “the free and democratic rule of law”; b) the protection of the wellbeing of the German people; c) the family (and with that also German national sovereignty (Volkssouveränität: see above) through numerical maintenance of the Volk); and d) protection of German identity.

a) The free and democratic rule of law

“The free and democratic rule of law” (die freiheitliche demokratische Grundordnung) is a statement taken directly from the Constitution where it is used seven times as a shorthand form to express the fundamental constitutional order of the German republic (Articles 10, 11, 18, 21, 73, 87a, 91). It is frequently employed by all parties in exactly this sense and is always strongly positive. Its use by the AfD reflects this, and it is invariably employed to buttress their particular view of German identity and society; this means that for the AfD the constitution and its principles are stated to be inseparable from German identity as a whole.

This constitutional principle of the “free and democratic rule of law” is repeatedly invoked (too many times to be indicated individually) as a fundamental point of opposition to inward migration and to Islam, the religion of most recent migrants and refugees. Arguments outlined above contained in the Lower Saxony manifesto make absolutely clear the over-arching nature of the contrast between constitutional principles, including this particular one, as a fundamental part of German identity and recent inward migrations. In that manifesto, as in those of Schleswig-Holstein and North Rhine Westphalia also, Islamist organisations and radical imams within Germany or foreign imams from “countries where the free and democratic rule of law” is unknown (North Rhine-Westphalia) are placed in contrast to this principle, thus emphasising the asserted fundamental contradiction between German identity and Islam –

13 Grundgesetz, Preamble: Conscious of their responsibility before God and man, [ . . . ] the German people have adopted [ . . . ] this Basic Law (Deutscher Bundestag 2014).
an opposition expressed in all four manifestos in the politically-charged statement “Islam is not a part of Germany” (der Islam gehört nicht zu Deutschland). 14

b) Protection of the wellbeing of the German people
This foundation principle also underlies many of the points that follow. The Lower Saxony manifesto asserts in Section 13, “Stop Mass Immigration; Protect our Identity”, that the policy of permitting so many people to enter the country in 2015 offended against the constitutional principle enunciated in the President’s oath of office to the German people: [I swear that I will] “. . . promote their [Germans’] wellbeing [and] protect them from harm . . .” (Art. 56), it then follows with the claim that this “harms the principle of our national identity, the protection of which was passed on to us by the fathers of the Constitution”. Permitting so many people to enter and then conducting asylum review procedures for them is thus “quite clearly unconstitutional”.

c) The family
Under the Constitution marriage and the family enjoy the particular protection of the state (Article 6), thus the frequent mentions of family and marriage form part of the affirmation of the Grundgesetz and its particular role in asserting German collective identity. The incorporation of family and its constitutional protection into the AfD vision of German identity arises from four interrelated factors: demographics, the particular view of national sovereignty (see above), the conviction that German identity is significantly threatened by (Moslem) immigration, and also a conservative view of society and societal values (see section Late Globalised Modernity above). The low fertility rate due to social changes, particularly among women of German ethnic background, means that the natural development of the population is negative (excess of deaths over births in 2015: 187,625 (Statistisches Bundesamt 2017: 33) and will continue to be so despite an over-all population increase due to inward migration. The existential threat to German identity and German control of government is a fundamental statement particularly in the manifestos of Schleswig Holstein (Preamble; Section 12), Lower Saxony (I, II, and Section 13); North Rhine-Westphalia (Sections 3.03, 6.01). In addition, statements opposing the use of Sharia principles, including in the area of civil law, are relevant for family matters (North Rhine-Westphalia: Section 3.03; Lower Saxony: Section 13; Schleswig-Holstein: Section 2). Taken together, these factors lead to repeated statements about the value of “the traditional / classical family” – a model of mother, father, and numerous children, stated to be “the foundation of democracy” and thus of a fundamental constitutional value (Schleswig-Holstein, Preamble). Only with this guarantee of maintaining or increasing the ethnic German population (e.g. Schleswig-Holstein: Section 3 “Family”; Lower Saxony, Section II; and also

14 For a brief overview of the origin and debate around this phrase, see Gould (2016).
Section 9: “With the help of family-oriented policies we wish to contribute to the birth of more German children”) can a German majority in the country and the German defining culture (Leitkultur) (Lower Saxony II) and, more generally, German values be maintained (Schleswig-Holstein: Preamble; see also Section 22).

As mentioned, the AfD view of the family is conservative and linked to the stated need to have more German children for the sake of the preservation of the German population and identity. This method of maintaining the national identity leads to the frequently-repeated condemnation of “gender mainstreaming” and “gender ideology” which, it is asserted, “aim to abolish traditional sexual identities” (Saarland: Section 25) or “the naturally-occurring difference between the sexes” (Schleswig-Holstein: Section 3), is “unnatural” (Schleswig-Holstein: Preamble), and is even deemed harmful to boys and men (North Rhine-Westphalia: Section 2). A consequence of this harmful “ideology” repudiating traditional gender roles is the increased incorporation of women into the labour force, a contributing factor to the drop in the fertility rate of women.

It was indicated above that the family enjoys specific constitutional protection; the manifestos insist on this, but only in the form of one man married to one woman and together with several children. They insist also on the constitutional obligation for government to promote the effective equality of men and women (Article 3), but only in the conservative framework just mentioned (e.g. “in their different qualities, social roles and life situations”: Saarland: Section 25; Schleswig-Holstein: Section 3), as opposed to “gender mainstreaming” which defines gender identity as more a matter of choice, promotes positive measures to re-think gender roles, and strives to overcome systemic discrimination in all aspects of society, including in employment (European Commission 1996). The Saarland manifesto (Section 25) reveals explicitly an additional reason for the opposition to this gender mainstreaming, it is being promoted by the European Union (Amsterdam Treaty, Article 2: European Commission, 1996). This means that here, too, in the eyes of the AfD the European Commission is encroaching on the fundamental identity-concept of popular sovereignty (Volkssouveränität: see above), as well as on questions of German national identity.

In summary, two preliminary points need to be made here: a) All of the above indicates a complete rejection of questions and hypotheses raised by Beck (2000) and outlined in the section The AfD in late globalised modernity above. The party rejects also any questioning of “the principles of territoriality, collectivity and frontier” or of anything which might suggest steps towards a “cosmopolitan nation”. Such steps are incompatible with their view of German identity; b) The emphatic defence of the identity
features noted above underlines the degree and depth of the importance which the party ascribes to them. These two patterns are continued in the Bundestag manifesto.

d) Protection of German identity

It can be seen that much of what was outlined above concerns implicitly the protection of German identity. At the same time, the concern for identity and its protection are addressed explicitly, above all in the manifests of Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony, but also in North Rhine-Westphalia. Occasionally the concern is for identity at the state level (for example in Schleswig-Holstein where the party supports school instruction in the local variety of Low German (The German Language as Centre of our Identity)), but principally the interest is centred on German cultural identity, showing once more that national cultural and identity concerns are being enunciated at the state level. And it is a matter for concern: national cultural and linguistic identity, often defined in the terminology employed to present deutsche Leitkultur, are threatened, principally because of immigration and the religion of the migrants (North Rhine-Westphalia, Inward Migration, Integration and Asylum; Lower Saxony, II Fundamental Values, also Stop Mass Migration, Protect Identity; Schleswig-Holstein, For our Way of Life, for our State, also Education and Culture). The Saarland manifesto mentions “identity” only in connection with that of the Saarland. On the other hand, in the Preamble it states “The AfD is committed to the history, the intellectual cultural heritage of our entire people (Volk)”.

The Bundestag Election Manifesto (AfD BDT 2017)

This section of the paper will continue the analysis of the topics investigated in the previous section in connection with the manifestos for the four state elections in 2017: the ethno-cultural aspects of the party’s definition of German national identity including the use of (deutsche) Leitkultur and Heimat; the constitutionalist definitions of German identity; and, resulting from the internal and external threats, the argument for the measures to be taken to protect German identity. The section will demonstrate the intensification and even expansion of positions previously outlined in the state election manifests. In this section, too, as an election manifesto also has a fundamental communicative and persuasive function, some attention will be paid to the language and argumentation.

Briefly, the AfD position on Germany and German identity continues to have two thrusts which, initially, might appear contradictory: On the one hand German ethnicity and culture, and on the other the Grundgesetz or Federal Constitution.
German ethnicity and culture

i) Popular Sovereignty (*Volksouveränität*)

The ethnic or ethno-cultural foundation of European states is, it is affirmed, a general European principle. The fundamental position is “national identities, cultures and languages have developed in historical processes lasting centuries”, and the “nation states represent an indispensable area of identification” (Section 1.1, Without Popular Sovereignty (*Volksouveränität*) there is no Democracy). “Nation” (whether expressed by *Nation* or by *Volk*) is clearly in the sense of an ethno-cultural-linguistic nation and contains an essentialist component; and nation states are the political manifestation of this.

The ideas in the above quotations are paramount. They are the starting point of the manifesto from which all else derives. In addition, and announced in the title of the first section “Defence of Democracy in Germany”, they form the basis of the repeated assertions that German democracy (and every other feature of German identity) is under threat. *Volksouveränität*, which is contrasted with, and placed in opposition to, German politicians, parties, and the EU, contains in *Volk* also the concept of the ethnic nation. The manifesto argues that professional politicians and domestic political organisations together form an oligarchy which controls both the political processes and the communications media, thus controlling public opinion and consequently manipulating the nation. They have used these positions of power for self-enrichment and self-aggrandizement and, implicitly, in the process have severely harmed the principle of *Volksouveränität* based, as we have seen, on the ethnic nation (*Volk*). The pinnacle of their malevolent actions in undermining what is the foundation of German statehood and therefore identity is the refugee policy of the CDU/CSU and SPD (Section 1.3: The People (*das Volk*) must once more become Sovereign). Nowhere in the earlier state manifestos of 2017 are the following opposed quite so closely and forcefully: the refugee / foreign / Muslim on the one hand and the German people on the other; the sovereign people betrayed by their corrupt, selfish and unpatriotic political elites; and the theme of nativism and the threat to national values fundamental to their portrayal of German identity and which contains all the elements of populism (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; Naím 2017; Wodak 2017; Krzyzanowski et al. 2018).

As defined, German popular sovereignty as the foundation of national identity and the nation state is part of a shared European norm. As in the case of other countries this norm is violated by the European Union and the expansion of its jurisdiction (Section 1.2, Returning the European Union to a Confederation of
Thus the explicit and, more numerous implicit, criticisms of the EU and its impact on German identity, are valid also for this foundational element of European states, other national identities, and European culture more generally.

The bearer of this popular sovereignty is later defined as the *Staatsvolk*, the collectivity of those persons making up the state in the sense that they have the power to decide who shall govern (Section 7, For a Clear Image of the Family -- Gender Mainstreaming is Unconstitutional). What was said above about *Volk* applies here, also: “German” and “nation” are repeatedly presented with an essentialist component or overtone. As in some state manifestos, it is important that the number and proportion of ethnic Germans in the over-all population be maintained as high as possible in order to maintain control of society. But what is new in the federal manifesto are two elements: 1) it asserted that only the conservative vision of the family of married heterosexual parents plus children can “produce the *Staatsvolk* the bearer of sovereignty”. This represents an intensification of principles sketched earlier. And 2) that any other vision of the family or gender mainstreaming is unconstitutional (Section 7: For a Clear Image of the Family -- Gender Mainstreaming is Unconstitutional).

To summarise: for Germans to maintain control over the state apparatus the birth rate has to be raised (see above) and the “classic” or “traditional” family of married heterosexual parents plus children has to be encouraged. This conservative form of the family is made into an element of national identity as “it alone can produce the *Staatsvolk* as the bearer of sovereignty”.

ii) Language, Culture and Defining Culture

The presentation of these topics is absolutely consistent with the state-level manifestos, but on occasion is more forcefully or urgently formulated. The *Bundestag* manifesto places the German Language absolutely in the centre of “our identity” (Section 9.2) and continues “the national language is the heart of a *Kulturnation*”. This adds to the ethnic dimension the notion that all Germans share a common culture and civilisational values, further implying that non-Germans are outsiders and hinting at their inferiority.¹⁵

¹⁵ It must be noted that the AfD is not alone in using *Kulturnation* to define German identity. It occurs, for example, in the CDU 2007 Programme of Fundamental Principles (*Freiheit und Sicherheit: Grundsätze für Deutschland*) as a statement of the fundamental nature of the country: *Deutschland ist eine europäische Kulturnation geprägt vor allem durch die christlich-jüdische Tradition und die Aufklärung* (CDU 2007: 42).
The fundamental European civilisational values of equality before the law and individual autonomy, including the unfettered liberty to enter into whatever contracts the individual wishes, have, it is asserted, sprung from “the Christian and humanistic culture of the European peoples”. In the past few decades Germany had deviated from these principles partly by reason of decrees from Brussels (Section 1.15.1) and due also in part to decisions by political actors in Germany (Section 1.12: Free Civil and Legal Order). This implies that established EU and German politicians are systematically destroying some of the Western values on which German identity is based. These shared European values of Christianity and humanism are an important component of deutsche Leitkultur, the “German defining culture” (see above for definition and discussion). The federal manifesto contains the most extensive, consistent and explicit list of compositional elements of the concept which includes also values drawn from Antiquity and the Enlightenment. In addition to the German language (see above), other elements of this identity-defining term are: “our customs and traditions, our intellectual and cultural history, our liberal democracy, our high regard for education, art and scholarship and the Social Market Economy as an expression of human creativity and creative energy are associated with it in the closest possible way” (Section 9: German Defining Culture instead of ‘Multiculturalism’). As in the Heidelberg Manifestos (see above), all of this has to be protected from the harm of multiculturalism. The inclusion in deutsche Leitkultur of intellectual and economic activity is to be understood in conjunction with popular convictions concerning the sloth and torpor of Muslim migrants and their avidity for welfare handouts cited, for example, by Sarrazin (2010) as undermining the German nation, its values and its prosperity (see also below). The creative, intellectually curious and energetic German defining culture is presented as the antithesis of Moslem defining culture and is subsequently declared to be in a Kulturkampf with it (see below for further discussion of this important point).

Revealingly, the section on family life and population trends (Section 7: Welcoming Culture for Children: Encouraging Families and Population Trends), which also deals with German cultural values and practices, closely follows the thesis and arguments of Thilo Sarrazin’s best-selling book Germany is abolishing itself: The Ways we are putting our Country at Risk / Deutschland schafft sich ab: Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen (Sarrazin 2010), first published in 2010 and to date with a sale of at least 1.5 million copies. Its publication was accompanied by massive media attention reaching further millions of people, with the result that its xenophobic and above all Islamophobic ideas were exposed to a significant proportion of the German population. His position is that the declining German birth rate and the high rate of Muslim immigration lead to a dumbing down and loss of the dynamism of German identity.
Consequently, he argues, social policies should be introduced to encourage stable (German) families with more children.\textsuperscript{16}

Correspondingly, the manifesto section on the family and population is introduced with a lament for the “shrinking of our native population” (\textit{unsere angestammte Bevölkerung}) and an expression of the desire to transmit our inherited and actively lived values “to our descendants”, rather than letting such values be “squandered” or “plundered”. To make the reference to Sarrazin’s anti-Muslim-immigration position absolutely clear, Section 7.1 has the heading “Do not Abolish Germany” (\textit{Deutschland nicht abschaffen}). Protecting German values can only be achieved by increasing the birth rate of the indigenous population (\textit{Erhöhung der Geburtenrate der einheimischen Bevölkerung}). The primarily ethnic identity characteristics explicit in the above statements are “native” and “indigenous” and are emphasised by the use of “our”. The implication is quite clear: the \textit{Staatsvolk} must be ethno-culturally German.

iii) Social Market Economy, Welfare Nationalism, Prosperity Nationalism

In the state election manifestos (see above) and in the \textit{Bundestag} manifesto (Section 10.6) reference is made to “Social Market Economy” as a foundation of post-war German reconstruction, identity and prosperity. In Section 9 it is explicitly stated that it owes its existence to, and is inseparable from, \textit{deutsche Leitkultur} (Section 9.1), and, although without naming it, it is further defined in Section 10 “Taxation and Finance, Economy and Employment” and more particularly in Section 10.6 “Economic Policy for Germany: Prosperity for Everyone”. As stated in the opening section of the federal manifesto, Germany’s post-war “social, economic and societal success” (Section 1.1) arises also from the fundamental concept of popular sovereignty. Thus, the economic system and national well-being and prosperity are associated in the closest possible way with ethno-cultural and political identity. However, as outlined above, it is stated that both European and German policies have more recently undermined these values and thus also prosperity and social policies. A pillar of national identity is endangered.

a) Welfare Nationalism

Ensuring the continuation of the full range of social and health services arising from the achievements of the Social Market Economy and \textit{deutsche Leitkultur} is fundamental to the manifesto. There is never any question of their reduction for Germans even though these vital programmes are threatened a) by globalisation (Section 10.0), b) by demographic trends (Section 10.0), c) by policies and actions of the

European Central Bank (Section 12.1), d) by failed national policies (12.1), and e) by uncontrolled immigration (Sections 5.2; 10.0; 12.1). The chauvinistic exclusion of non-citizens from such services which, it is stated, owe their existence to German defining culture is most evident in Section 5 ‘Asylum must be restricted: Inward Migration and Asylum’ and Section 11 ‘Social Policies’. In the former, benefits for Turkish citizens arising from past agreements and treaties are to be discontinued (5.3), and non-EU citizens are to receive no benefits “to prevent migration into the social payments network”. And, importantly, EU citizens are to receive benefits only after making social assistance contributions in Germany for four years (5.4). Thus the preservation of this German cultural achievement is to be maintained by going against the fundamental principle of non-discrimination in the European Treaties. In Section 11, following the earlier statements of the total endangerment of such social services sketched above, “Our limited funds are not to be made available for an irresponsible immigration policy . . .” (11.1) and, in the face of the necessity of massive transfers of funds to maintain the pension system, “the increasing billions being paid out as a result of the immigration policies must be devoted instead to stabilising pensions for the German population” (11.4).

b) Prosperity Nationalism

As defined earlier, prosperity nationalism is the desire to protect acquired prosperity achieved by domestic policies and economic activity against foreign dilapidation. In the federal manifesto this reaches its apogee in Section 2, ‘The EURO has failed: Currency, Monetary and Financial Policy’ which contains the fundamental demand to leave the Euro zone to protect the German economy. The faulty foundations of the currency (agreed to be foreign nations) and broken political promises within Germany have contributed to current difficulties. However, it is the ECB which bears the fundamental responsibility for damage already wrought by a range of its policies, as have also the economic weaknesses of the Euro Zone’s southern member states. A strong economy is necessary also for the maintenance of the German welfare state, thus the alleged trend of the EU to weaken what for the AfD is fundamental, namely the nation state (see above), endangers past German achievements and implicitly but clearly has to be resisted (Section 11.1, para 2).

iv) Constitutional Values

In its definition of the relationship between the German Volk, their state, and their territory the AfD imparts an important role to the Constitution. This is two-fold: a) necessary reforms to be made in order
to enhance the role of the nation or to protect its culture, and b) emphasis on constitutional principles which are in opposition to Islam.

a) Necessary Reforms

The importance of popular sovereignty was outlined above. On the other hand, the Constitution (Article 38) frames the state as a representative parliamentary democracy under the supremacy of the elected Bundestag and the Bundesrat (which represents the individual state governments), and one in which political parties explicitly have a fundamental role in shaping opinion (Article 21). Proposals to introduce strong elements of direct democracy to increase the direct influence of the sovereign people over the state through the introduction of the power of direct legislation, the power to change or annul laws voted by the Bundestag and Bundesrat, direct nation-wide election of the President, a popular vote on constitutional changes, and restrictions on the number of legislative terms, all would shift the relationship between the German people and its federal parliament and government away from the current model and towards what the AfD explicitly calls “the Swiss model”, giving the people more direct control. This model should also be applied to remaining in or leaving the Euro zone, and even staying in or leaving the EU itself (Section 1.3: The Nation must once more be Sovereign).

It is also argued that if such a model of direct democracy had existed in Germany, the threat to national identity posed by massive refugee immigration would have been avoided (Section 1, Defence of Democracy in Germany). As a further protection of the German nation and culture within wider European culture, and in the face of the ‘massive migration flows of globalised modernity’ (see the discussion of modernity above) it is also proposed to restrict the constitutional right of asylum (Section 5.5: Asylum in the Region of Origin instead of Unchecked Migration to Germany).

b) Opposition to Islam

Already outlined is the origin and importance in the state election manifestos of the concept of die freieheitlich-demokratische Grundordnung / the free and democratic rule of law as a statement to refer to, and express support for, the existing German constitutional order and values. This and synonymous expressions are employed in the federal manifesto in such a way as to indicate that in the view of the AfD the concept has become internalised by all Germans with the result that Constitution and people are inseparably linked. This importance is intensified by the party’s repeated use of the Constitution as a
marker to define German identity in contrast to Islam and its alleged hostile and unconstitutional practices (Section 6: Islam in Conflict with the Free and Democratic Rule of Law). The catalogue of areas where Islam is allegedly in conflict with German constitutional identity (or with other aspects of German identity as expressed in law) is long: non-acknowledgement of the German legal order; freedom of religion; civil law; state monopoly of the use of force; minarets (as a symbol of power) and muezzins (publicly claiming there is only one god) contradict the tolerant co-existence of religions achieved in modernity (in der Moderne) by Christian denominations, Jewish congregations, and other religions; the neutrality of the state in matters of religion and personal ideology; the equal evaluation of religions required by the law on church-state relations (Staatskirchenrecht); burqa and niqab; the headscarf as a religious-political symbol denoting female subjection to males; child marriage, familial intermarriage, polygamy. The contrast is absolute; the list of opposed characteristics is more comprehensive than in state election manifestos.

The contrast is not only more absolute and more comprehensive, but it is also more serious and far-reaching. State-level manifestos do refer to a European or “Western” dimension (Schleswig-Holstein: Sections 4, 5, 12; North Rhine-Westphalia: Section 1; Lower Saxony: Sections 1, 13), but only the federal manifesto makes use of the impact of the historical term Kulturkampf, i.e. the nineteenth-century struggle for both values and supremacy between on the one hand Prussia and other German states and on the other the Roman Catholic Church. It was seen also as a struggle between native and alien in the form of Germany defending itself against the Vatican / Italy (Borutta 2011). In the manifesto, Kulturkampf has also the more recent meaning of a Huntingtonian clash of civilisations (in German the book’s title is Kampf der Kulturen: Huntington 1998), explicitly that between “the West and Islam” (Section 9.1, German Defining Culture instead of ‘Multiculturalism’). Given, as demonstrated, the importance of “German defining culture” / Deutsche Leitkultur for the AfD, Kulturkampf takes on a particularly strong resonance.

In other words, what we have with the AfD is on the one hand a striking combination of a conservative and essentialist view of national identity, and on the other a version of the Sternbergerian / Habermasian concept of national identity arising from Verfassungspatriotismus / constitutional patriotism (Habermas 1990; Sternberger 1990): i.e. proposing support for, and loyalty to, Germany and all that it stands for through support for the Constitution. However, as will be argued below, the contradiction is only apparent, but it is also very problematic.
In the view of Jan-Werner Müller constitutional patriotism also includes two important features highly relevant for the position of the AfD: a) The notion of constitutional patriotism did not reduce in the slightest the ethnically-framed view of citizenship (2016: 35); this was enshrined in law up to 2000 when a degree of *jus soli* was introduced for the first time in the new Citizenship Act which came into force on January 1st 2000. Despite this change, what I have called an ethnically-framed view of citizenship and identity is still very prominent in many people’s minds, and the AfD is supporting that position. It opposes precisely the addition of any part of *jus soli* (Section 4.1; Section 5.10) as this dilutes the principle of ethnic specificity. In addition, constitutional patriotism implies that citizens bear a significant responsibility to protect the Constitution (Müller 2016: 34), in particular in identifying illiberal and undemocratic practices or tendencies in society or politics (Müller 2016: 51). It can thus be argued that in its defence of German national identity in the form of its views on popular sovereignty, opposition to certain features of the EU, and to international financial agreements – particularly the euro bailout package --, and other constitutional values, the AfD can see itself as acting in conformity with these obligations of constitutional patriotism. On the other hand, as initially pointed out, Germany is now a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional country and society, though without being a multinational country in the sense of the UK or Spain, where there is a measure of constitutional protection for the recognised ethno-cultural-linguistic minorities within certain territories. Despite, and in opposition to, the mixed nature of German society which has evolved in line with Beck’s and Giddens’ analyses of the developments of modernity (see above), the AfD places great emphasis on a monolithic German cultural identity and restoration of “the core of traditional life” (see above, Beck 1997: 69) together with an equal emphasis on the fundamental constitutional principle of “a free and democratic society”. However, an unsurmountable problem lies in the fact that in the view of the AfD as expressed in the federal manifesto, Moslems, who make up about 5% of the population are, as indicated above, and as will be seen below, allegedly unable to comprehend and absorb this fundamental principle of German identity. To put it a different way, and to use the terminology of Laborde (2002), the appeal to the constitution as a marker of German identity in three of the state-level manifestos (the Saarland is the outlier) and the federal manifesto has become part of an appeal to an “exclusionary proclivity” and is an “appeal to a closed national identity” discouraging “reflexive self-critical engagement with others”. This means that for the AfD the political focus, i.e. all elements are open to debate, which is the foundation of any constitutional patriotism is, and should remain, absent from the German multi-ethnic and multi-confessional society of late modernity in 2017 and the foreseeable future. German identity is largely essentialist and minimally voluntarist. This rejection and exclusion is also likely to work the other way round: that is, the “rejected” 5% will continue to feel unwelcome, which will diminish any willingness to enter into a productive
debate in order to prove that the AfD is fundamentally wrong in its assessment of their alleged incapacity to perceive and adopt important German identity values relating to the nature of the state and society in which they live.

To understand just how exclusionary this view of national identity is, and to uncover some of its roots (see also Wodak (2018) for an Austrian parallel) it is necessary only to examine more closely the paragraph on the *Kulturkampf* mentioned above. The statement on the current European *Kulturkampf*, on the German defining culture, on the necessity of its protection, and on the means of its protection, define the heart of the AfD’s vision of German and European culture. It also goes far beyond anything in the state-level manifestos. In full, the paragraph is the following:

> Civil societies in functioning states are called upon to protect and develop their cultures on their own terms. This is naturally true for German cultural identity. The cultural and religious struggle (*Kulturkampf*) already being fought in Europe between the West and Islam [which is] a doctrine of religious salvation and bearer of cultural traditions and legal obligations lying outside any possibility of integration can only be avoided by means of a set of defensive and restrictive measures which prevent further destruction of the European values of the peaceful coexistence of enlightened citizens. (9.1 German Defining Culture instead of ‘Multiculturalism’).

This is not a new argument in German politics. The chain of argument is the following: An alien cultural-religious group unwilling and incapable of integration is both in our midst and on our borders; this alien group represents a totally destructive element to our German way of life and all that constitutes us as a nation; therefore, drastic measures must be taken against this clearly identifiable cultural-religious group which is also potentially destructive for the whole of Europe. It is a position redolent of a past disaster.

In its creation of an unbridgeable gulf and of the fundamental undesirability of the alien culture deriving from Islam, a dichotomy between “enlightened citizens” and adherents of Islam, between a Christian national identity / Christian Europe-wide identity on the other hand and a non-European Moslem undifferentiated group identity on the other, the AfD contradicts earlier statements in the manifesto concerning its “unrestricted acceptance of freedom of conscience and belief” (Section 6). More
importantly, it also contradicts Article 3.3 of the Federal Constitution prohibiting discriminatory or preferential treatment because of “... race, language, homeland (Heimat) and origin, faith or religious or political opinions”. The preservation at all costs of German identity as expressed in “German defining culture” outweighs other considerations including fundamental constitutional values. The AfD is arguing for the common good in the form of the preservation of national identity by suspending or disregarding one of the articles of the opening section “Basic Rights” of the Constitution. The first article of this lays down that “The following basic rights shall bind the legislature, the executive and the judiciary as directly applicable law.” This means that the AfD is selectively using the Constitution for its own purposes, and in the name of a conception of national identity with a very strong ethno-cultural component is setting aside a fundamental part of constitutional law and jurisprudence.

The values of a society founded on the “free and democratic rule of law” which the AfD defines as part of German identity are based on the idea of a shared humanity. These universal values are common to all and are laid out in the Constitution whose starting point in Article 1 is the notion of universal human dignity which it is the primary responsibility of the state to respect and protect (see above: “The Constitution”). Despite what the AfD repeatedly says about the importance of constitutional values, the notion of a shared humanity which includes newly-arrived non-ethnic Germans is absent. This leads to the view on their part that these new arrivals never could come to share, to appreciate, and to accept the constitutional values of a “free and democratic society”. This means that for the AfD there is a hierarchy of people within the German population.

Conclusion

This paper has analysed the components of German national identity as defined and propagated by a party initially born of the financial crisis of 2008. By maintaining a top-down process of decision-making (Bebnowski 2015: 34) and with the arrival of large numbers of Middle-Eastern refugee claimants in 2015, the AfD has rapidly mutated into a right-wing populist party with considered positions on a range of issues, as sketched above in the Section German Parties and the EU. These represent a radical departure from Germany’s liberal social values and indicate also an indirect shift in German national identity viewed more broadly – away from the high level of participation in European integration processes visible over the past several decades. The party now (2018) has considerable representation at both the state and federal levels of German parliamentary democracy and will foreseeably continue so.
At a time of the financial, social and political uncertainties outlined above (Section: The AfD in late globalised Modernity), and in a period of growing securitisation practices and discourse, the party has taken up strong positions affirming the necessity of protection of native values from harmful influences represented particularly by the European Union and by Islam. The particular strength of this position is that in the cases of both the EU and Islam the danger can be presented as both internal and external, and that what is being threatened are the closely-related and highly-prized cultural values of deutsche Leitkultur and Heimat and all that they imply, together with equally highly-prized constitutional values anchored in the Grundgesetz. The ‘EU’ is not just located in the foreign capital ‘Brussels’ but is also in Berlin and the state capitals which have to modify German law and regulations to conform to Commission directives. It is located also in the support of the established parties for the EU and the European idea. Similarly, ‘Islam’ is not just a ‘non-European’ religion in a continent and country that the AfD proclaims as being ‘Judeo-Christian’, it is also within Germany as the religion and cultural background of refugee-claimants, Turkish residents, and citizens, many of whom wish to live visibly their religion and various aspects of their culture. And Globalisation represented, for example, by the statement “our automated and highly interconnected world” (Preamble, Schleswig-Holstein), is not merely an abstract or foreign term, but is portrayed as an alien force used by existing parties within Germany to contribute to the undermining and destruction of the traditional values of German identity. In other words, the need for protection of cherished values from enemies both domestic and foreign is particularly acute. Some of the hostile evaluations and positive essentialist identity features and attitudes outlined in the AfD manifestos had been publicly expressed on the political Right, including the respectable Right as represented by the CDU and particularly the CSU, for at least the past forty years, though one might suggest that their origins lie somewhat further back in time. The particular appeal of the newly-enunciated comprehensive view of German national identity lies in its being identifiably associated both with a specific party which now defines itself as the Defender of National Identity against internal and external foes, and above all in being enunciated as a central issue and an Alternative (identity) for Germany which only this party has defined with such clarity and has so strongly declared its willingness to protect. The coherence between the essentialist and the constitutionalist elements on which the AfD builds its conception of national identity (and, in the case of the constitutional references, by which one can argue it is also protecting itself from serious investigation) is, as has been shown, more apparent than real. Indeed, one can suggest that for the AfD the central element of German national identity is ethno-cultural, and ethno-cultural seen as homogenous and ignoring any genuinely-existing regional cultural variations and the previously-existing Protestant/Catholic division within Germany. In fact, the similar, and often identical, cultural arguments advanced in the manifestos for the different states point in exactly this direction. What the manifestos do do is open up a new and allegedly unbridgeable
religious divide within Germany (now that the previous Protestant/Catholic division has largely lost significance), namely that between Christian and Moslem; and this division is stated to be totally significant and decisive. In addition, it is to be noted that the rejection of Islam and its adherents (also seen as an undifferentiated block -- which they are not) is as a reactionary culture incompatible with the Enlightened (as noted, the term is very frequently used) German culture. The fact that Moslem culture is allegedly so reactionary and indistinguishable from the religion also provides the AfD with reasons for their rejection on constitutional grounds relating to the fundamental human rights (Grundrechte) of Section 1 which the German state is constitutionally obliged both to protect and to incorporate before all else (Article 1). The AfD case for a clearly enunciated, undifferentiated ethno-cultural national community, a Volksgemeinschaft, with its own identity can be felt to be more appealing now that a degree of stability has been achieved with the re-establishment of one single German sovereign state as a territorial-political unit possessing just one social system, rather than the two states and two social systems which had existed before reunification.

To return once more to the fundamental statement “the free and democratic rule of law” and its place and function in the manifestos: As mentioned, Isensee (1986) indicated that the Grundgesetz has become much more than a constitutional text; it is also a source of clichés in popular usage, widely used in non-legal discourse, in popular rhetoric, in philanthropic, economic and cultural contexts. This means it is seen also as the foundation of a wide set of social and political values, and in the popular imagination binds together individuals, nation, state and society. What was described above with the deliberately provocative term Volksgemeinschaft, ethno-cultural national community, a concept from a part of Germany’s past one likes to think of as totally overcome, is thus being supported and whitewashed (the term is deliberately chosen) with the help of Germany’s most important post-war political achievement, the Grundgesetz. This same Constitution obliges the Federal Government to maintain membership and active participation in the European Union (Article 23); it also gives it the explicit power to transfer elements of sovereignty to international organisations (Articles 23 and 24) and grants to the individual states the power (with federal approval) to conclude treaties with foreign states in the areas of their constitutional competence (Article 32). Consequently, German membership of the EU cannot be contested with any constitutional argument. But it can be, and is being, contested in the manifestos on a political level with arguments related to ethno-cultural specificity and Volkssouveränität. The national community is emphasised above the transnational community. Here, too, despite the AfD’s protestations to the contrary, the Constitution is at odds with their vision of national identity. This reinforces the suspicion, already indicated, that the constitutional references are part of a public-relations or rhetorical exercise and are being used also as a cloak of respectability rather than as representing a fundamental
commitment to every part and to all the rights conferred in the foundation document of the modern German state.

Taking all the elements of these analyses together, it emerges that the alternative identity for Germany presented and propagated in the 2017 AfD election manifestos contains three of the important elements of right-wing populism as outlined by Wodak (2018) in her analysis of the strong shift to the Right and focus on migration and refugee policy preceding the Austrian parliamentary election which took place just three weeks after the German elections: 1) Nationalism / Nativism / Anti-Pluralism; 2) Anti-Establishment-ism / Anti-Elitism; 3) Conservatism. All of these are underlain by a narrative of threat and the promise that the party is, unlike the others, fully capable of dealing with these threats. And just as the references to the Constitution and the insistence on a particular type of national identity have been shown to conceal a disregard for certain constitutional principles, so also the AfD is proposing by its repeated insistence on the necessity of introducing many more instruments of direct democracy a weakening of the representative parliamentary democracy which is the essence of the State created by that same Constitution. The aim is to put more power in the hands of the German Staatsvolk and, in this way too, in addition to the many other features outlined in the analyses above, intensify “the subjective feeling of belonging to a territorially-defined political community within which the inhabitants feel that they share certain characteristics or common elements.”

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