Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

The thesis addresses the media dynamics around a specific case of German right-wing populism in recent years. It examines the mainstream media's portrayal of the right-wing populist party 'The Freedom Party' during its active nation-wide existence as a political party (July 2010 - November 2013). The point of departure is a theory by the German political scientist Frank Decker, which claims that a constant media bias exists in the country towards right-wing groups. This bias can be explained through the German people's collective memory of the Third Reich's horrors ('Hitler's shadow'), which is deeply anchored in the German political culture. Essentially, the objective of this thesis is to test Decker's theory and apply it to the specific case of the German Freedom Party. In order to achieve valid results, various media portals that address different parts of the German public, yet all belong to the mainstream media, have been incorporated into this study. The chosen media include the digital publications of Süddeutsche Zeitung, DER SPIEGEL, BILD and Berliner Zeitung. All relevant articles covering the Freedom Party included in the digital archives of these news publications within the above-mentioned time frame have been analyzed in the main chapter of the thesis. The analytic framework that is applied in order to test Decker's thesis and look for possible media bias in those publications is Theun van Dijk's concept of 'The strategy of polarization/ the ideological square'. In substance, it contains the idea that the ideological opposition of journalists to phenomena they are describing (in this case right-wing parties in general, and the Freedom Party in particular) can be measured through a) How they construct headlines ('surface structures') on the phenomenon; b) Which terminology ('lexical items') they apply in order to describe it and c) To what degree they highlight negative characteristics of the phenomenon ('The ideological square'). These three analytic dimensions are applied to every single digital article incorporated into the thesis. Every article is summarized and then analyzed in an in-depth-fashion, while charts visualize and summarize the degree of polarization against the party that can be identified in those media publications. In order to be able to assess the accuracy of the terminology that the media has applied to describe and image the Freedom Party, an introductory analysis of key elements of the party program is included in the main chapter as well. The dismantling of the party's political agenda serves as a 'compass' for the media investigation. Only if the subject of analysis is approached independently by the researcher, conceptualized in the larger context of the study (right-wing parties in Germany and their relationship with the mainstream media) and labeled according to previous research on the diversity of German right-wing parties, can it be given a fair hearing in its own terms. The investigation of the party program has identified the party as a stereotypical modern right-wing populist party whose ideology is at odds with traditional right-wing extremism in so far as it is firmly located within the democratic framework and does not pass as 'fascist'. Hence, certain labels for the party can be ruled out as illegitimate and non-accurate. Based on this assessment, three types of terminologies and figures of thought have been conceptualized for the purpose of this study, and examined accordingly in the sources: Openly ideological opposition where 'anti-fascist-reflexes' are at full play (false labeling, stigmatizing that cannot be justified through the actual party program), slightly tendentious news coverage (the amplification of certain controversial elements that are included in the program, yet they are framed in an emotional fashion and evoke negative connotations) and neutral news coverage/ accurate labeling of the party's ideology and agenda (truthfully covering key features of the actual party program). The analysis, which has been divided chronologically into four different analytic phases, and which is conducted newspaper by newspaper, ultimately shows that there no coherent image of the Freedom Party is created by Süddeutsche Zeitung, DER SPIEGEL, BILD and Berliner Zeitung within the time frame of the study. No constant deliberate opposition of the newspapers in question can be identified, yet no favorable news coverage on the Freedom Party has occurred either. In fact, even among the same editorial staff conflicting and contradictory images might were created on the party, and the imaging of the Freedom Party ranged from stigmatizing it as a quasi-fascist party that appears as 'wolves in sheep's clothing' over describing it accurately as 'right-wing populist' to portraying it rather favorably as a 'protest-party' or simply 'Islam-critical'. All in all, the array of opinions on this particular right-wing populist party expressed in the four newspapers is as diverse and heterogeneous as the opinions on right-wing populism in society itself. Hence, Decker's thesis of the German media's 'anti-fascist-reflexes' towards new-founded right-wing parties could not be verified through the present study.

MASTER'S THESIS

The media image(s) of right-wing populist parties in recent German history

The case of the German Freedom Party 2010-2013

by

Hendrik Behnisch

University of Helsinki

Faculty of Social Sciences

Department of Political History

March 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CHARTS INCORPORATED INTO THIS THESIS

'All political opinions have a similar right to publication,

and these different opinions are to be treated

equally and fairly by the media.'

- Olaf Jandura rephrasing the media paragraph of the Basic Law of the Federal

Republic of Germany, (Kleinparteien in der Mediendemokratie, p. 42) -

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Contemporary European right-wing populism: A multifaceted phenomenon

All across Europe, right-wing populist parties have been on the rise for the past decade. Under the phenomenon of this new party family, political scientists and media alike have labeled relatively different groups in various countries.[1] Regardless of some ideological variations among these parties, the concept of the enemy and the overall-populist rhetoric tie them in substance together.

A firm stance on national immigration policies, closely interwoven with an Anti-Islam-agenda, and a deep EU-Skepticism are characteristic of all those parties. In addition to that, an anti-establishment-rhetoric and the self-image of representing the 'silent majority' are crucial for identifying populist movements. In practical terms, the existence of a charismatic figurehead, who the people´s and media´s attention can be focused on, is also a decisive factor for such movements.[2]

As the aforementioned political focal points of these parties indicate, their logic is fundamentally confrontational. This is especially so as the actors deliberately place themselves outside of the establishment system. Consequently, one can argue that circulating Anti-Islam and Anti-Europe-rhetoric are reinforcing a significant conflict potential in our societies, that might very well spin out of control. It is exactly therefore that right-wing populism's increasing appeal to voters all over the continent needs to be addressed by researchers, scientists, politicians and the media alike. The question remains, however, in which way this should be done.

Arguably, there are cases where right-wing populist parties are openly opposed by the aforementioned groups, and constant attempts are made to marginalize them – the treatment of Sweden's *Sverigedemokraterna* is a good example of that practice.[3] In other countries, such parties have been more or less accepted by established parties in order to get a back-up for their power, for example in minority governments. As a result, certain right-wing populist parties did succeed in impacting national immigration policies significantly (such as Denmark's *Dansk Folkeparti*[4] and the

---

1 Von Deggerich, Markus; Ertel, Manfred; Mittelstaedt, Juliane von; Rohr, Mathieu von; Schlamp, Hans-Jürgen; Simons, Stefan: Kontinent der Angst. In: DER SPIEGEL 39/2010

2 Lewandowsky, Marcel; Decker, Frank: 'Populismus. Erscheinungsformen, Enstehungshintergrunde und Folgen eines politischen Phänomens'. In: Bundeszentrale fur politische Bildung.
http://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/rechtsextremismus/41192/was-ist-rechtspopulismus, last accessed on 9.1. 2014

3 Bossetta, Michael: 'Cultural Racism without a Race – An explanatory insight into the discrimination and self-perception of the Sweden Democrats', Master Thesis, Lund University, 2012.

4 Henningsen, Bernd: 'Wo Westergaard zu Hause ist', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 14.10. 2010.
http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/rechtspopulisten-in-skandinavien-wo-westergaard-zu-hause-ist-1.999386, last accessed on 14.1. 2014

Netherlands's *PVV*). Not only the acceptance of such parties varies a great deal, depending on the political culture in question, also do the parties' ideological leanings and initial backgrounds differ (and, hence, their constitutional, democratic character).

When trying to tackle right-wing populism in analytic terms, it is reasonable to look at its **variants in the affected countries individually** in order to dismantle and understand the different types of that phenomenon better. I have decided to deal with the case of one of the few Western European countries where the movement has not gained significance in the party landscape yet: Germany. In the year 2015, no right-wing populist party is currently part of the national parliament (Bundestag). Hence, **Germany is an exception with regard to right-wing populist parties establishing themselves nation-wide and impacting national politics.** Given that Germany appears to be 'the-odd-one-out' in within the context of the rise of European right-wing populism, the question arises: Why? Various scholars have sought to answer this question, and the work of one in particular, the German political scientist Frank Decker, marks the point of departure for my study.

1.2 The case of Germany

Challenging framework conditions due to 'Hitler's shadow'

Decker has formulated the concept of **'Hitler's shadow'** and **'a historically contaminated environment'** that pose fundamental challenges to the rise of right-wing parties in Germany.[5] National Socialism, the specifically German variant of *fascism,* was a *right-wing* extremist mass movement – and brought havoc over an entire continent and has to be held accountable for one of the worst crimes in the history of humanity, the Holocaust. Naturally, the ideological legacy of right-wing groups is thereby highly problematic by default in the Federal Republic.

In a broader historical sense, this thesis gets backed up by the Finnish scholar Lauri Karvonen who argues that our perspective on fascism is 'post-Auschwitz'. Therefore, he continues, the term fascism is subject to strong normative (negative) judgments.[6]

This mindset of demonizing the ideologies of Nazism/ fascism/ right-wing extremism (that can all be used as synonyms) which the two scholars portray as predominant among citizens of Western liberal democracies, is particularly strong in Germany, after all one of the 'core-countries' of

---

5   Decker, Frank: Wenn die Populisten kommen, p. 17
6   Karvonen, Lauri: Fascismen i Europa, p. 11

European fascism between the two World Wars.[7]

By referring to this obviously contaminated historical context in Germany in particular, Decker seeks to explain the phenomenon of **the mainstream media's 'anti-fascist-reflexes'** that, according to his interpretation, easily occur towards new-founded right-wing parties in Germany. In other words: **New-founded German right-wing parties are constantly in danger of being labeled and stigmatized as fascists/ Nazis – no matter if that is justifiable through their party program or not.**[8] This sounds like a reasonable, valid argument. Let alone, it has not been tested sufficiently in recent years and cases. Is the German political culture, mirrored in and voiced through the mainstream media, hostile towards right-wing populism? Have parties with that political orientation been fighting a lost cause in recent years? In stark contrast to the developments in many other European countries?

For the purpose of this study, I will make a case by investigating the **media portrayal** of an earlier, less prominent right-wing movement in Germany. The party that I chose as my study subject made an attempt to mobilize an immigration-critical and anti-Islamic electorate between 2010 and 2013 and goes by the name **'Die Bürgerrechtspartei fur mehr Freiheit und Demokratie – Die Freiheit'** (Citizen rights party for more freedom and democracy – Freedom Party).

The party, which I will refer to as the **Freedom Party** in this paper, can be regarded as one piece in the mosaic of anti-Islamism, xenophobia and anti-establishment sentiment that has become gradually more and more visible among the German public in recent years – even though the party never reached its initial goal to have a 'determining influence on German politics during the decades to come'.[9]

It is the objective of the study at hand to analyze the way the German mainstream media has covered the party in the three years of its existence (the party leadership decided to no longer run nationwide electoral campaigns in the autumn of 2013). Essentially, my research question can be phrased like this:

How have leading German news publications (DER SPIEGEL, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Berliner Zeitung, BILD) been portraying the Freedom Party, and what public image was shaped by that?

By examining how the media has portrayed the Freedom Party I am making a case of how the

---

7   Ibid, p. 20

8   Decker, Frank: Wenn die Populisten kommen, p. 17

9   'Neue Partei Die Freiheit in Berlin gegrundet', in: tagesspiegel.de, published on 29.10. 2010.
    http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/landespolitik/rene-stadtkewitz-neue-partei-die-freiheit-in-berlin-
    gegruendet/1969872.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

media landscape in Germany has mirrored the phenomenon of right-wing populism during a certain time period. This, in turn, will allow me to draw conclusions on how one significant element of the political culture in Germany – the mainstream media in its role as the *'watchdog of society'* – has reacted to a particular representative of right-wing populism between 2010 and 2013.

Differentiation despite the 'post-Auschwitz'-perspective: A key point of this study

In fact, *'the media as the watchdog of society'* is a concept that is highly relevant for what this study seeks to address and raise awareness to – because dealing with right-wing parties is inevitably a normative matter for certain individuals. This, however, is not limited to the realm of professional politics and journalism – even scholars have shown contradictory approaches in addressing German right-wing parties.

The normative 'post-Auschwitz'-perspective can be observed in the ideas of Alexander Häusler, who calls the accuracy of the term 'right-wing populism' into doubt altogether. In his reading, political movements with an immigration-critical and anti-Islamic agenda are 'extreme Right' per definition. Häusler considers 'right-wing populism' simply as a 'new tactics from the far Right'. Furthermore, he claims that anti-Islamic campaigns are only the focal point of a more general xenophobia, and thereby are a perfect masquerade for racists. Accordingly, Häusler makes use of the terms 'anti-Muslim racism' and 'culturalized racism'.[10]

With reference to the aforementioned multifacetedness of modern right-wing populism and in full awareness of the danger of walking into trap of the 'post-Auschwitz'-perspective while researching all kinds of different right-wing parties, I first want to declare my rejection of Häusler's ideas and shed light on the mindset in which I am conducting this study.

In fact, I consider a *non-normative, differentiating take on the phenomenon as a necessity*, and essentially share Frank Decker's way of addressing right-wing populism in general, and its German variants in particular: Decker argues that the establishment of right-wing populism in the party system can have a catalyst effect that frees public debates from taboos. Since these taboos (such as expressing anti-Islamic sentiments or taking critical stance on multiculturalism) are, according to Decker, still very strong in Germany, they are being covered up by the political elites and media alike. As a result, immigration-critics' protest against what they perceive as an enforced

---

10 Häusler, Alexander: 'Die PRO-Bewegung und der antimuslimische Kulturrassismus von Rechtsaussen', in
    http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/do/08253.pdf, last accessed on 25.3. 2015

'voicelessness', can get channeled through political violence, in the absence of a 'proper political voice' within the party system.[11] Therefore, *right-wing populist parties can provide a corrective function within the German party system, and be a legitimate player in the political arena, voicing a particular electorate's concerns*.

Decker's stance on modern right-wing populist parties necessarily involves freeing one's mind from 'Hitler's shadow', and requires a differentiation between the ideological variants of right-wing parties. In other words: In such an approach as shown by Decker (and shared by the author of this thesis), right-wing *as such* is not bearing a negative connotation already, only the radical, extremist variants of a right-wing attitude are to be demonized and opposed (concretely: Nazism/ fascism/ right-wing extremism).

The bottom line is: If I shared Häusler's mindset of deeming all German right-wing populist parties per definition 'far Right', 'racist' and anti-democratic, I would have no interest in finding out whether or not the media has portrayed such a party *fairly*. Moreover, I could not expect to generate any relevant and refined knowledge with this study, because usually, the media abandons its attempt to fair and balanced media coverage when it comes to proclaimed enemies of liberal-democratic state orders. This is often the case as journalistic accounts on such groups (e.g. political and religious extremists) serve the purpose of defending democracy – by warning the readership about those threatening it (and hence, playing the part of *'the watchdog of society')*. In other words: There would be no substantial point in, say, researching the possibility of the mainstream media portraying an explicit Nazi party neutrally or even favorably. Yet given modern right-wing populism's multifacetedness – and its increasing appeal to voters all over Europe – *it would be intellectually lazy to condemn all those parties as anti-democratic, and thereby justify a possible media bias*. Furthermore, this approach would be undifferentiated, and incapable of generating more refined knowledge on the phenomenon of right-wing populism and its relationship with the mainstream media.

As a result of the deliberately non-normative approach I have chosen, **I incorporate a two-typologies-differentiation between right-wing populism on the one hand, and Nazism/ fascism/ right-wing extremism on the other at all times in my research**. The typology has been formulated by Decker and Lewandowsky, and the differentiation it entails is vital for the mindset in which I conduct this research, and, furthermore, it is key in the logic that is at play in my entire thesis.

The crucial aspect brought forward by Decker and Lewandowsky is that **many right-wing**

---

11 Decker: Wenn die Populisten kommen, p. 15

populists are indeed not to be labeled as extremists or Nazis/ fascists, but rather as political actors that have a certain appeal to democratic, conservative middle-class voters[12]. Fascist parties are naturally not appealing to a democratic electorate, as several explicitly anti-democratic features characterize the ideology of fascism. These characteristics include, among others, extreme nationalism that is downgrading other nations, the rejection of pluralism and therefore parliamentary democracy, the ideologically legitimized use of violence, the attacking of particular targets (e.g. racial or sexual minorities) and the defense of discrimination in the light of rejecting equal basic human rights[13]

When examining where the demarcation line between right-wing populism and fascism goes, it is essential to emphasize that right-wing populism is commonly located **within the democratic framework**. While right-wing populists might very well challenge the established, democratic system (particularly through their criticism of the political elites), they do not seek to abolish it. Where right-wing extremists want to achieve just that, in order to establish a fascist dictatorship that implements the above-mentioned principles, right-wing populists merely try to strengthen direct-democratic/ plebiscitarian elements in the political system. The violence-oriented, anti-parliamentarian concept of politics that fascism represents distinguishes it clearly from its democratic counter-part. Both ideologies react with hostility towards sociocultural modernization (which entails multiculturalism), but they choose different means to combat it, as their ultimate goals differ.[14]

However, Lewandowsky and Decker point out that the populist core-concept of 'us' (the 'good' people) and 'them' is a vague moral category that can take many forms. In terms of the contemporary right-wing populist movements all over Europe, this concept primarily manifests itself in two ways. In the rhetoric against the political elites on both national and EU-level, the so-called *horizontal othering* takes place. *Vertical othering,* on the other hand, is directed against immigrants, and particularly those from Muslim countries.[15]

Most importantly in this typology, however, is that **the violence of right-wing populism is merely rhetorical**, whereas the violence of right-wing extremism is *literal*. This should be taken into account when analyzing and labeling right-wing groups in Germany – as pointed out already, contemporary European right-wing populism is a truly heterogeneous phenomenon with parties that embody different degrees of radical ideas. Painting them all with the same brush by letting the

12 Decker, Frank; Lewandowsky, Marcel: Rechtspopulismus als neue Strategie der politischen Rechten. In: Online Akademie der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/akademie/online/08320.pdf, p.1
13 Harris Geoffrey: The dark side of Europe – the extreme Right today, p. 16
14 Decker; Lewandowksy, p.1
15 Ibid, p.3

concept of 'Hitler's shadow' cloud our judgment would a) not do justice to multifaceted nature of the phenomenon I am researching here and b) make it impossible to give particular cases of such parties a fair hearing on their own terms. In order to succeed in just that with regard to the Freedom Party (following the logic of the differentiation *traditional right-wing extremism vs. modern right-wing populism*), the party needs to be located within the spectrum of German right-wing parties first. For that purpose, historical contextualization is crucial, which will be executed next.

Right-wing parties in Germany prior to 2010: Mostly stigmatized as Nazis

German political scientists agree on the fact that there are five noteworthy German right-wing parties that emerged after World War II and *prior to 2010*, the year the Freedom Party entered the political stage. These five parties are The National Democratic Party (NPD), the Republicans (Republikaner), the German People´s Union (DVU), the Schill-Party (Partei rechtsstaatlicher Offensive/ PRO) and PRO-Deutschland.

The certainly most prominent and most extremist of these parties is the NPD which has been monitored by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution[16] for decades already. On top of that, one effort to ban the party has been made already, and a second one, initiated by the federal states of Germany, is currently ongoing.[17] The NPD is essentially a Nazi-party, that is ideologically not only akin to Hitler´s NSDAP, but can even be seen as its successor party. Being founded in 1964, the NPD almost entered the parliament in 1969, but then soon got marginalized in the political landscape. Only in the early 2000s did the NPD gain ground in two federal states that formerly belonged to the GDR (Saxony and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern), yet in the national elections, the NPD managed only to mobilize a tiny electorate.

During the 1990s, the NPD was facing two particularly firm competitors: The DVU and the Republicans. The DVU was founded in 1971 already, but started running electoral campaigns no earlier than in 1987 – with relative success, in certain federal states at least. In ideological terms, the DVU appears to be very reminiscent of the NPD, as the maintenance of German identity and defense of German national interests are the main concerns for the party.

---

16 The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution is Germany's domestic security agency. It is an institution that reports to the Federal Ministry of the Interior, which makes the Minister of the Interior the minister responsible for the agency.

17 Hebel, Christina; Medick, Veit: Jetzt muss die NPD zittern. In: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 3.12. 2013. http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/zweites-npd-verbotsverfahren-jetzt-ist-wieder-karlsruhe-am-zug-a-936805.html, last accessed on 15.1. 2015

Hints of anti-Semitic attitudes can easily be dismantled; for instance in the claim that the German Chancellor makes policies not for the benefit of the people, but for the benefit of Israel and the USA. Consequently, the DVU merged with the NPD in 2011 and thereby ceased to exist as an own party.[18]

The NPD's second great competitor, the Republicans, got established in 1983 as a break-away party of the Christian Social Union (CSU), the Bavarian twin-party of Germany´s biggest catch-all party CDU. The Republican share such main themes as nationalistic values, a law-and-order-operational mode of society, and anti-immigration-policies with the NPD and the DVU. Whereas those two have rather socialistic agendas on nationalistic terms, the Republicans show their kinship to CDU/CSU in their orientation towards liberal economic policies. Their electoral successes took place between the late 1980s and the mid-1990s in West-Berlin and Baden-Württemberg.[19]

Despite the temporary successes gained in single federal states, none of the aforementioned parties has managed to gain political significance all over Germany. Lacardie highlights the fact, that the NPD, DVU and Republicans alike **are stigmatized as Nazis by the German media**.

Only one German right-wing populist party prior to 2010 has succeeded in not being tied to this kind of bad reputation: The Schill-Party. Founded by a former judge, Ronald Schill, in Hamburg in 2000, the party entered the Landtag in the Hanseatic city with 19,4% of the votes in 2001.According to Decker, the party was successful in the first place because Schill acted upon bourgeois resentment against foreigners and the bourgeois yearning for better public security, without ever being associated with Nazism or any other kind of extremism. According to Decker, the **incapability of the German media to demonize Schill as a Nazi,** based on his respectable reputation as a former judge, was a decisive factor in the ascent of his one-man-party.[20]

The last right-wing party prior to the Freedom Party that sought to reach out for a larger electorate was Pro Deutschland, which emerged from the Cologne-based Anti-Islamic association 'Pro Köln' in 2005, and is monitored by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution since 2011.[21]

As this brief outline indicates, **four out of five right-wing parties that got founded in post-World-War-II-Germany, got labeled as Nazis by the media**. Whereas there is scholarly

---

18 Haus der Niederlande. 'Rechter Populismus in Deutschland', In: http://www.uni-muenster.de/HausDerNiederlande/Zentrum/Projekte/Schulprojekt/Lernen/Populismus/70/rechterpopulismusbrd.htm, last accessed on 15.1. 2015
19 Ibid
20 Decker: Wenn die Populisten kommen, p. 307
21 Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. http://www.bpb.de/politik/wahlen/wer-steht-zur-wahl/bundestag-2013/165517/pro-deutschland, last accessed on 12.3. 2015

consensus on the rightfulness of this stigma in the cases of the NPD and the DVU, and the accuracy in keeping that label off the Schill-Party, the Republicans and Pro-Deutschland are located in some kind of ideological gray zone where it is difficult to measure their (potentially) anti-constitutional character. However, the case of the Republicans in particular should bring one more important aspect to our attention: The ideological point of departure for new-founded right-wing parties.

In this context, it must be noted that they can either originate from a fascist world view and try to appear more moderate to attract mere middle-class voters (the 'sheep-in-wolves-clothing'-scenario), or they are slightly radicalized break-away parties from conservative catch-all parties (as the Republicans were in relation to the CSU).

Basically, the break-away-process from big catch-all parties can be interpreted as a *rebellion of the most right-wing members of such parties against the official party line*. In other words: If there is an ideological shift to be observed that certain members of the party cannot identify with, the likelihood of a **break-away-party** being formed increases. In fact, this is exactly the phenomenon that occurred in the case of the Freedom Party as well, as I will show next.

1.3 Right-wing populism in Germany 2010-2015: A brief outline

The 'Social-democratization' of the CDU (2008-)

One of the reasons that kept new-founded right-wing parties on the margins of the political landscape in the old Federal Republic, is the remarkable and lasting capability of the Germany's biggest middle-of-the-road-party-tandem CDU/CSU (Christian Democrats)[22] to absorb occurring national-conservative movements into their electorate. Essentially, over many decades the party was known for giving conservative, more nationalist-minded voters a political home. The party did so by frequently implementing a rhetoric in its public appearances that is bordering on right-wing populist statements – even prolific CDU-politicians in leadership-positions followed that pattern on occasion.

For example, the former German chancellor Helmut Kohl insisted after German reunification, when homes of asylum-seekers were torched by Neo-Nazis in the East German city of Rostock, that Germany is no immigration country.[23] On a similar note, the current German chancellor Angela

---

22 The CDU is electable in 15 out of 16 federal states, whereas its twin-party, the CSU, is only electable in the federal state of Bavaria. Despite this organizational demaracation line between the two parties and some small ideological differences, one can consider the CDU/CSU as one party-tandem, the Christian Democrats.

23 Kohl, Helmut: 'Regierungserklärung zur 12. Wahlperiode des Deutschen Bundestages', in: Konrad-Adenauer-

Merkel declared in 2010 that 'multiculturalism has failed'.[24]

Against that background, it is remarkable which ideological shift the CDU has taken under the leadership of Angela Merkel right after she got elected as the German chancellor in 2005, and brought the party back into the government after seven years as an opposition party. As a result of her leadership, the CDU is widely considered to have lost vast parts of its conservative profile. The German media has coined the phrase of the 'Social democratization of the CDU' in order to describe the phenomenon that got started under Merkel´s leadership. The main objective of that strategy to enter the leftist sphere of the political center is to attract former SPD-voters.[25] Officially, this course is meant to help the CDU regain its status as a big catch-all party that attracts voters even beyond the conservative camp. As a result of the CDU´s apparent shift to the center, the notion of the 'homeless conservatives' within the party has surfaced in public discourse.

In response to this peculiar trend within the CDU, in 2010, various political scientists predicted that a new right-wing populist party – a break-away party from the CDU – could pick up at least 20% of the votes.[26]. This assessment was a combination of this long-term-development within the CDU, and two occasions in particular, that provoked lasting public discourses throughout the rest of the year 2010.

The Sarrazin-Debate (2010)

At least two controversial nationwide discourses occurred that year which dismantled the German public's disagreement on the Federal Republic's national immigration policies in general, and the status it should grant Islam in its society in particular.

In the course of these up-heated debates, deep dividing lines between immigration-critical and anti-Islamic segments of society on one hand, and advocates of multiculturalism on the other, have been revealed. Hardened fronts can be observed as far as far as questions of Germany's national and cultural identity, the implementation of multiculturalism in German society, and, most notably,

---

Stiftung: Helmut Kohl. http://helmut-kohl.kas.de/index.php?
menu_sel=17&menu_sel2=&menu_sel3=&menu_sel4=&msg=609, last accessed on 10.3. 2015

24 'Integration: Merkel erklärt Multikulti fur gescheitert', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 16.10. 2010,
http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/integration-merkel-erklaert-multikulti-fuer-gescheitert-a-723532.html, last accessed on 10.3. 2015.

25 'Berliner Erklärung: Sozialdemokratische CDU.' In: sueddeutsche.de, published on 17.5. 2010,
http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/berliner-erklaerung-sozialdemokratische-cdu-1.73040, last accessed on 30.1. 2014

26 '20 Prozent fur Rechtspartei möglich', in: RP online, published on 13.9. 2010. http://www.rp-online.de/politik/deutschland/20-prozent-fuer-rechtspartei-moeglich-aid-1.2292654, last accessed on 16.1. 2014

Islam's role in the country, are concerned.[27]

The first significant indication of the considerable existence of a 'right-wing populist electorate' in Germany is the so-called **'Sarrazin-Debate'** that took place in late summer/ early autumn 2010. Essentially, the 'Sarrazin-Debate' was centered around topics that are identity-establishing for right-wing-populists; and the polls implied that a party picking up those issues would instantly gain around 20% of the vote Following the book *'Deutschland schafft sich ab. Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen.' (engl: 'Germany abolishes itself'. How we put our country at stake')* by the SPD (Social Democratic Party)-member Thilo Sarrazin, anti-Islamic, immigration-critical sentiments were displayed publicly and discussed in an up-heated climate[28].

The main thesis of the book (the best-selling factual book in Germany after World War II) is that Germany´s immigration policies had failed dramatically, leading to countless parallel societies of Turkish and Arabic immigrants who supposedly disrespect the German state, yet make a living out of its benefits. In other words: The book primarily reinforced the image of the 'bad', 'lazy' and 'economically useless' (Oriental) immigrants that are nothing but a burden to German society, and – through their unwillingness to integrate culturally – ultimately also a threat to German national identity.[29] The book became a bestseller, and the political climate clearly appeared to be in favor of a new right-wing/immigration-critical party in Germany.

Former Federal President Wulff's controversial Islam-statement (2010)

The concern of a considerable amount of the German public about the country's cultural and national identity, did not only get amplified in the Sarrazin-Debate, it also got reinforced all the more through a highly controversial statement by the Federal President at the time, Christian Wulff (CDU). In his anniversary speech on German unity day 2010, Wulff declared that 'Islam belongs to Germany'[30] – a statement which deepened the dividing lines between the modern-minded, rather pragmatic and less ideological parts of the CDU and the nationalist-conservative ones even more.

27 Schneiders, Thorsten Gerald (ed.): Verhärtete Fronten - Der schwere Weg zu einer vernünftigen Islamkritik, p.7
28 Ruf, Christoph: 'Studie zu deutschen Einstellungen: Wie gross Srrazins Basis wirklich ist', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 13.10. 2010.
   http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/studie-zu-deutschen-einstellungen-wie-gross-sarrazins-basis-wirklich-ist-a-722789.html, last accessed on 16.3. 2015
29 Geyer, Christoph: 'So wird Deutschland dumm.' In: FAZ online, published on 25.8. 2010.
   http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buecher/rezensionen/sachbuch/thilo-sarrazin-deutschland-schafft-sich-ab-so-wird-deutschland-dumm-1999085.html
30 Schlegel, Matthias: 'Wulff: Islam gehört zu Deutschland'. In: tagesspiegel.de, published on 3.10. 2010,
   http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/rede-zur-einheitsfeier-wulff-islam-gehoert-zu-deutschland/1948760.html, last accessed on 10.3. 2015

The latter, the prediction of various political scientists ran, would be easily be drawn to a new right-wing populist party, if a new one was to be founded. Interestingly, this development correlates exactly with the foundation of the subject of my study, the Freedom Party, which can be regarded as an immediate response to both the 'Social-Democratization of the CDU' which, arguably started as early as 2008, and the 'Sarrazin-Debate' and the 'Wulff-controversy', which both occurred in 2010.

As my study will show in greater detail, the Freedom Party was incapable of mobilizing the 'homeless conservatives' and the nationalist-minded, immigration-critical electorate in the following years, and it took three more years before another new party, did fill the 'gap' on the right-wing of the political spectrum that Merkel's CDU had left open throughout the past decade.

The AfD (2013-)

In 2013, the currently relatively successful German nationalistic protest party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) was founded. Arguably, the AfD started out as a 'watered-down version' of the three-years-older Freedom Party, for they were not touching upon the taboo of Anti-Muslim-sentiment. Instead, they were mostly portrayed as 'Euro-Skeptics' that have a rather elitist approach due to their leaders being professors and former managers.[31]

After missing the chance to win seats in the German parliament (Bundestag) in September 2013, it succeeded in doing so for the European parliament in May 2014[32], as well as in the federal elections in the federal states of Brandenburg, Sachsen (Saxony) and Thuringia[33]. In the wake of these electoral successes, the attitudes of the established parties and the media have become more hostile towards the AfD, referring to them as a right-wing populist or nationalistic-conservative party that is fueled by a latent xenophobia.[34]

---

31 Wittrock, Philipp: 'Alternative fuer Deutschland – Partei der Besserwisser', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 11.4. 2013. http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/gruendungsparteitag-der-anti-euro-partei-alternative-fuer-deutschland-a-893374.html, last accessed on 9.1. 2015

32 Amann, Melanie; Reinhold, Fabian: 'AfD-Erfolg: Lucke, Henkel und Co im Siegesrausch', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 25.5. 2014, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/afd-chef-lucke-feiert-gutes-ergebnis-bei-europawahl-a-971600.html, last accessed on 9.1. 2015

33 Amann, Melanie; Baumgärtner, Maik; Deggerich, Markus; Müller, Ann-Katrin; Röbel, Sven; Winter, Steffen: 'Obenauf und unten durch', in: DER SPIEGEL 39/ 2014

34 'Neue deutsche Welle' in: DER SPIEGEL 51/ 2014

PEGIDA (2014-)

This increasing opposition to the AfD among the political elites and mainstream media alike is tied to the fact that the various federal delegations of the party associated themselves quite openly with a movement that probably marks the most significant outburst and manifestation of right-populism in recent German history: PEGIDA ('Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes' – 'Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident').

Starting in the autumn of 2014, this mass protest group has been making headlines nation-wide in Germany for several months.[35] At the peak of the movement, about 25.000 demonstrators were voicing their anti-Islamic, xenophobic and anti-establishment sentiments in the streets of Dresden and various other German cities. After a scandal around one of the leaders who had uttered racist attitudes on a social media platform and had posed as Adolf Hitler on a photograph[36], about half of the leadership left the movement. As a consequence, the popularity of the movement died down, and its exposure in the media ebbed away.[37]

A 'family tree' of German right-wing parties past and present

The ideological ties between the object of the study at hand, the Freedom Party, and the more recent manifestations of German right-wing populism, AfD and PEGIDA, are quite obvious. The Freedom Party-founder and leader at the time, René Stadtkewitz, justified the withdrawal of his party from politics by claiming that there is a 90% convergence between the two parties in terms of the political agenda[38].

As a consequence of the AfD nearly entering the German Bundestag in the autumn of 2013, he drew the conclusion that this party has the biggest chances for future success of the entire Euro/

---

35 Hebel, Christina; Otto, Ferdinand: 'Massenprotest in Sachsen. Fünf Grunde fur Pegidas Erfolg in Dresden', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 7.1. 2015, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/pegida-fuenf-gruende-fuer-den-erfolg-in-dresden-a-1011490.html, last accessed on 9.1. 2015

36 'Ausländerfeindliche Hetze bei Facebook: Pegida-Chef Bachmann tritt zuruck', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 21.1. 2015, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/lutz-bachmann-zieht-sich-bei-pegida-zurueck-a-1014270.html, last accesed on 10.3. 2015

37 Reinbold, Fabian: 'Danke, Pegida, das war's!`, in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 10.2. 2015, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/pegida-das-ende-der-bewegung-kommentar-a-1017581.html, last accessed on 10.3. 2015.

38 Hebel, Christina: 'Die Freiheit' – Anti-Islam-Partei will sich der AfD anschliessen' In: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 1.10. 2013, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/die-freiheit-stellt-wahlkaempfe-zugunsten-der-afd-ein-a-925504.html, last accessed on 29.1.2014

EU-skeptic nationalist-conservative movement in Germany, and should be supported by all means. Therefore, he even appealed to members of his own party to join the AfD, as they are essentially fighting for the same cause[39]. The second important aspect is the actual migration from countless members of the Freedom Party to the AfD that started to take place even before Stadtkewitz´s plea.[40]

Drawing conclusions from both the historic contextualization of right-wing parties in post-World-War-II-Germany, and the following examination of more recent societal trends and right-wing group and party formations, we can visualize the phenomenon in a chart displaying the 'family tree' both modern, contemporary right-wing populism and traditional right-wing extremist groups in Germany. Those parties which have been stigmatized as Nazis by the mainstream media are highlighted in magenta, those which are frequently covered in a critical fashion in yellow, and those which are commonly approached neutrally in green.

Chart 1: Ideological map of all noteworthy German right-wing parties and groups after World War II

Conservatism	Conservatism with explicit populist elements	Right-wing populism	'Right-wing extremism light' (some membership convergence with fascist groups and monitored by the German state)	Right-wing extremism (monitored by the German state)
CDU/ CSU (*1950)	Early AfD (2013-2014)	AfD (2014-)	PRO-Deutschland (*2005)	NPD (*1964)
		SCHILL-Party (2001-2007)		DVU (1987-2011)
		PEGIDA (2014-)		Republicans (1983-2006)

Finding the Freedom Party's location within this chart is one objective of the work at hand.

However, as we can see, of all the German parties commonly associated with a right-wing world

---

39 Ibid
40 Amann, Melanie: 'Unheimlich gute Freunde', in: DER SPIEGEL 36/2013

view, only one is an established political actor in the Federal Republic. The CDU/CSU. And even here it is highly disputable in how far they could even really pass as a nationalistic-conservative group during the past two decades, regardless of occasional flirts with right-wing populist rhetoric.

Other than that, **only two out of six notable German right-wing parties** (the Freedom Party excluded, for this remains to be seen in the cause of this study) **escaped the 'Nazi stigma' of the German media: The Schill-Party and the AfD.** The four other parties that sought to reach out for and represent a nationalistic and immigration-critical electorate in the parliament, the NPD, the DVU, the Republicans, and Pro Deutschland, have acquired a bad reputation media-wise.

However, the active polarization against right-wing groups among the German political elite and media was not limited to opposing traditional fascist groups, but also applies to those parties and movements whose agenda has a pro-constitutional character: The AfD and PEGIDA. The veteran Minister of Finances, Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU), probably the AfD's most prolific critic, even called the party *'a shame for Germany'*[41]. This demonstrates that the AfD – despite their electoral successes in several federal states – is not fully accepted as a legitimate part of a pluralistic party landscape. Interestingly, the AfD itself had initially firmly tried to distance themselves from the object of my study, the Freedom Party.[42]

On a similar note, despite the initial criticism Merkel expressed of multiculturalism, she made harsh value judgments on PEGIDA in her New Year's speech 2015, accusing them of 'coldness' and 'hatred' towards asylum seekers.[43] In turn, PEGIDA has made active use of the term *'Liar's Press'* to express the ant-establishment feeling in a similarly harsh way. These mutual recriminations underline the deep divide that is existing between parts of the German public and the establishment in the year 2015.

As I stated before, the fronts appear to be hardened in debates on immigration, multiculturalism and Islam. And this paints quite a bleak picture of the political culture and the democratic debate-culture in the Federal Republic – 'Hitler's shadow' is distorting the view in such matters, to pick up Decker's poignant statement. The controversies around how to address right-wing parties in Germany are, as shown before, also part of the academic debate. Regardless of *the normative/ non-*

---

41 'Kritik an Protestpartei: Schäuble nennt AfD 'Schande für Deutschland', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 9.10. 2014, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/schaeuble-ueber-afd-schande-fuer-deutschland-a-996347.html, last accessed on 9.1. 2015

42 'AfD streitet uber Aufnahme von rechten Uberläufern' In: Welt Online, published on 6.10.2013. http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article120669457/AfD-streitet-ueber-Aufnahme-von-rechten-Ueberlaeufern.html, last accessed on 9.1. 2015

43 'Neujahrsansprache der Kanzlerin: Merkel prangert Hass bei Pegida-Märschen an', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 31.12. 2014, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/merkel-kritisiert-pegida-bei-neujahrsansprache-scharf-a-1010785.html, last accessed on 10.3. 2015

normative divide among scholars embodied by two of the leading experts in this field of research, Alexander Häusler and Frank Decker, a great deal of literature is available on the subject, which I will go into next, before moving on to outlining the further structure of the thesis.

1.4 Status quo of related studies, sources, methodology and the structure of the thesis

Frank Decker's high-profile presence in this thesis reflects his status as a leading researcher on German right-wing populism. As such, he has published a considerable amount of research literature on the subject matter, and formulated theses on the reasons for Germany´s 'special case' in various books and articles for political journals.

Some of his main works on the matter include *'Wenn die Populisten kommen – Beiträge zum Zustand der Demokratie und des Parteiensystems' (Wiesbaden, 2013), 'Populismus – Gefahr für die Demokratie oder nützliches Korrektiv?'* (Wiesbaden, 2006) and *'Der neue Rechtspopulismus'* (Opladen, 2004).

Decker's normative-minded counterpart in this research field, Alexander Häusler, has recently published a detailed account on the AfD, together with Rainer Roeser: 'Die *rechten 'Mut'-Bürger: Entstehung, Entwicklung, Personal & Positionen der Alternative für Deutschland'* (Hamburg, 2015). In addition to that we was primarily concerned with the Cologne-based right-wing populist Protest-initiative 'Pro Köln', which later grew into the small right-wing extremist party 'Pro Deutschland'. He published an account on new strategies of right-wing extremist actors in Germany entitled as *'Rechtspopulismus als "Bürgerbewegung": Kampagnen gegen Islam und Moscheebau und kommunale Gegenstrategien'* (Wiesbaden, 2008).

Moreover, Florian Hartleb belongs to the most prolific scholars on German right-wing populism, and he has published books like '*Rechts- und Linkspopulismus. Eine Fallstudie anhand von Schill-Partei und PDS'* (Wiesbaden, 2004) and '*Populismus in der modernen Demokratie. Die Niederlande und Deutschland im Vergleich'* (with Friso Wielanga, Münster, 2011).

As I made clear already earlier, I am following Decker's trail in this study. For one, I do not approach the object of my study in a normative approach that is guided by a 'post-Auschwitz' perspective, but *treat the Freedom Party neutrally as another political actor representing a particular agenda that is actually anchored in growing parts of the German public*. Second, I use his theory as a point of departure for making an own case – for Decker, right-wing parties' interplay

with the media has a major standing in his explanation of why right-wing populist parties have been so unsuccessful in recent German history.

However, Decker's theory of the historically grounded bias of the German mainstream media that is carrying out anti-fascist-reflexes towards new-founded right-wing parties can only be practically tested validly in my study, if I can make some statements about the nature of the party in question. If that party was explicitly fascist, one could not speak of 'anti-fascist-reflexes' at all, but of justified, deliberate opposition against an anti-democratic group (as in the case of the NPD). **Therefore, in my understanding of the case, Decker's theory of the 'reflexes' only applies fully in its logic if they 'hit' a new party that does not deliberately style itself as extremist or fascist, but one that is at least located in an ideological 'gray zone' or not clearly identified in ideological terms.**

As a consequence, I have decided to analyze key aspects of the party program of the Freedom Party as a 'prologue' to the analytic main part. **This analysis of the party program shall serve as a compass for assessing if the party has been portrayed accurately or not.** Only if we know what kind of right-wing party (are they extremists/ fascists?) we are dealing with, we can give the party a fair hearing on its own terms; and reach a solid conclusion on whether or not the party has been portrayed objectively by the mainstream media, or, indeed, in a biased fashion of ideological opposition, as Decker's thesis of 'anti-fascist-reflexes' implies.

This approach of mine is especially necessary for this thesis, as I am dealing with a political culture where immigration-critical parties and movements are entitled as 'a shame for Germany' and accused of 'hatred for asylum-seekers' by prolific established politicians of the German government.

In short: I do not intend to let 'Hitler's shadow' cloud my judgment on a) the nature of the Freedom Party and b) on whether or not the mainstream media has portrayed it fairly.

The media I have chosen with regard to the portrayal the Freedom Party include the internet-news-portals of DER SPIEGEL, Süddeutsche Zeitung, BILD and Berliner Zeitung.

DER SPIEGEL is the leading political journal in Germany, published nation-wide on a weekly basis The German communicologist Frank Brettschneider states that DER SPIEGEL holds an 'opinion leadership' in Germany.[44]

Süddeutsche Zeitung is a supra-regional daily newspaper that has a center-left political orientation. The Goethe Institute, one of Germany´s most seminal cultural organizations, terms the

---

44 Jandura, Olaf: Kleinparteien in der Mediendemokratie, p. 61

paper 'the flagship of a social-liberal and culturally interested bourgeoisie'.[45]

BILD is a supra-regional daily tabloid, and is generally considered as the 'newspaper of the common man'.[46] The tabloid claims to speak for the average citizen in advocating 'common sense' politics, and has traditionally head political leanings towards the CDU and other conservative groups.[47] While mostly being ignored by intellectuals, it is for the popularity among common people that it is considered to be a powerful discourse-leader and opinion-shaper.

Berliner Zeitung - only circulating in Berlin and the neighboring federal sate Brandenburg - is chosen because of the local connection to the Freedom Party. In fact, the party was founded in Berlin and took its first noticeable steps into the public eye in the context of the municipal elections in Berlin in autumn 2011. As a result, a more detailed media coverage on the Freedom Party by Berlin´s leading local newspaper can be expected.

However, the actual articles I will make use of have partly been published in the printed versions of these newspapers and journals, and have been added to the digital archives afterwards. Partly, they have been published online right away. Due to the growing significance of the internet and the decline of printed editions, I rest my study on digital sources.

The actual research process for the sources provided by each newspapers was quite simple: I used to internal search function on each newspaper's website. Given that the German name of the Freedom Party 'Die Freiheit' (simply meaning 'freedom' in German) is very ambiguous and disadvantageous for such an online-search, I have typed in the name of the two party leaders the Freedom Party has had for time period under investigation, René Stadtkewitz and Michael Stürzenberger.

I determined the time frame from July 2010 (when Stadtkewitz was expelled from the CDU) until November 2013 (when Stadtkewitz appealed to his party members to join the AfD). The Freedom Party got founded on 27th October 2010, yet I started looking for relevant articles from July onward already because Stadtkewitz's exclusion from the CDU is an important prologue to the actual foundation of the Freedom Party, and news coverage on his persona at that time is highly likely to reflect his political agenda already – which, in turn, will result in a certain branding of him as a political actor even before the Freedom Party is officially founded. I went through all the articles that the internal search brought up, and analyzed them in-depth. Those were 44 articles in total.

---

45 Goethe-Institut: Tageszeitungen in Deutschland.
    http://www.goethe.de/wis/med/prj/dzz/tag/sz/deindex.htm, last accessed on 17.3. 2015
46 Brocchi, Davide: 'Die Presse in Deutschland', In: Cultura 21, published on 6.12. 2008.
    http://magazin.cultura21.de/kultur/wissen/die-presse-in-deutschland.html, last accessed on 30.1. 2014
47 Conradt, David P: The German polity. p.66

For the sake of clarity, my analysis of the media portrayal of the Freedom Party is divided into four sub-chapters, with each of the chosen newspapers/ journals occupying one chapter. Furthermore, I will translate the headlines of the articles directly into English (the German original is to be found in the footnotes), and present them in a chart before going into analyzing the content.

What is more, **I have decided to divide the duration news-coverage into four analytic phases**– again for the sake of clarity, and to master the sheet amount of source material better. The first phase is the **'foundation phase'** of the Freedom Party (including the aforementioned 'prologue' of Stadtkewitz's exclusion from the CDU). It roughly covers the time from July 2010 until February 2011. The second phase, starting of from March 2011, I call the **'consolidation phase'**, which lasts until August 2011. The third phase is the **'electoral campaign for the municipal election in Berlin'** – the first election the Freedom Party ever partook in, which lasts throughout September 2011. The final phase is what I call **'disintegration and radicalization phase'** which starts from October 2011 and stretches until November 2013.

Admittedly, the way I marked these phases is subjective, yet it serves the purpose of this study perfectly in enabling me to give a more structured account on the media coverage on the party for a duration of three years.

The selection of the media is based on the ambition to give a balanced picture of the news-coverage on the Freedom Party. By including publications in different formats, with various political orientations and target groups, this goal is most likely to be achieved. Moreover, all the chosen media have a wide circulation in common, and can safely be considered to play a prominent role in shaping public opinion in Germany. Ultimately, the objective of my study rests upon the conviction that the media acts as the '4th power' in any liberal-democratic state with a free press – various solid justifications for that approach will be displayed in the following sub-chapter 1.4.

The methodology for finding answers to my research question is quite simple: I am conducting a critical source reading, a critical content analysis on the digital articles on the Freedom Party.

I am not going to analyze these articles by **applying two different analytic frameworks to the sources**. First of all, my view is already guided by a thesis of **Frank Decker ('For obvious historical reasons – 'Hitler's shadow' – The German media has acquired 'anti-fascist-reflexes' that turn out in disfavor for new right-wing parties').** Most importantly, I approach the sources with the question in mind **whether there is bias towards the Freedom Party, and if 'anti-fascist-reflexes' can be identified in those articles through**, for instance, taken an openly critical stance on the party, or by using a false terminology for describing and labeling it.

Hence, I try to find out about the role of (politicized) media discourse in reproducing sociopolitical dominance. In this particular case it is the possible sociopolitical dominance that critical attitudes among leading news publications in Germany are holding over supposedly nationalist-conservative groups. Is there an unequal relation of power between those two groups to be discovered? Has the German media played an active political part in suppressing and marginalizing right-wing groups with an anti-immigration and anti-Islam-agenda?

Instrumental in testing Decker's thesis is an analytic framework that **Teun A. van Dijk** has developed in order to dismantle bias in media publications: **The ideological square.**

Van Dijk outlines his approach in greater detail in the chapter 'Opinions and ideologies in the press' in **'Approaches to media discourse'** by Allan Bell and Peter Garrett (ed.).[48] One of van Dijk's basic assumptions is that ideologies in general should not be seen as wrong or right, but as a tool to promote the interest of a particular group – according to van Dijk, this is their main social function.[49] Nonetheless, the social and political actors that hold on to a particular ideology of course do believe it is right and true; for ideologies represent the basic principles that govern social judgment of individuals and groups.[50] As a consequence of the dichotomy right/wrong and true/false that is tied to every group ideology per definition, many of those involve the representation of Self and Others, Us and Them.[51]

This representation is often polarized – *We are good, they are bad* – especially when conflicting interests are involved. Given that journalists also serve as the 'watchdog of society' (van Dijk)[52], they are necessarily ideological and juxtaposed to those movements they see as potentially dangerous to their idea of a 'good society' – they are not mere observers, but political actors (more about that in the next chapter 1.4). In any case, van Dijk continues, ideology is usually expressed indirectly in (media) discourse, yet the personal opinion/ judgment of the journalist will impact the semantics.[53]

Van Dijk mentions various semantics one can look into in order to dismantle ideological connotations in media portal. However, due to the sheer amount of primary sources (44 online articles and news pieces altogether in the main analysis), I have decided to focus on analyzing only four major elements:

---

48 Bell, Allan; Garrett, Peter (ed.): Approaches to media discourse, New Jersey, 1998.
49 Ibid, p. 24
50 Ibid, p. 24ff
51 Ibid, p. 25
52 Ibid, p. 25
53 Ibid, p. 27

1. Relevance – *How much newsworthiness is a phenomenon granted?*

Obviously, the amount of articles composed on the Freedom Party does already indicate in how far a particular media portal is willing to deal with them in the first place.

2. Surface structures – *headlines, leads of news reports might emphasize negative semantics to describe a phenomenon/ group.*

How are the articles and news pieces reporting on the Freedom Party entitled?

3. Lexical items - *Terms that express values and norms for the sake of a value judgment; e.g. 'terrorist', 'racist'*

The analysis of lexical items is of major importance, for they are the primary tool and most explicit way of branding, labeling and possibly even stigmatizing a political group.

4. Strategy of polarization/ 'the ideological square'

I Emphasize our good properties/ actions

II Emphasize their bad properties/ actions

III Mitigate our bad properties/ actions

IV Mitigate their good properties/ actions

This approach comes down to the question of balanced, fair news coverage. Are the news pieces composed in such a fashion, or is the party rather the despicable 'them', whose negative characteristics and aspects are highlighted in a disproportional manner?

Since a journalist's emphasis of the *us* in the ideological square is not to be expected in the news coverage on the Freedom Party (see chapter 1.4 for more details), I will focus on the portrayal of the Freedom Party as THEM with the guiding question: Are they portrayed according to van Dijk's ideological square (negative features highlighted, positive ones downplayed) and is there a significant usage of the rhetoric ploys which were outlined above in order to tackle the Freedom Party –'THEM' in this concept -- ***from the perspective of ideological opposition***?

1.5 The media – a political actor in its own right

My media-centered approach can be justified on many levels. First, it is noteworthy that publicity has always belonged to the preconditions of politics. The relatively recently coined term 'media democracy' and the fact that both political science and communication studies have similar roots support that argument on the semantic and respectively historical level.[54] Indeed, the political relevance of the mainstream media is indisputable and has its roots cause in its fundamental purpose of informing the public. As Niklas Luhmann put it: '*What we know about society, yes, the world we live in, we know through the mass media.*'[55]

Von Alemann and Marschall point out that the role of the media exceeds the one of mere informing purposes – in fact, they are political actors on their own and carry out power in their own right.[56] This is especially so as mass media are the link between the information-seeking public on the one hand and the parties on the other. In practical terms this gets executed through the media´s portrayal of the political scenery, and, most importantly through the way it is *interpreted* and *commented on.* The major significance of the media in shaping a party preference among the public is also closely tied to the fact that there is relatively little direct contact between the parties and its potential electorate.

As Jandura notes, parties have no claim to a favorable news coverage in Germany. Nonetheless, both democracy theory and the Basic Law suggest that citizens have a claim to **truthful, diverse and balanced news coverage**. Furthermore, there is **a right to equality**, which means that **all political opinions have a similar right to publication, and that these different opinions are treated equally and fairly by the media**. Finally, media coverage is supposed to be free of economic or political interference.[57]

Non-partisanship is generally claimed by the German media, a certain political orientation of the editorial staff can, however, easily be identified in various national newspapers.[58] This might in extreme cases lead to the distortion of a party´s image, especially if several major news publications 'join forces' against a party they are not in favor of.

Brettschneider remarks that the effect of influencing political opinions among the readership is

---

54 Von Alemann, Ulrich; Marschall, Stefan (ed.): Parteien in der Mediendemokratie, p.15
55 Ibid, p. 17
56 Ibid, p. 17
57 Jandura, Olaf: Kleinparteien in der Mediendemokratie, p. 42
58 Brocchi, Davide: 'Die Presse in Deutschland', in: Cultura 21 Webmagazin, published on 6.12 2008
 http://magazin.cultura21.de/kultur/wissen/die-presse-in-deutschland.html, last accessed on 13.1. 2015

most likely to occur when many different news publications cover a political phenomenon or a party in a similar fashion. He compares that impact with the mind-numbing efficiency of propaganda in totalitarian states.[59] Moreover, Brettschneider seeks to explain the persuasive effect of *consonant media coverage* on a party. He does so by pointing out that under such circumstances people can hardly inform themselves about competing views.[60]

In any case, media coverage has a huge impact on the party preference among the readership/ electorate, as Brettschneider argues. The way the media coverage is conducted – its **amount**, its **tendency** and its **consonance** – is fairly decisive for the political success of the parties in question. In practical terms, one can say that the *degree of mobilization* of the electorate gets influenced by the way of the mass media coverage is carried out. Hence, Decker's claim on the media's high profile position in potentially 'blocking' new right-wing parties' way into the public is absolutely justified – the power of the media can hardly be underestimated in that matter. This is exactly where my study takes its relevance from.

2. THE GERMAN MAINSTREAM MEDIA: 'ANTI-FASCIST-REFLEXES' TOWARDS THE FREEDOM PARTY?

2.1 Prologue: The Freedom Party's party program – what kind of right-wing party is it?

As indicated before, **the Freedom Party was formed as a break-away-party of the CDU**. René Stadtkewitz, a CDU-member of many years, ended up founding the Freedom Party because he was expelled from the CDU. This happened due to his rejection to turn down an invitation to the Dutch right-wing populist and member of parliament Geert Wilders (PVV/ Dutch Freedom Party). Upon the controversy of inviting Wilders to Berlin in order to have an open debate on Islam and integration, Stadtkewitz commented that the CDU is 'lacking the courage' to tackle that discussion for real. In Stadtkewitz´ reading, the Islam as such is an 'obstacle to successful integration into the German society'.

With regard to the initial ideological positioning of, the political and mental climate the Freedom Party has been founded it, it is safe to say that this party has **not** emerged from the right-wing extremist end of the political spectrum, but the bourgeois-conservative one. The leadership-troika of the early days - that declared the formation of the Freedom Party – consisted of the aforementioned

---

59 Von Alemann, Ulrich; Marschall, Stefan (ed.): Parteien in der Mediendemokratie, p. 61
60 Ibid, p. 61

René Stadtkewitz, fellow-ex-CDU member Marc Doll and ex-Pirate Party-member Aaron König. Upon the declaration of the formation of the new party, Stadtkewitz even explicitly said that he wants to keep right-wing extremists at bay: Whoever applied for membership should confirm that they have not been members of a right-wing extremist party[61].

In addition to that, he made clear that the Freedom Party should be firmly rooted on the grounds of the Basic Law[62], and promote a 'healthy' relationship with the German nation; hence, a patriotic attitude. When Stadtkewitz announced the formation of the Freedom Party, he pointed out that the party´s primary political concerns would be immigration and particularly Islam, public security, family policies, social and economic policies. Without having issued an official party program yet, demands such as the introduction of all-German plebiscites (designed after the Swiss example), a halt of continuous immigration and a zero-tolerance-policy towards criminals were voiced.[63] In quite a typical populist-fashion, Stadtkewitz instantly claimed that the established parties had primarily made policies for minorities in recent years. The Freedom Party, on the contrary, would make policies for the benefit of the majority.[64] What does this declaration of intent entail for the actual party program then?[65]

---

61   Beikler, Sabine; van Bebber, Werner: 'CDU bekommt Konkurrenz von Stadtkewitz'. In: tagesspiegel.de, published on 8.9. 2010, http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/ex-parteifreund-will-partei-gruenden-cdu-bekommt-konkurrenz-von-stadtkewitz/1929146.html, last accessed on 30.1.2014

62   The Basic Law is the German constitution. After World War II and upon the division of Germany, it was only designed as a temporary constitution for the old Federal Republic, hence the uncommon term

63   'Neue Partei Die Freiheit in Berlin gegrundet.' In: tagesspiegel.de, published on 29.10.2010, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

64   Beikler, Sabine; van Bebber, Werner: 'CDU bekommt Konkurrenz von Stadtkewitz'. In: tagesspiegel.de, published on 8.9. 2010, http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/ex-parteifreund-will-partei-gruenden-cdu-bekommt-konkurrenz-von-stadtkewitz/1929146.html, last accessed on 30.1.2014

65   The version of the party program which is outlined in greatest detail on the party's homepage is the 'party program 2.0', which was implemented on 23./24.2. 2013. Admittedly, this is long after the time frame of my study, and might thereby imply some logical problems when using it as a reference and 'compass' for the Freedom Party's ideological orientation between 2010 and 2013. Then again, I have examined the 'political guidelines' on the Freedom Party-website's archives (starting from September 2010) thoroughly, and those are in perfect harmony with the updated party program. There is no indication that core points of the party program have changed significantly over time – no 'ideological turn' appears to have taken place. On the contrary, the declarations of intent of Freedom Party-founder René Stadtkewitz on what the party's agenda shall be like, back in September 2010, the rudimentary extracts of a party program 1.0 from 29.10. 2010 that are publicly visible, the 'timeless' political guidelines on the website (that originate from the foundation phase of the party) and the 'party program 2.0' from February 2013 are essentially converging. Therefore it is my personal assessment as a researcher that the current, updated program does give a valid image of the Freedom Party's political agenda even back in autumn 2010. The information accessible in the digital archives of the Freedom Party's homepage that cover the time period of my study do support my argument.
  Political guidelines (from autumn 2010): http://diefreiheit.org/home/wofur-wir-stehen/
                                          http://diefreiheit.org/home/politische-leitsatze/, last accessed on 26.3. 2015
  Party program 2.0 (February 2013): http://diefreiheit.org/home/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Grundsatzprogramm-2.o-Endversion-1.pdf, last accessed on 26.3. 2015

a) Restrictive immigration policies

The party calls for an immediate halt of immigration, as immigration, 'especially from Islamic countries', has led to countless problems that have to be solved first before more immigration can take place. Effectively, the Freedom Party wants to close German borders to immigrants, and even asylum-seekers shall be treated firmly: If they do not submit documents that verifies the rightfulness of their status, they shall not be granted asylum. On top of that critical, not to say hostile stand that the party takes against immigrants (particularly from Islamic countries), the Freedom Party wants to examine the economic usefulness of the various immigrant groups – periodically, studies on that matter shall be undertaken and published.

The radically hostile attitude towards immigration expressed by the party definitely qualifies them as a right-wing populist political group. It is obvious that immigrants shall serve as scapegoats and the 'unwelcome Other'. Humanitarian aspects towards asylum-seekers get subordinated under the idea that immigrants of any kind are rather a burden to Germany than an enrichment. Judging immigrants primarily by their economic use leads to an unwelcoming atmosphere; if those immigrants do not turn out to be 'worthy' of the standards proposed by the Freedom Party, Germany should get rid of them.

Consequently, the Freedom Party wants to set the obstacles for immigration as high as possible – state funding for immigration shall be abolished completely, and those who migrate into Germany are supposed to fund that step all by themselves. By that, the Freedom Party wants to lower Germany´s attraction for immigration significantly.

b) A dynamic model of citizenship on the grounds of cultural assimilation

However, despite their clear favor of a dominant domestic German culture (*'Leitkultur'*), the party does not express any racist views. In contrast to Nazi-parties, the Freedom Party accepts the possibility of foreigners becoming German citizens.

The condition for that, however, is a 'successful assimilation' – only after 10 years immigrants shall be able to apply for German citizenship. 'The economic, mental and cultural adjustment to the basics of German society' is what the Freedom Party considers as a 'successful assimilation'; and that means no less than essentially giving up the former identity that ties the immigrant emotionally and culturally to his/her homeland. So even if there is no racist element in the anti-immigration agenda of the Freedom Party, a firm rejection of the idea of multiculturalism can be dismantled.

The term 'multiculturalism' largely covers that migrants are welcome to maintain their distinct cultural backgrounds and habits while adhering to a common constitution and coexisting peacefully with the 'majority culture'. The idea of multiculturalism is an egalitarian figure of thought that is juxtaposed to the nationalist-minded model of a strong domestic culture that the immigrants have to subordinate themselves under. It is safe to say that the concept of a strong domestic culture implies a superiority of this culture over the immigrants´ culture – in that sense, it is combating the idea of cultural relativism (the conviction that all cultures are of equal value).

Still, if one measures the Freedom Party´s take on 'successful assimilation' against the backdrop of fascist ideology, the party appears as modern and liberal in that regard. As I mentioned earlier, the question of how becoming a part of the nation is dealt with, can mark right-wing populists further off from fascist ideas – if the identity-concept is viewed as a dynamic one. No foreigner is doomed then to remain outside of the 'community of fate' that is the German people in right-wing reading. In that sense, the identity-question, one of the central characteristics of right-wing groups is rather dynamic, modern and liberal, and by no means determinate, discriminating and exclusive as in fascist ideology.

c) Anti-Islamic policies

In any case, the labeling of the Freedom Party as an 'Anti-Islam-Party' is justifiable when examining the point 'Political Islam'. The Freedom Party claims to have 'the knowledge' that Islam is 'not only a religion', but mainly 'a political ideology'. This claim covers Islam as a whole – and is in accordance with Geert Wilders´ portrayal of the religion as a demonic monolith.

The Freedom Party expresses the general suspicion that mosques do not only serve religious purposes but rather encourage Muslims to remain among one another, in so-called 'parallel societies', that are a tremendous obstacle of integration. Moreover, Islamic organizations per se are portrayed as breeding grounds for enemies of the Basic Law and liberal-democratic societies. Consequently, the Freedom Party calls for a thorough check of all active Islamic organizations in Germany – to find out whether or not they adhere to the Basic Law. The implication of that claim is that a significant number of those organizations is pursuing political goals that work against the Basic Law.

Those who teach the Qur'an are supposed to declare under oath that the Basic Law overrules Islamic law (the Sharia). In other words, the Freedom Party attempts to force Islam into the spiritual-private sphere and subordinate certain implications of the religion as such under the Basic

Law.

The general assumption is that the Qur'an and the Basic Law are incompatible. That leads to the general suspicion that pious Muslims who really try to live by the Qur'an necessarily have to disrespect the Basic Law. In other words: the Freedom Party portrays every Muslim as a potential enemy of the constitution, and hence, of the status quo. This (unspoken) criminalization of Muslims is in its basic implications an aggressive form of horizontal othering that is typical of right-wing populism. It remains unclear why the Freedom Party chose to use the term 'Political Islam' as their claims and suspicions cover Muslims in general. The hostility of the party is by no means only limited to radical-fundamentalist preachers that incite political violence – it stretches over the whole realm of Islamic belief and practice. Consequently, the party comes out in its true colors at the end of the paragraph as it states that it does all it can do to object the 'Islamization of Germany'. The latter is a common combat term in right-wing populist circles[66], and is generally disregarded in the center/left spectrum of politics. In other words: No serious established politician in Germany would make use of such an offensive and colored expression.

d) EU-skepticism

A further clearly right-wing populist view is expressed in the section 'Europe and international relations': EU-criticism. The party claims that the European Union is flawed by a lack of democratic legitimization. As an appropriate response to that, national plebiscites shall be held that allow Germany to take back legislative powers on to the national level. Any kind of financial support for EU-member states in economic crisis shall be undone, and ultimately the currency shall be abolished. The Freedom Party suggests that either a North-South division of the currency shall be introduced (in accordance with the economic conditions of the EU-member states in question) or a return to national currencies shall be prepared. The objection to an ongoing European integration (or, standardization, as critics would claim) in economic, legal and political terms is in accordance with the patriotic/ nationalistic world-view of the party . In fact, there is an ideological cohesion in the Freedom Party´s agenda identifiable, and that cohesion can easily pass as 'right-wing populist'.

All in all, there is no doubt that the Freedom Party does pass as a representative of the modern right-wing populist party family. With plainly **populist claims** (more **direct democracy**, making policies for the **silent majority**), aggressive **horizontal and vertical Othering** against (supposedly burdensome) immigrants and the European Union, the general **criminalization of Muslims,** the party's attempt of presenting itself as a moderate liberal-democratic one is lacking credibility.

---

66 Von Drach; Markus C. Schulte: 'Islamisierung ist ein ideologischer Kampfbegriff', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 22.12. 2014, http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/sechs-fragen-zu-pegida-islamisierung-ist-ein-ideologischer-kampfbegriff-1.2275618, last accessed on 17.3. 2015

e) Explicit distancing from right-wing extremist groups

Still, the party tries hard to present itself as a modern political actor whose primary concern is to defend individual freedoms, hence the party name. The Freedom Party's political program does not allow anyone to label them as fascist or right-wing extremist. Whenever the kinship of right-wing populism and fascism comes into play, **the makers of the program tried to mark their party off from 'Hitler´s shadow'**.

They did so not only by **rejecting chauvinist notions of nationalism**, but also by highlighting a dynamic, modern concept of citizenship and national identity that is not determinate by blood and birth. The most explicit attempt to step out of the 'historically contaminated environment', the Freedom Party tied to the matter of Antisemitism.

Whereas the NPD and DVU are/ were explicitly anti-Semitic, **the Freedom Party pledges itself explicitly to Israel**, which they call 'the only democracy in the middle-East'. Israel is regarded as an 'outpost of the Western world and culture in the Arabic sphere of influence', and shall therefore be supported at all costs. Even a NATO-membership of Israel is favored by the Freedom Party. However, the explicit pro-Israel-sentiment is closely tied to the idea that Israel and the West face a common enemy: The expansionist Islamic culture.

In that sense, it is questionable whether or not the Freedom Party is a genuinely pro-Semitic movement or simply using 'brotherhood' with Israel to both legitimize its own anti-Islam-agenda and keep sympathizers from Nazi-circles at bay. In fact, a firm pledge to Israel gives the party the tools to invalidate theories claiming that they are a fascist/ Nazi-movement.

In any case, the examination of the party program allow us the following conclusions: **The Freedom Party is a stereotypical modern right-wing populist party**. **We need to acknowledge certain links between right-wing populist psychology and the figures of thought making up the core of fascism; let alone, these ties belong to the realm of political theory.** The explicit democratic acceptability of a contemporary right-wing party can be measured against how it deals with those elements of its ideology that one might locate in the ideological gray zone bordering fascism. And in that case, the Freedom Party has explicitly stated various views that are at odds with traditional fascism.

This has important consequences for the terminology that is adequate and 'fair' in describing the

Freedom Party in media accounts. **After investigating key features of the party program, it is apparent that certain tags that are part of the political-ideological gray zone between right-wing populism and right-wing extremism cannot be used anymore.**

To clarify in which mindset I will approach the media sources in the next chapter, I will outline three different rhetoric levels in which right-wing populist parties commonly get framed in public discourse.

1. The neutral-descriptive level

The terms that are covered by the analytic evidence from the primary source of the party-program are the following:

Right-wing populist party; right-wing party; Anti-Islam-party; Islam-critical party; protest-party; Islam-opponents; enemies of Islam

For the sake of clarity, I will visualize all those analyzed articles that fit into this category in a green space in the summarizing charts at the end of each chapter.

2. The slightly tendentious level

There are other typical tags that get used in debates on right-wing populism which I count to a 'gray zone', meaning that they imply a critical stance on modern right-wing populist parties (they are tendentious), yet they are still based on what is actually to be found in the party program, only in an 'amplified interpretation' (e.g. through emphasizing unpleasant emotions like 'fear' or 'hatred'):

Islamophobia/ Islamophobes, Islam-haters,

This one will be portrayed in yellow in my summarizing charts.

3. The clearly biased level of open ideological opposition & reader-interference

Finally, there is a level where the analytic work of scholars such as Lewandowsky and Decker gets undone, because essentially all conservative-nationalistic parties right of the political center get painted with the same brush. It can happen that stereotypical modern right-wing populist parties as the Freedom Party get branded as something they are not. In other words: 'Right-wing' as such is a contaminated term in those accounts, and the 'anti-fascist reflexes' are at full play:

Right-wing extremist party, fascist party, Nazi-party, 'brown' party, racists

This one will be portrayed in magenta in my summarizing charts.

However, **these three ideal types give me conceptual and rhetoric orientation when examining the primary sources** of the media publications I have chosen – and closely follow Lewandowsky's and Decker's differentiation between modern right-wing populism and traditional right-wing extremism.

2.2 Süddeutsche Zeitung

Süddeutsche Zeitung's website, named sueddeutsche.de, contains twenty-one relevant articles on the Freedom Party. The chart below displays them in a compact fashion:

Chart 2: The articles by Süddeutsche Zeitung on the Freedom Party within the time frame of my study

Headline	Author	Published	Analytic phase?
'Right-wing populism: Geert Wilders divides Berlin's CDU'	Constanze von Bullion	23.7. 2010	foundation phase
'Between Geert Wilders and Martin Luther'	F. Fuchs; M. Kolb	23.7. 2010	foundation phase
'Berlin CDU expels member of parliament'	Constanze von Buillon	27.7. 2010	foundation phase
'Enemies of Islam in Europe and the USA – Internationale of Hatred'	Thomas Kirchner	15.9. 2010	Foundation phase
'Geert Wilders in Germany – Agitation speech in Berlin'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	2.10. 2010	Foundation phase
'Islam-critic Wilders in Berlin – 'Geert, you are my hero!''	Jan Bielicki	3.10. 2010	Foundation phase

'Homeless right-wing populists'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	11.1. 2011	Foundation phase
'Anti-Islam-Party The Freedom Party: Geert Wilders light'	Jan Bielicki	1.2. 2011	Foundation phase
'Comeback of the agitators'	Kathrin Haimerl	5.8. 2011	Consolidation phase
'Geert Wilders in Berlin – a lesson for the 'Finally-someone-is-speaking-up'-fraction'	Thorsten Denkler	5.9. 2011	Electoral campaign for the municipal election in Berlin
'Anti-Islam-campaign – right-wing-populist party starts petition'	Bernd Kastner	13.10. 2011	Disintegration and radicalization phase
'Freedom Party and PI considered as anti-constitutional in Bavaria'	Bernd Kastner	12.4. 2013	Disintegration and radicalization phase
'The dangerous venom of hatred'	Bernd Kastner	14.4. 2013	Disintegration and radicalization phase
'Islam-opponent Michael Stürzenberger: The great agitator'	Bernd Kastner	21.4. 2013	Disintegration and radicalization phase
'Trial against Islam-fiend Stürzenberger: Agitating with Himmler'	Bernd Kastner	27.4. 2013	Disintegration and radicalization phase
'Trial against Stürzenberger: No verdict for Himmler-poster'	Bernd Kastner	13.5. 2013	Disintegration and radicalization phase
'Right-wing populist insults police officer: 'Fuck off!''	Christian Rost	15.7. 2013	Disintegration and radicalization phase
'Defeat for Islam-opponent Stürzenberger'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	25.7. 2013	Disintegration and radicalization phase
'Banks close Stürzenberger's accounts'	Ekkehard Muller-Entrench; Bernd Kastner	30.9. 2013	Disintegration and radicalization phase
'Enemy of Islam Stürzenberger has been attacked'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	24.10. 2013	Disintegration and radicalization phase
'Islam-haters carry on'	Bernd Kastner	24.10. 2013	Disintegration and

			radicalization phase

What is striking immediately in the news-coverage of Süddeutsche Zeitung is that there is a strong focus on both the foundation and the disintegration phase of the Freedom Party, with next to no material on the consolidation phase and the party's first public election campaign in Berlin. Interestingly, the archives are not listing a single article or news piece on the party throughout the entire year 2012. The focus of the newspaper can be displayed as follows:

Chart 3: Distribution of articles by Süddeutsche Zeitung according to my analytic phases

Articles in total	Foundation phase	Consolidation phase	Berlin election	Disintegration phase
21	8 (38%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	11 (52%)

Before even going into a deeper analysis, it is already apparent that twenty-one articles on a political phenomenon/ a party in roughly forty months is not an exactly large amount. In statistical terms, and on the average, every other month the Freedom Party was granted the status of a newsworthy phenomenon by the editorial staff of Süddeutsche Zeitung. Hence, if we examine this particular newspaper's approach to the Freedom Party in mere quantitative terms first, then it is safe to say that the party did not get a considerably large media exposure during the time-frame of my research. Then again, in all fairness, we must be reminded that parties in Germany do not have a claim to either a particularly large or favorable news coverage. In other words: Simply acknowledging that a new party has not passed the filter of relevance for the editorial staff of a particular newspaper, does not allow us any conclusions as to whether the newspaper is ideologically opposed to the party in question – and therefore installs a 'Media embargo' on them – or simply considers the party irrelevant.

It must be noted though, that in van Dijk's analytic framework of the ideological square, the concept of 'relevance' is counted as one aspect of the ideological positioning of a given newspaper to a societal or political phenomenon. To put it differently: For van Dijk, a low news coverage on a party indicates a rather negative attitude among the editorial staff towards it.

More important is, however, the actual rhetoric that has been applied in the articles that did take the Freedom Party as a subject, as well as the themes that were tied to it. Hence, we move from the quantitative aspect of Süddeutsche Zeitung's news coverage on the Freedom Party to the qualitative one. Three means especially that are drawn from van Dijk's analytic toolkit are key in identifying the positive/neutral/negative approaches in the articles: The **surface structures** (=headlines), the

lexical items that are in use (as what does the party get described/ labeled?) and the degree to which negative qualities of the party are pointed out or emphasized (the **ideological square**).

2.2.1 The portrayal of the Freedom Party during the foundation phase (July 2010-March 2011)

The eight articles that Süddeutsche Zeitung published during the foundation phase of the party vary quite a bit in terms of their stance on the party. Some are openly critical, some are perfectly neutral and informative, and some apply an ideological opposition to Stadtkewitz's anti-Islamic political ideas in a rather subtle fashion.

Two articles by Constanze von Buillon (*Right-wing populism: Geert Wilders divides Berlin′s CDU'* and *'Berlin CDU expels member of parliament)* serve as an example of the latter.

Both of her accounts take the exclusion of Freedom-Party-founder René Stadtkewitz from the CDU as a subject, which happened due to his determination to invite Geert Wilders for a plenary discussion in Berlin. Von Bouillon describes the conflict of interest between Stadtkewitz and the CDU in an objective fashion, but it is noteworthy that no statement of Stadtkewitz himself is mentioned. Only criticism of CDU-local leader Henkel and representatives of SPD (Social Democrats) and DIE LINKE (Socialists) is displayed, which suggests that the invitation for Wilders was unacceptable.[67]

In her second article von Buillon mentions that Stadtkewitz had already previously caused the CDU trouble' by demonstrating against the building of a new mosque in his home district in Berlin, alongside the right-wing extremist NPD.[68] This implies that Stadtkewitz has rightfully been expelled, for his political convictions are partly overlapping with those of the NPD.

Even though von Buillon applies neutral surface structures in her two articles on Stadtkewitz's exclusion, and the the lexical items *('right-wing populism')* for covering the case are accurate, one can argue that she does indicate Stadtkewitz's supposedly 'bad qualities' by linking one of his former political actions to a like-minded campaign of the NPD. In a subtle manner, the **ideological square** (linking the opponent to something bad = the NPD) is, however, inherent in her articles.

An example of a perfectly neutral account of the very same subject, published by the same

---

67 Buillon, Constanze von: 'Geert Wilders entzweit Berliner CDU'. In: sueddeutsche.de, published on 23.7. 2010. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/rechtspopulismus-geert-wilders-entzweit-die-berliner-cdu-1.978523, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

68 Buillon, Constanze von: 'Berliner CDU wirft Abgeordneten raus'. In: sueddeutsche.de, published on 27.7. 2010 http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/reaktion-auf-wilders-einladung-berliner-cdu-wirft-abgeordneten-raus-1.980114, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

newspaper, is an article by F. Fuchs and M. Kolb (*'Between Geert Wilders and Martin Luther'*). The two authors leave it to the reader to come up with his own stance on an Anti-Islamic attitude in general, for they only explain the context of the conflict of interest between Stadtkewitz an the CDU. Introducing Wilders as the 'enfant terrible of Dutch politics', they explain why his uncompromising Anti-Islamism has alienated the CDU. The authors shed some light on Stadtkewitz's attitudes, and quote his statement that he would like an 'Islamic Reformation' to happen, but that Muslims are responsible for that themselves.[69] That particular article sheds light on both parties involved in the conflict, and does so in an informative, neutral manner, so the ideological square cannot be applied to this article. This, however, remains an exception in terms of how the articles published on the website of Süddeutsche Zeitung, have approached Stadtkewitz and the his new party until the end of the year.

An increasingly negative tone and more openly displayed criticism of Stadtkewitz's alignment with Wilders, and his anti-Islamic agenda was to follow throughout the following months.

The actual reason for Stadtkewitz's exclusion from the CDU, his invitation for Wilders, resulted in an event centered around a speech by the Dutch Islam-opponent. The article which covers this controversial happening ('*Inflammatory speech in Berlin'*) displays criticism from parts of the German government (Minister of Defense, Minister of Justice) who essentially claim that Wilders is a 'dubious politician who attacks the integration policies in Germany'. Nonetheless, both opponents of Wilders and Wilders himself are quoted, so a balanced coverage on the event is given. Nonetheless, the title of the article indicates a condemnation of Wilders' speech – as a consequence, Stadtkewitz's political ideas – that are fairly close to Wilders's - get openly opposed once again.[70] Jan Bielicki, who attended the event, mentions its initiator, René Stadtkewitz, only briefly, and focuses his account fully on Wilders. However, Stadtkewitz's goal to form the German Freedom Party is already covered in the article.[71] Even though Bielicki correctly speaks of 'right-wing populists' all the time, and thereby labels the recruitment pool for the nascent Freedom Party with correct lexical items, a negative tone prevails. Not only does he highlight the negative features of Wilders and his sympathizers by referencing established politicians' criticism of their agenda, also does he brand the speech as 'inflammatory' in the headline. This strong negative moral judgment is

69 Fuchs, F; Kolb, M: 'Zwischen Geert Wilders und Martin Luther', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 23.7. 2010 http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/cdu-berlin-rene-stadtkewitz-zwischen-wilders-und-luther-1.978765, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

70 'Hetzrede in Berlin', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 2.10. 2010 http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/geert-wilders-auf-deutschlandbesuch-hetzrede-in-einem-berliner-hotel-1.1007501, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

71 Bielicki, Jan: 'Geert, du bist mein Held!', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 3.10. 2010 http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/islamkritiker-wilders-auf-berlin-besuch-geert-du-bist-mein-held-1.1007543, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

the first the reader encounters regarding Wilders and Stadtkewitz, and hence, the logic of the ideological square is clearly at play here.

A similarly critical article on Wilders and Stadtkewitz, *'The international of hatred'* by Thomas Kirchner, was published two weeks before that and rounds up the initially critical, partly even openly hostile stance on Stadtkewitz and his sympathizers, that would soon make up the core of the Freedom Party. In this piece, the not-yet-founded Freedom Party is mentioned as a nascent political party that is addressing 'Islam-haters', who until that point had only channeled their anti-Islamic sentiments through discussions in internet-forums.[72] This way, the legitimacy of the party is fundamentally called into doubt by the author.

It is obvious, that until this point the majority of the articles which did take Stadtkewitz and his plans to form a new political party as a subject, are rather critical, and very much in line with van Dijk's logic of the ideological square. At this point it must be noted that at no point any of these articles tied the foundation of the party as a response to the 'Sarrazin-Debate', and, hence, as a result of a current discourse in the German society. By not pointing out this causal connection, one possible aspect that could generate more interest from readers, or attach more relevance to the party, was left out.

Nonetheless, the tone in the online articles of Süddeutsche Zeitung gets noticeably more neutral in the following months.

After the actual foundation of the Freedom Party on 27th October 2010, the party planned to hold its first party congress in a language school in Berlin. With short notice, the principal of the school had undone the agreement of letting the party use the facilities. As a result, the members of the Freedom Party were forced to gather outdoors, where they were disturbed by background noise caused by leftist counter-demonstrators.

The article *'Homeless right-wing populists'* covered this happening, and even though the turn of events would have invited to apply some mockery in the report, the author chose not to. However, sueddeutsche.de itself is using neutral terminology on the Freedom Party in this article. In order to describe the party´s political profile, they use the - at that point already commonly used - expressions 'new Islam-critical party' and 'right-wing populists.'[73] Even though the headline of the article contains a hint of irony (the party members are not literally 'homeless'), this article confirms

---

72 Kirchner, Thomas: 'Internationale des Hasses', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 15.9. 2010
    http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/islamfeinde-in-europa-und-den-usa-internationale-des-hasses-1.999936, last
    accessed on 14.1. 2015
73 'Obdachlose Rechtspopulisten', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 11.1. 2011
    http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/partei-die-freiheit-obdachlose-rechtspopulisten-1.1045138, last accessed on
    14.1. 2015

the trend within the editorial staff of Süddeutsche Zeitung to cover the Freedom Party in a rather neutral, descriptive fashion.

This trend is continued even within the first proper in-depth article on Stadtkewitz and the Freedom Party by Süddeutsche Zeitung: *'Geert Wilders light'*, composed by Jan Bielicki, is centered around the portrayal of René Stadtkewitz.

Stadtkewitz´s personal background is covered and individual attributes are highlighted by the author. Bielicki's key assumption is that Stadtkewitz is unfit for the task of being a 'tribune of the people'. Furthermore, he should not be considered as the 'German Geert Wilders' – mainly, because he is averse to provocative statements, which are identity-establishing for the controversial Dutchman. Consequently, Bielicki does not tie Stadtkewitz to any kind of political extremism, but mentions that the Freedom Party evokes constant negative response from leftist groups.

Notwithstanding, Bielicki portrays Stadtkewitz´s efforts to keep right-wing extremists at bay and build an image of the Freedom Party being located in the political center. After attending a party convention in a small town in the German federal state Hessen, the author describes a few of the participants – hence, members and electorate of the Freedom Party – and portrays them as former FDP- and CDU-members/ electorate, as much as 'frustrated non-voters'.

Hence, the author puts lesser emphasis on the right-wing/ nationalistic/ immigration-critical aspects of the Freedom Party, but rather portrays them as a protest-party of the bourgeoisie-camp that is averse to political extremism, and consequently presents itself as 'tame'.[74]

Arguably, this last article manifests a culmination point in a development from an initially rather critical attitude towards Stadtkewitz, where is Anti-Islamic agenda, and the corresponding alignment with Wilders are emphasized, to a more balanced one, that emphasizes the party's status as a new protest party that reaches out for non-voters.

As far as my first analytic phase, the 'foundation phase' (July 2010-February 2011) is concerned, there is a 'normalization' in the nature of Süddeutsche Zeitung's articles on the Freedom Party observable. Bielicki's in-depth-account is probably even so close to Stadtkewitz's self-image and the idea of a perfectly unproblematic, democratic reputation of the Freedom Party, that one might criticize it as too uncritical.

However, after examining the first set of articles covering the foundation phase of the party, we can complement parts of our initial chart as follows:

---

74 Bielicki, Jan: 'Geert Wilders light', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 1.2. 2011
http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/anti-islam-partei-die-freiheit-geert-wilders-light-1.1053605, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

Chart 4: The applicability of van Dijk's 'Ideological square'/ strategy of negative polarization in Süddeutsche Zeitung's articles on the Freedom Party during the foundation phase

Headline	Author	Date of publication	Ideological opposition?
'Right-wing populism: Geert Wilders divides Berlin's CDU'	Constanze von Buillon	23.7. 2010	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** right-wing populist *(neutral)* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *Yes*
'Between Geert Wilders and Martin Luther'	F. Fuchs; M. Kolb	23.7. 2010	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** right-wing populist *(neutral)* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *No*
'Berlin CDU expels member of parliament'	Constanze von Buillon	27.7. 2010	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** right-wing populist *(neutral)* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *Yes*
'Enemies of Islam in Europe and the USA – Internationale of Hatred'	Thomas Kirchner	15.9. 2010	**Surface structure:** *negative* **Lexical items:** Islam-haters *(negative)* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *Yes*
'Geert Wilders in Germany – Agitation speech in Berlin'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	2.10. 2010	**Surface structure:** *negative* **Lexical items:** right-wing populists *(neutral)* **Ideological square/**

			highlighting of negative features: *Yes*
'Islam-critic Wilders in Berlin – 'Geert, you are my hero!''	Jan Bielicki	3.10. 2010	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** right-wing populists *(neutral)* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *Yes*
'Homeless right-wing populists'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	11.1. 2011	**Surface structure:** *neutral (ironic)* **Lexical items:** right-wing populists *(neutral)* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *No*
'Anti-Islam-Party The Freedom Party: Geert Wilders light'	Jan Bielicki	1.2. 2011	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** Anti-Islam-Party *(neutral)* **Ideological square/ highlighting negative features:** *No*

In total, during the first seven months of René Stadtkewitz promoting his political agenda, and, eventually founding the Freedom Party, five out of the eight articles investigated have a tendentious or negative tone, making van Dijk's analytic framework of the ideological square perfectly applicable.

Nonetheless, it must be noted that quite a wide array of journalists composed articles on the Freedom Party for Süddeutsche Zeitung during that time period, which necessitated a varied range of opinions – and resulted in a relatively incoherent image on the Freedom Party up to this point.

2.2.2 The portrayal of the Freedom Party during the consolidation phase (March 2011-September 2011)

During the time period that I dubbed 'consolidation phase' only one article is listed in the digital archives of Süddeutsche Zeitung. In fact, Kathrin Haimerl's article, *'Comeback of the agitators'* was

published relatively shortly after the terror strikes of Oslo and Utoya, executed by right-wing extremist Anders Breivik.

Under the impression of these attacks, the author ties the Freedom Party's political profile to the political convictions of Breivik. Haimerl does so by establishing a link between one of the guest orators of an upcoming Freedom Party-convention in Berlin – Robert Spencer[75] – and Breivik. The Norwegian terrorist referenced Spencer's ideas in his manifest, that served as his justification of his cold-blooded mass murder. This leads the author to the conclusion that there are basic similarities in the political mindset of Freedom Party-members and Breivik himself. Executive board member Felix Strutting however, directly opposes that notion, and seeks to portray Breivik as a single perpetrator, the author continues.

Haimerl has a fundamentally critical stance on the Freedom Party, yet it is noteworthy, that he most negative portrayal in the article concerns a competitor of the Freedom Party, the Cologne-based right-wing party 'Pro Deutschland'. The author uses external authorities to discredit them. Political scientist Richard Stöss is quoted with calling 'Pro Deutschland' *'right-wing extremism light'*. And yet, being labeled as somewhat of a lesser evil is not exactly beneficial for the Freedom Party in this article. Political scientist Häusler states that *both parties have one essential attitude in common: hostility towards Muslims*, which, in his terms, passes as a *'religiously covered racism'.* In that sense, both the Freedom Party and Pro Deutschland try to appear as 'bourgeois protest-movements'.

Like Häusler, the author of the article essentially paints both parties with the same brush. As a consequence, the Freedom Party, being mentioned in one breath with the 'right-wing extremist light' Pro Deutschland and – through Robert Spencer – indirectly being connected to mass murderer Anders Breivik appears as 'a wolf in sheep´s clothing'.

The attempt of the party to portray itself as a moderate, conservative force in the political center, is portrayed as a means of deception. This negative judgment of Kathrin Hainerl gets more weight through the references to external authorities on right-wing populism. Felix Strübing's unwillingness to deal with Breivik´s deed is used against the party. This is done in so far as this fairly ignorant attitude is portrayed as a missed chance to clarify ideological matters within the party – at whose end a truly credible reputation of being a moderate protest-party could emerge. Since the party is unwilling to get engaged in a self-critical discussion on a possible ideological kinship with Breivik, this can be interpreted as the Freedom Party being 'found guilty on ideological

---

75 Spencer is a US American author and blogger running a website named jihadwatch.com. He does not differentiate between peaceful Muslims and religious fanatics, but rather regards Islam as a demonic monolith. On top of that, Spencer accuses Muslims in Western societies to simply mimic a peaceful, law-abiding attitude for the sake of deceiving Westerners.

terms'.

All in all, the Freedom Party is portrayed as a political group that is antidemocratic and dangerous at the core, and all the more so as they camouflage themselves as something they are not – a respectable, democratic alternative to the CDU and FDP. In a sense, this makes the Freedom Party come across as perfidious. Whereas, for instance, the NPD is openly nationalistic (to say the least) and hostile to foreigners, the Freedom Party is portrayed as a deceiving, more subtle player in the political arena – by representing something they do not openly admit. The true danger in that would be that people end up sympathizing with and voting for a party who they would not support if the party had come out in its true colors. In that sense, the article inherently claims an educational purpose as its ambition is to 'warn' people about the – supposedly unacceptable, antidemocratic – agendas of the Freedom Party and Pro Deutschland.[76]

As a consequence, it is safe to say that Haimerl's article is composed from an angle of fierce ideological opposition to the Freedom Party. The entire article is strongly built on van Dijk's **ideological square** and aims at portraying the Freedom Party as an enemy of the 'good society'. Certainly, relevance is granted to the party, yet this is done in the context of Breivik's terror attacks, and this context necessarily gives the account a negative connotation.

Chart 5: The applicability of van Dijk's 'Ideological square'/ strategy of negative polarization in Süddeutsche Zeitung's articles on the Freedom Party during the consolidation phase

Headline	Author	Date of publication	Ideological opposition?
'Comeback of the agitators'	Kathrin Haimerl	5.8. 2011	**Surface structure:** *negative* **Lexical items:** right-wing populists *(neutral)* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *Yes*

It is noteworthy, however, that Kathrin Haimerl is yet another 'new voice' within the editorial staff

76 Haimerl, Kathrin: 'Comeback der Hetzer', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 5.8. 2011
    http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/rechtspopulismus-in-deutschland-comeback-der-hetzer-1.1127643, last accessed
    on 14.1. 2015

assigned to compose accounts on the Freedom Party. In that sense, one can conclude, that until this point **there has been no coherent picture of the Freedom Party that has been painted by Süddeutsche Zeitung**. After initially depicting Freedom-party-founder Stadtkewitz as a 'trouble maker' for the CDU who has some ideological convergence with the NPD, it then appeared as if a 'normalization', hence, a more balanced, neutral nature of the articles, was on its way. On the contrary, in this latter article's case – the most openly hostile so far – a contemporary event at the time, a politically motivated right-wing terror strike by a single perpetrator, turned out to a 'game changer' in terms of approaching the Freedom Party.

2.2.3 The portrayal of the Freedom Party during the Berlin electoral campaign (September 2011)

The openly ideological opposition to the Freedom Party within the staff of Süddeutsche Zeitung intensified during the electoral campaign for the municipal election in Berlin.

The Freedom Party organized an event that can be termed as 'a party convention behind closed doors', for the general public had to purchase pricey tickets in order to listen to several speeches of like-minded guest orators, among them Geert Wilders.

Thomas Denkler attended the event for Süddeutsche Zeitung and composed an article (*'Lessons for the 'finally-someone-speaks-up'-fraction'*) that continues on a similar note as Haimerl's previous one.

Denkler dismisses the nature of the event by summarizing it as 'dumb speeches, simple answers to complex issues and many empty chairs in the hall'. What comes to framing the Freedom Party itself for the reader who is unaware of its existence or does not know what it is all about, the author finds not exactly flattering attributes. In fact, Denkler labels the Freedom Party as a 'small, gray party'. He highlights this by contrasting its status sharply with that of its 'star guest' Wilders – who holds a considerable amount of political power in the Netherlands – at that time his PVV was tolerating a national-liberal minority government. The author states that Stadtkewitz wishes to copy that success in Germany. Let alone, Stadtkewitz is 'no Wilders, but a small, gray man with minor rhetoric skills, who used to be a backbencher'. Moreover, the attendants of the event get painted with the same brush: 'Most of them are as gray as the party-leader.'

The motif of the 'wolves in sheep's clothing' that Haimerl has applied in her previous article,

resurfaces in Denkler's account as well. In fact, he draws a parallel between the misleading terminology that the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) used to describe itself (they called themselves democratic, yet were a dictatorship) and and the one of the Freedom Party. On that note, Denkler calls their official self-labeling 'citizen rights party' fundamentally into doubt.

Furthermore, he argues that the enthusiastic response that Wilders receives from the attendants is reminiscent to 'the gatherings of cults'. Hence, a lack of seriousness and credibility of the party and its electorate is implied.

Given that Stadtkewitz crosses the blurry lines between anti-Islamism and sheer xenophobia several times in his speech at the event, the author asks whether or not the Freedom Party and its sympathizers are fascists, right-wing extremists or Nazis. This explicit question touches upon the core of my study, and this author's conclusions are quite clear.

The author remarks ironically that the Freedom Party's firm commitment to Israel and its cause 'should suffice' to clear up doubt on the party's democratic attitude. Clearly, the author´s doubts remain. Nonetheless, Denkler mentions Stadtkewitz's attacks on the media for portraying the Freedom Party unfairly labeling (by labeling them as something they are not).

The climax of Denkler's doubts on the Freedom Party's democratic nature is reached by using a statement that Wilders makes in his speech against the party. The Dutchman claims that the Western culture is 'far superior to other cultures', and Denkler links this statement directly to the **'supremacy fantasies' of the National Socialist ideology**.

By making the border between Wilders and the Freedom Party on one hand, and committed Nazis on the other, fall like that, the author prepares one final verbal attack: He claims that 'This movement wants to wipe out Islam in Europe'.

This martial, violent choice of words (that has a fascist-connotation) clearly frames the Freedom Party as a quasi-fascist group that tries to lead the public astray by building up a misleading image of itself. All in all, Denkler makes his disapproval of the Freedom Party abundantly clear. He mixes efforts to demonize the party by comparing one specific figure of thought – Western cultural supremacy – to the National Socialist ideology, and thereby tries to answer the aforementioned question whether or not the Freedom Party is at its core fascist group.

Moreover, the lack of charisma of the party's top candidate Stadtkewitz would create a further obstacle for electoral success. As a result, the reader is left with the impression that the Freedom Party is a 'small gray party' that essentially is 'a wolf in sheep's clothing'. The party is portrayed as holding on to a cult mindset ('this Holy Mass of right-wing populists') which gets manifested in the

leadership-principle towards and 'worship' of Wilders, and fascist-elements as much as dumb xenophobia are plainly attached to the party.

Eventually, a reader who had previously been unaware of the party's existence is provided with two profound reasons to dismiss it from his memory – for one, it is introduced as a quasi-fascist group, and second of all, they are so 'gray' and marginal that they do not stand a chance in the oncoming election anyway. Regardless of the rather neutral surface structure of the article, its author's ideological opposition to the Freedom Party is obvious due to the aforementioned reasons. Especially Denkler's linkage of the Freedom Party to fascist ideas and National socialist supremacy fantasies dismantles that van Dijk's ideological square is at play here: the author highlights negative features constantly, and successfully writes the party down. This journalist's mindset can be seen a considerable obstacle for the party´s efforts to gain positive, or at least neutral, publicity.[77]

Chart 6: The applicability of van Dijk's 'Ideological square'/ strategy of negative polarization in Süddeutsche Zeitung's articles on the Freedom Party during the electoral campaign for the municipal election in Berlin

Headline	Author	Date of publication	Ideological opposition?
'Lessons for the 'finally-someone-is-speaking-up'-fraction'	Thorsten Denkler	5.9. 2011	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** right-wing populists *(neutral)* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *Yes*

2.2.4 The portrayal of the Freedom Party during the disintegration and radicalization phase
2.2.4.1 'The Anti-constitutional Turn' of Michael Stürzenberger

The Freedom Party failed to win any seats in the parliament of Berlin (Senat) in September 2011, and with this defeat, the party's status of newsworthiness instantly collapsed altogether for Süddeutsche Zeitung. There is one more article listed in their archives that was published relatively

---

77 Denkler, Thorsten: 'Lektionen fur die 'Endlich sagt es mal jemand'-Fraktion', in: sueedeutsche.de, published on 5.9. 2011. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/geert-wilders-in-berlin-lektionen-fuer-die-endlich-sagt-es-mal-jemand-fraktion-1.1138801, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

close to the defeat in Berlin (October 2011), yet after that, there is a nearly one-and-a-half-year-absence of the Freedom Party in the digital archives of the newspaper.

The Freedom Party surfaces again in the paper's news coverage the context of their local activities in Munich. Apparently, the resurgence of the party is tied to Michael Stürzenberger, a highly controversial figure within the party. Already in October 2011, the local association of the Freedom Party in Munich, led by Stürzenberger, started rallies for a petition against the building of a new Islamic center in the city[78].

These petitions of the Freedom Party in Munich carried on throughout the following year. Ultimately, these activities and the public speeches of Stürzenberger led the interior ministry of the federal state Bavaria (whose capital Munich is) to label this particular local delegation of the Freedom Party as ***anti-constitutional***.

It is noteworthy in this context that Bavaria was the first federal state to attach that label to the party, even though only five persons are explicitly referred to, with Stürzenberger being the most high-profile one among them.[79]

In order to understand this radicalization of the local delegation of the Freedom Party in Bavaria, the key role of Stürzenberger in this process needs to be emphasized. In fact, a controversy around his person on the first major nationwide party conference of the Freedom Party (which took place in Frankfurt in December 2011) had a major disintegrating effect on the party as a whole.

However, a fundamental factional dispute occurred when Stürzenberger was voted into the party executive. Whereas the moderate wing of the party wanted the Freedom Party to get rid of its image as an 'Anti-Islam-party', the radical one was all the more pushing for a fierce Anti-Islamic agenda. Stürzenberger – now a high-profile representative of the party – personified that factional dispute in so far, as he had published a highly controversial text online which was supported by the radical wing and rejected by the moderate one.

In that text, the freshly elected member of the executive board had demanded that Muslims who do not publicly denounce their faith, should be forcefully deported. Moreover, he suggested that a law should be introduced which forces all German citizens to read the Qur'an. Understandably, the moderate party wing called these ideas as 'unworthy of a liberal party', and it was noted that bourgeois sympathizers of the party would be shying away because of Stürzenberger´s voiced extremism. As a consequence of the controversy around Stürzenberger and the factional dispute,

---

78 'Rechtspopulistische Partei will Unterschriftenaktion starten', in: suddeutsche.de, published on 13.10. 2011 http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/anti-islam-kampagne-rechtspopulistische-partei-will-unterschriftenaktion-starten-1.1161620, last accessed on 11.3. 2015

79 Kastner, Bernd: 'Die Freiheit und PI gelten in Bayern als verfassungsfeindlich', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 12.4. 2013. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/bayern/einstufung-des-bayerischen-innenministeriums-die-freiheit-und-pi-gelten-in-bayern-als-verfassungsfeindlich-1.1647727, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

several federal associations of the Freedom Party quit the party.[80]

2.2.4.2 Local news-coverage on the Freedom Party's activities in Munich

In terms of the news coverage of the anti-constitutional Bavaria-delegation of the Freedom Party, three things need to be acknowledged.

First of all, even though Süddeutsche Zeitung is published nation-wide, it also has a local dimension in its news coverage: stories from Munich – where the publisher's house is located. After the Freedom Party's failure in Berlin and Stadtkewitz's loss of power, Stürzenberger's rise shifted the power and activities of the party most visibly to Munich. Hence, the Freedom Party became a local phenomenon again for a – on some level – local newspaper. This led to a set of relatively trivial local stories complied in the paper's digital archives, that would not be of much interest to a citizen not residing in Munich.

Second, it is noteworthy that Stadtkewitz's early Berlin-based Freedom Party and Stürzenberger's Munich-based delegation of the party differ. The early Freedom Party was closely associated with several former members of Berlin's CDU (and, to some degree, Geert Wilders), whereas Stürzenberger's Freedom Party delegation was labeled as extremist, and therefore monitored by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution in Bavaria. Consequently, different images and semantics could be expected in Süddeutsche Zeitung's portrayal of the Freedom Party.

The third point is picking up upon just that: Whereas the first three analytic phases were marked by journalistic accounts composed by a relatively wide array of authors, the last phase of my analysis is almost exclusively covered by one particular journalist: Bernd Kastner.

This is important in so far as the portrayal of the Freedom Party up to here was relatively heterogeneous, ranging from depicting them as a conservative-bourgeois protest-party to presenting them as quasi-fascist 'wolves in sheep's clothing'.

Given Kastner's relatively monopoly position in terms of news coverage on the Freedom Party from here onward, his ideological positioning towards the Freedom Party is decisive in what kind of coherent picture is given throughout the year 2013.

As it turns out, Kastner has a fairly open ideological opposition to the Freedom Party, which is obviously sanctified by the its official change in status to 'anti-constitutional'. The judgment of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution in Bavaria is backing Kastner up, and moves the Bavaria-delegation of the Freedom Party (and, hence, the whole party name) from early 2013

---

80 Klarmann, Michael: 'Zerfall einer Splitterpartei', in: heise.de, published on 17.12. 2011
    http://www.heise.de/tp/news/Zerfall-einer-Splitterpartei-2010188.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

onward closer to the Nazi-party NPD.

Kastner is accusing the Freedom Party of evoking broad-brush fears of Muslims, and of spreading Islam-hostile propaganda. Furthermore, the motif of partial ideological convergence between the Freedom Party and the NPD is applied again, once more in the context of their rallying against the new building of a new Islamic center in Munich. Hence, the Freedom Party is tied to Nazism one more time, and this trend clearly continues in Kastner's articles.

Not only does he term Stürzenberger's public speeches in Munich as *'propaganda'* and refers to his anti-Islamic agenda as *'the dangerous venom of hatred'*.[81] Moreover does Kastner repeatedly refer to the Freedom Party as *'extremists'*.

For his article *'The great agitator'* Kastner visited one of Stürzenberger's rallies in the pedestrian zone of Munich, and termed it 'scary'. Countless counter-demonstrators and Freedom Party-members vilified one another in a rough language: While Stürzenberger degrades his critics as 'leftist lunatics' and accuses Chancellor Merkel's CDU, the country's biggest catch-all party, of 'treason against the people', counter-demonstrators demand the Freedom Party-spokesman to 'shut the fuck up'. Consequently, Kastner, as an observer of the scenario, reaches the conclusion that 'there is no dialogue, only confrontation' between the two camps.

Moreover, Kastner implies that Stürzenberger appear as someone who is in denial of reality - while his party is officially labeled as anti-constitutional, he portrays himself as a defender of the constitution. Accordingly, he distributed copies of the Basic Law in the end – the very constitution they claim to defend against 'the Islamic threat'.

Stürzenberger's out-of-touch-with-reality-feature gets highlighted even more by emphasizing his dramatic and alarmist rhetoric, which make him appear to be obsessed with his opposition to Islam and the established parties.[82] Indeed, Stürzenberger is portrayed as an *extremist politician* whose rhetoric and conduct go far beyond the limits of what the public is used to by respectable, moderate politicians. The confrontational nature of his slogans and the tirelessness with which he held the rally give Stürzenberger a passionate, radical air. Consequently, one can attest to Stürzenberger, that he has a very emotive take on the subject 'Islam'. This supposedly irrational, 'noisy' and alarmist nature of Stürzenberger's anti-Islam activities led Kastner to call him *'The great agitator'* and resulted in a very negative framing, to say the least.

The following articles by Kastner on the subject are centered around further rallies in the streets

---

81 Kastner, Bernd: 'Das gefährliche Gift des Hasses', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 14.4. 2013, http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/rechtspopulisten-der-freiheit-und-pi-das-gefaehrliche-gift-des-hasses-1.1648379, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

82 Kastner, Bernd: 'Der grosse Agitator', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 21.4. 2013. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/islamgegner-michael-stuerzenberger-der-grosse-agitator-1.1654428, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

of Munich, executed by Stürzenberger and his associates, and pass rather as 'trivial local news'.

Once, the Freedom-Party-leader used a poster of SS-leader Heinrich Himmler in one of his rallies - for the sake of linking Islam directly National Socialism. The photograph of Himmler included the quote by the high-profile Nazi *('The Islam is very similar to our ideology')*, and was, according to Stürzenberger, used for the sake of its 'shocking effect'. The purpose of the Himmler-poster, the Freedom Party-member argued, was to educate the public about the 'parallels between National Socialism and Islam'. However, showing photographs of popular members of the Nazi-regime is disputable in legal terms in Germany.[83]

Consequently, Stürzenberger and his fellow party members who partook in the rally were taken to court, were the party-leader was reported to have defended his cause passionately. Ultimately, the trial ended with a verdict of acquittal, as the Himmler-photograph was shown only briefly in public, and was clearly not meant as a promotion of National Socialism.[84]

The conflict of Stürzenberger's methods of promoting his agenda with the German law and officials, led to a series of defeats for the party-leader, which were all covered. In July 2013 he, got sentenced to a fine because of insulting a police officer.[85] Later on, a court decided that Stürzenberger was not allowed to keep on photographing counter-demonstrators nor was he permitted to keep on using the megaphone constantly during his rallies – every ten minutes he had to lay it down for ten minutes. In other words: The alarmist nature of Stürzenberger's rally, essentially built upon attracting attention in a noisy fashion, got diminished through the sentence.[86] Another defeat followed for Stürzenberger in September 2013, as two private bank accounts of Stürzenberger, who by now had been repeatedly referred to as *'Munich´s noisiest Islam-opponent'*, got terminated one-sidedly. The banks official explanation for that step was the 'incompatibility' of Stürzenberger´s political agenda with the bank´s basic principles of the peaceful coexistence of people and religions.[87]

---

83 Kastner, Bernd: 'Hetzen mit Himmler', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 27.4. 2013.
   http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/prozess-gegen-islamfeind-stuerzenberger-hetzen-mit-himmler-1.1659838, last accessed on 19.1. 2015
84 Kastner, Bernd: 'Keine Strafe fur Himmler-Plakat', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 13.5. 2013.
   http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/prozess-gegen-stuerzenberger-keine-strafe-fuer-himmler-plakat-1.1671618, last accessed on 19.1. 2015
85 Rost, Christian: 'Ach, leck mich doch am Arsch', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 15.7. 2013.
   http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/rechtspopulist-beleidigt-beamten-ach-leck-mich-doch-am-arsch-1.1722140, last accessed on 19.1. 2015
86 'Niederlage fur Islamgegner Sturzenberger', in: suddeutsche.de, published on 25.7. 2013.
   http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/entscheidung-gegen-rechtspopulisten-niederlage-fuer-islamgegner-stuerzenberger-1.1730693, last accessed on 19.1. 2015
87 Kastner, Bernd; Muller-Jentsch, Ekkehard: 'Banken kundigen Sturzenbergers Konten', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 30.9. 2013.
   http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/rechte-partei-die-freiheit-banken-kuendigen-stuerzenbergers-konten-1.1784508, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

In October 2013, a Turk attacked Stürzenberger during one of his rallies, whose glasses got broken. The Turk got arrested and Stürzenberger filed a charge of personal injury and criminal mischief against him. Once the perpetrator was arrested, Stürzenberger carried on with his rally.[88]

In the final article within the time period of my research that is to be found in the digital archives of Süddeutsche Zeitung (from October 2013), Kastner proclaims that *'Islam-haters carry on',* yet he voices doubt on whether the Freedom Party will still be existent and functional at Munich's municipal elections in spring 2014. Kastner underlines this speculation by referencing the plentiful migration of Freedom Party-members to the AfD. On top of that, Freedom Party-leader Stadtkewitz had just recently resigned[89].

Regardless of the nature of these articles as rather trivial local news coverage which a) is not aimed at a nation-wide public and b) hardly contains any deeper political analyses on the Freedom Party, their sheer amount must be acknowledged. Within my four subjectively analytic phases, the 'disintegration and radicalization phase' is most extensively covered by Süddeutsche Zeitung, due to its partially local-newspaper character in Munich, and the massive shift of the Freedom Party's activities there after its crushing defeat at the Berlin election.

The official change of status of the Bavaria-delegation of the Freedom Party into 'anti-constitutional' by the German authorities has, in any case, sanctified a harsher and more critical language use for journalists in portraying it. This was, as it turns out, not continuously applied.

However, this chart summarizes the shift towards an ever-increasing polarization of the editorial staff of Süddeutsche Zeitung against the Freedom Party from 2011-2013:

Chart 7: The applicability of van Dijk's 'Ideological square'/ strategy of negative polarization in Süddeutsche Zeitung's articles on the Freedom Party during the disintegration/ radicalization phase

Headline	Author	Date of publication	Ideological opposition?
'Anti-Islam-campaign – right-wing-populist party starts petition'	Bernd Kastner	13.10. 2011	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** *neutral* *('right-wing populists; 'Islam-opponents')*

---

88 'Islamfeind Sturzenberger attackiert', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 24.10. 2013. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/kundgebung-gegen-moscheeprojekt-islamfeind-stuerzenberger-attackiert-1.1803130, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

89 Kastner, Bernd: 'Islamhasser machen weiter', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 24.10. 2013, http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/rechtspopulistische-partei-die-freiheit-islamhasser-machen-weiter-1.1802278, last accessed on 26.3. 2015

			Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features: *no*
'The Freedom Party and PI are considered as anti-constitutional in Bavaria'	Bernd Kastner	12.4. 2013	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** *negative 'Islam-haters', 'Islam-hostile propaganda'* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *yes*
'The dangerous venom of hatred'	Bernd Kastner	14.4. 2013	**Surface structure:** *negative* **Lexical items:** *negative 'extremists', 'agitating'* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *yes*
'Islam-opponent Michael Stürzenberger: The great agitator'	Bernd Kastner	21.4. 2013	**Surface structure:** *negative* **Lexical items:** *negative 'agitator'* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *yes*
'Trial against Islam-fiend Stürzenberger: Agitating with Himmler'	Bernd Kastner	27.4. 2013	**Surface structure:** *negative* **Lexical items:** *negative 'agitator'* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *yes*

'Trial against Stürzenberger: No verdict for Himmler-poster'	Bernd Kastner	13.5. 2013	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** *neutral* *(''Enemy of Islam')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *no*
'Right-wing populist insults police officer: 'Fuck off!''	Christian Rost	15.7. 2013	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** *neutral* *('right-wing populist')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *no*
'Defeat for Islam-opponent Stürzenberger'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	25.7. 2013	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** *neutral* *('right-wing populist'; Islam-opponent)* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *no*
'Banks close Stürzenberger's accounts'	Ekkehard Muller-Entrench; Bernd Kastner	30.9. 2013	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** *neutral* *('right-wing populist'; Islam-opponent)* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *no*
'Enemy of Islam Stürzenberger has been attacked'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	24.10. 2013	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** *neutral*

			('right-wing populist'; 'enemy of Islam') **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *no*
'Islam-haters carry on'	Bernd Kastner	24.10. 2013	**Surface structure:** *negative* **Lexical items:** *negative* *('Islam-haters '; 'enemy of Islam')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *yes*

As the chart above indicates, even in the process of the Bavarian Freedom Party's radicalization to an anti-constitutional group, where a negative media framing was indeed backed-up by the German authorities, **there is no coherent picture painted within the staff of the newspaper.**

Then again, it must be noted that **the majority of the local-news-accounts are relatively short, and do not – with a few exceptions- elaborate in greater depth on political or ethical questions**. On the average, in these articles, events involving actors from the Freedom Party get covered in a mere reporting fashion, and varying tags for the group get applied. The only exception in these local news in terms of analytic depth is Kastner's *'The great agitator'* which depicts the author's experience on one of the Freedom Party's rallies in a rather detailed fashion.

Interestingly, this journalist, Kastner, who has a monopoly position in reporting in the Munich-based Bavarian delegation of the Freedom Party, has not even used the same terminology or degree of polarization against the Freedom Party consistently throughout his articles either. In the more extensive, detailed accounts he did choose to speak up against them quite plainly by, in van Dijk's terms, applying a strategy of polarization against them, and highlighting their negative features, accusing the party of 'agitation', 'propaganda' and 'hatred'. In shorter accounts, he refrained to only label them as either 'right-wing populists', 'enemies of Islam' or 'Islam-opponents' .

Hence, this inconsistent terminology-use by Kastner in particular also represents the incoherence in portraying and framing the Freedom Party in general at Süddeutsche Zeitung. In so far, **we**

cannot identify clear patterns in the media portrayal of this particular newspaper, on the contrary, a relatively wide array of journalists composed accounts on the party, which partially differed significantly from one another. On one hand, there are a few articles that label the party as a bourgeois-conservative protest party that seeks to attract those 'homeless conservatives' that the 'Social-democratization' of the CDU has alienated . On the other hand, there is a considerable amount of accounts that label the party as quasi-fascists, link them to either the NPD or the Norwegian right-wing terrorist Anders Breivik, and accuse the Freedom Party of being 'wolves in sheep's clothing'.

2.2.5 Süddeutsche Zeitung's accounts on the Freedom Party: A relatively wide array of authors and opinions

The total result for Süddeutsche Zeitung in terms of the applied terminology looks as follows:

Chart 8: The distribution of neutral-descriptive, tendentious and openly critical terminology in the articles by Süddeutsche Zeitung on the Freedom Party within the time frame of my study.

Lexical item	Appearances (Articles altogether)
Right-wing populist	**9 (21)**
Anti-Islamic	**2 (21)**
Islam-critical	**2 (21)**
Right-wing party	**- (21)**
Protest-Party	**1 (21)**
Islam-opponents	**3 (21)**
Islamophobic	**1 (21)**
Islam-haters	**1 (21)**
Agitators/ extremists	**5 (21)**
Fascism-references	**1 (21)**
Racism-references	**1 (21)**
'Wolves in sheep's clothing'	**2 (21)**

By applying van Dijk's analytic framework of the strategy of polarization (the ideological square; emphasizing the opponent's negative features), my analysis has brought to light that **out of twenty-articles, nine have been neutral-descriptive, three have been tendentious (applying criticism in**

a rather subtle manner), and nine have been composed out of an ideological opposition to the Freedom Party, portraying it in a plainly disadvantageous fashion, by emphasizing its negative features.

In conclusion, the neutral-descriptive, 'fair' accounts are slightly outnumbered by the tendentious or clearly hostile ones. Apparently, the deep division over how to deal with right-wing populist parties is not only one among scholars and politicians, but also among the journalists of Süddeutsche Zeitung.

However, as stated before, the nature of the paper's coverage of the Freedom Party is neither particularly extensive nor especially coherent in its degree of polarization.

The one coherent aspect is, however, the theme that the party gets connected to all the time – its anti-Islamic agenda. Yet this is perfectly understandable and legitimate, as my analysis of main parts of the party program has shown: Anti-Islamism is one, if not *the* key characteristic of the Freedom Party's ideology.

All in all, **Decker's thesis of the 'anti-fascist-reflexes' of the German media can certainly be applied to some of the authors reporting on the Freedom Party**, such as Thomas Denkler and Kathrin Haimerl, and partially Bernd Kastner and Constanze von Bouillon. Nonetheless, **a good amount of other articles I have analyzed do not support Decker's thesis**.

In conclusion of the accounts of Süddeutsche Zeitung on the Freedom Party, one can speak of **ambiguous results and an absence of coherence.**

2.3   DER SPIEGEL/ SPIEGEL ONLINE

2.3.1 Articles during the foundation phase (July 2010-March 2011)

As he have seen, Süddeutsche Zeitung has not elaborated on the causal connection between the Social-democratization of the CDU (which generated a considerable amount of 'homeless conservatives'), the Sarrazin-Debate (which started a controversial discourse on the role of Islam in German society), and the actual foundation of the Freedom Party.

Rather, these processes and discourses were reported on as independent happenings, in 'bits and pieces'. In other words: The paper did not pick up a certain political climate at a time (an increasingly clearly expressed nation-wide criticism of Islam and multiculturalism), and did thereby avoid to 'boost' a new party which could have ridden on that sociopolitical wave. This party could have been the Freedom Party.

I am pointing this out, because DER SPIEGEL actually did portray the causal connections outlined above and the sociopolitical climate at the time in greater clarity.

Consequently, the paper paid quite close attention to the early stages of the Freedom Party's history. In fact, Stadtkewitz had already said three days after his exclusion from the CDU, that he wanted to form the Freedom Party, and SPIEGEL ONLINE covered his declarations of intent, while introducing him as an 'Islam-critic' to the readership. The Freedom Party-founders Stadtkewitz, Doll and König are quoted with their goal of founding a party that is '**less social-democratic than the CDU**, much more liberal than the FDP[90] and more Anti-establishment party than the Green Party'. Consequently, SPIEGEL ONLINE calls the nascent Freedom Party a 'protest-party'.[91]

Indeed, SPIEGEL ONLINE takes Stadtkewitz and his ambitions in terms of the aforementioned political climate more into account than the paper discussed previously. Both the 'Sarrazin-Debate' and the identity-crisis of Merkel´s CDU have lead to various speculations about the possible foundation of a new right-wing party. SPIEGEL ONLINE actively takes part in these speculations and portrays numerous potential leaders of such a new-party. Under the title *'Provocateurs, frustrated ones, procrastinators',* also Stadtkewitz is portrayed in an own sub-section. There, the ex-CDU-politician and Freedom-Party-founder is depicted as a somewhat frustrated political actor who solidarizes with the controversial social-democratic multiculturalism-critic Sarrazin and condemns the public 'hounding' that has taken place towards him.

Moreover, Stadtkewitz is characterized as a 'poignant Islam-critic' whose new party – not officially founded yet – is about to speak up against bureaucracy, the EU and political Islam and promote more direct democracy on all possible levels. In the end, the author questions the likelihood of the Freedom Party getting over the 5%-threshold in the municipal elections in Berlin 2011. As a root cause for his skepticism, he refers to the leftist-liberal orientation of Berlin. His speculations turned out as prophetic, as he predicted an erosion of the party in case no success would be gained in these municipal elections – the party´s first ones, after all. Not only did the author style the Berlin elections in September 2011 as the fateful ones for the Freedom Party that they actually turned out to be, also did he point out Stadtkewitz´s lack of charisma and renown. In that sense, the author has anticipated the Freedom Party´s evolution quite correctly in this short article – pointing out that the party´s fate would be closely tied to Stadtkewitz degree of endurance

---

90 The traditional German Liberal Party that was in a coalition with the CDU/CSU from 2009-2013, and in 2013, got voted out of the Bundestag (and several other federal parliaments) altogether.

91 'Islamkritiker Stadtkewitz will Protestpartei grunden', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 10.9. 2010 http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/ex-cdu-politiker-islamkritiker-stadtkewitz-will-protestpartei-gruenden-a-716851.html, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

for his political cause.[92]

In terms of the over-all amount of Freedom-Party-related articles in the digital archives of SPIEGEL ONLINE, my research, carried out by the website's internal search engine, has brought six accounts between July 2010 and November 2013 up to the front.

In a chart, they can be summarized as follows:

Chart 9: The articles by DER SPIEGEL/ SPIEGEL ONLINE on the Freedom Party within the time frame of my study

Headline	Author	Published	Analytic phase?
'Islam-critic Stadtkewitz wants to found a protest-party'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	10.9. 2010	Foundation phase
'Provocateurs, frustrated ones, procrastinators'	Florian Gathmann; Philipp Wittrock	14.9. 2010	Foundation phase
'The German Geert'	Martin Gutsch	3.1. 2011	Foundation phase
'Disaster for Islam-opponents – Freedom Party has to cancel party convention'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	11.1. 2011	Foundation phase
'Mr. Wilders from the far Right gets involved'	Yassin Musharbash	3.9. 2011	Electoral campaign for the municipal election in Berlin
'Online-research on right-wing populism: Brown front at Facebook'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	10.11. 2011	Disintegration and radicalization phase

---

92 Gathmann, Florian; Wittrock, Philipp: 'Fuhrungsprsonal fur Protestpartei – Provokateure, Frustrierte, Zauderer', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 14.9. 2010
http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/fuehrungspersonal-fuer-protestpartei-provokateure-frustrierte-zauderer-a-717143-7.html, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

Chart 10: Distribution of articles by DER SPIEGEL/ SPIEGEL ONLINE according to my analytic phases

Articles in total	Foundation phase	Consolidation phase	Berlin election	Disintegration phase
6	4 (66,6%)	0 (0%)	1 (17%)	1 (17%)

It is obvious that SPIEGEL ONLINE initially granted the Freedom Party the status of a newsworthy phenomenon. Given the causal linkage that the paper has established between the Sarrazin-Debate and the Social-Democratization of the CDU/CSU on one hand, and Stadtkewitz's ambition to found a new Islam-critical protest-party on the other, one can conclude that this relatively close attention SPIEGEL ONLINE has paid to an unestablished small party is tied to its objective to respond to a peculiar sociopolitical climate adequately.

In other words: Apparently, the Freedom Party appeared to be exactly the new right-wing party that would a) address the sympathizers of best-selling author Thilo Sarrazin and his immigration-critical and anti-Islamic theses and b) those CDU/CSU-voters who felt alienated by the course the party has taken in recent years.

However, as the chart above indicates, that interest of SPIEGEL ONLINE in the Freedom Party declined rapidly throughout the first half year of the party's existence.

Nonetheless, SPIEGEL ONLINE is listing one remarkably in-depth-article on the Freedom Party and Stadtkewitz in particular in its digital archives, which was first published in the printed edition of DER SPIEGEL. The account, composed by Martin Gutsch and entitled as '*The German Geert',* is especially remarkable in so far as its sheer length of seven pages emphasizes the attention the paper has paid to the new party as the possibly significant manifestation of the recent societal phenomena of the CDU/CSU's identity-crisis and the fierce anti-Islamic debates of the early autumn 2010.

In his article, the author gives detailed background information on the personal and political development of Stadtkewitz. Hence, one might very well call the article a portrait of the politician. As it appears, Gutsch has accompanied Stadtkewitz on his various trips to political meetings in the foundation phase of the Freedom Party, all over Germany, and even one conference of the Islam-critical 'Free Press Society' in the Danish capital Copenhagen.

The author describes Stadtkewitz as *'calm, hefting and no Nazi',* and utters the assumption that this might be enough to address frustrated center-right voters who no longer feel loyalty towards the CDU/ CSU – this is a direct link to the Social-democratization of the party that served as one

'midwife' of the Freedom Party.

Furthermore, Gutsch points out that at this point the Freedom Party was in a fast growing-process, and quotes Stadtkewitz regarding the municipal elections in Berlin in September 2011: *'Those will be decisive. If we fail to enter parliament, the party will be practically dead.'* Hence, the high degree of fatefulness of these particular elections was not only an assumption of a SPIEGEL-journalist, but an assessment shared by Stadtkewitz himself.

Moreover, the author sheds light on the ambivalent relationship between Stadtkewitz and Wilders. On one hand, he is not ashamed of admitting his admiration for the Dutch Islam-critic (*'He is not a right-wing populist. Geert Wilders is a great democrat and liberal.'*), on the other hand he clearly feels uncomfortable with the Dutchman´s extreme rhetoric (*'Sometimes Wilders exaggerates a little bit, but one should be allowed to intensify things for better understanding.'*) Stadtkewitz claims that the 'internal rejection of Islam' is a 'majority opinion' in Germany, and justifies that argument by referring to the intensity of the Sarrazin-Debate. In other words: Stadtkewitz appears to believe whole-heartedly in the rightfulness of his (and Sarrazin´s and Wilders´s) cause: Radical criticism of Islam and a firm anti-immigration agenda, particularly with regard to immigrants from Islamic countries. But Stadtkewitz is averse to poignant and provocative statements in Wilders´s fashion – such as comparing the Qur'an with Hitler´s 'Mein Kampf' and the call for outlawing the Holy Book of Islam in Western societies.

For most parts, the author portrays Stadtkewitz in a neutral, and almost empathetic fashion, and makes clear **that the Freedom Party-founder is not an extremist, but rather a patriotic and multiculturalism-critical actor within the bourgeois middle-class spectrum**. His lack of media literacy and charisma in general are as much highlighted as **the author's assessment that there is no justification for demonizing Stadtkewitz and his party with the Nazi-stigma**.

Nonetheless, the article contains also critical and partly even sarcastic undertones with regard to Stadtkewitz´s political convictions. For one, the author analyzes that the Freedom Party wants *'some kind of Switzerland in Germany – only with less mountains.'* This assessment is based on the party´s calls for a *'firm stand on immigration'*, *'fast alien´s deportation'*, *'outlawing of minarets'*, *'direct democracy through more plebiscites'* and the vision of a Germany that is *'EU-critical'*, *'Christian-occidental'*, *'with only a small minority of Muslims'*, *'patriotic'*, *'secure'* and *'rich'*. This is the author´s reading of the Freedom Party´s party program, and in quite a sarcastic manner he adds: *'They want to seal the country – since seldom any good comes from abroad. Only European bureaucracy, globalization, Islamists and foreign welfare cheaters.'* Eventually, Gutsch judges that Stadtkewitz's mindset (and the one of like-minded right-wing populist actors all over Europe) quite

negatively:

'They are sitting in their worldview as if they sit in a parallel society of defense and fear. But they believe that they are fighting for a good cause: For the sake of freedom, for the sake of modernity, for the values of the West. They regard themselves as opponents to the dark danger from the Orient. This makes their Islamophobia electable for many fearful voters.'[93]

The use of the term **'Islamophobia'** is, against the background of the rather empathetic portrayal of Stadtkewitz, surprising in so far, as it is located on the level of combat terms that brands an anti-Islamic attitude as a pathological illness. For that reason, as a term in debates on right-wing populism, multiculturalism and Islam in the Western world, I have counted it to the tendentious terms, alongside 'Islam-haters'. An equivalent of a combat term within the camp of multiculturalism-critics or opponents of Islam would be **'Islamization'**. Hence, I deem both terms highly problematic in contemporary discourses on the aforementioned (admittedly very controversial) topics.

However, even though Gutsch applies certain sarcastic undertones and the combat term 'Islamophobia', his in-depth-article on the foundation phase of the Freedom Party is all in all perfectly neutral, and mostly merely descriptive. It sheds light on Stadtkewitz´s motivation for his patriotic and anti-Islamic cause, and takes into account that the Freedom Party is a growing movement. Hence, it is exactly the kind of news-coverage that a) one might have expected in the aftermath of the Sarrazin-Debate, the Wilders-controversy and Stadtkewitz´s exclusion from the CDU and b) the kind of article, that Stadtkewitz himself might have wished for at the time (as a publicity-platform).

The author acknowledges the causal connection between the Sarrazin-Debate, the CDU/CSU's identity-crisis, and thereby provides the recipient picture of a new political right-wing force gaining ground in Germany. Moreover, Gutsch points out that the Freedom Party is ideologically closely linked to other right-wing populist parties all over Europe, such as the Dutch Freedom Party, the Dansk Folkeparti and the Sverigedemokraterna, which, makes it 'modern', and, in turn, marks it off from 'old' German right-wing parties such as the NPD, the DVU and the Republicans.

What is more, the article manifests a stark contrast to the strategy of active polarization against

---

93 Gutsch, Jochen-Martin: 'Der deutsche Geert', in: DER SPIEGEL 1/2011, p. 44-54, original quote:
   'All die Leute im Saal, die Redner, die Parteien, Stadtkewitz - sie sitzen in ihrem Weltbild wie in einer
   Parallelgesellschaft der Abwehr, der Angst. Aber sie glauben, sie kämpften für das Gute: die Freiheit, die Moderne,
   die Werte des Westens. Sie sehen sich als Kämpfer gegen die dunkle Gefahr aus dem Morgenland. Das macht ihre
   Islamophobie für viele Ängstliche wählbar.'

Stadtkewitz that a considerable amount of previous journalists have applied – Gutsch's account embodies quite the contrary, actually.

The final account by SPIEGEL ONLINE that is covering the foundation phase of the Freedom Party is on the cancellation of the Freedom Party's first party convention that took place with short notice. Not surprisingly, it essentially contains the same facts as the one published by Süddeutsche Zeitung , but additionally sheds light on who initiated the counter-demonstration: a civic organization called 'Bündnis Rechtspopulismus stoppen' ('Pact to stop right-wing populism'). Posters with the slogan 'This agitation does not come out of nowhere' are explicitly mentioned in the article and linked to a series of arson attacks on mosques. Demonstrators are quoted with the words 'The Freedom Party is launching a racist smear campaign against Muslims and immigrants'. The inclusion of this figure of thought by the demonstrators suggests that the Freedom Party is a party inciting violence – or at least one whose agenda threatens the societal peace. Stadtkewitz, however, is also quoted with the claim that the Freedom Party was planning on declaring a resolution against such arson attacks on the party convention – only that the convention was prevented from happening in the first place.[94]

In conclusion of the articles published by SPIEGEL ONLINE during the foundation phase of the Freedom Party, it is safe to say that they are significantly more neutral, or even favorable than those composed by Süddeutsche Zeitung.

First of all, the party's foundation is more than once depicted as a possibly significant one due to the explicitly acknowledged 'prologue' that led to it (the Sarrazin-Debate, the Social-Democratization of the CDU/CSU). To put it differently: Unlike the other paper's accounts, the ones published by SPIEGEL ONLINE and DER SPIEGEL do not portray the Freedom Party's emergence as random, or without a 'larger societal context'.

Second, the strategy of tying Stadtkewitz's former anti-Islamic activities (mainly demonstrations against the building of new Mosques), is not applied by SPIEGEL ONLINE-authors at this stage at all; on the contrary, Gutsch called the Freedom Party-leader 'calm, hefting and no Nazi', and also former SPIEGEL ONLINE-articles tied Stadtkewitz and his nascent party to the bourgeois-conservative segment of society.

In terms of van Dijk's ideological square, the following chart suggests rather favorable results for

---

94 'Pleite fur Islam-Gegner: Die Freiheit muss Parteitag absagen', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 11.1. 2011
    http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/pleite-fuer-islam-gegner-die-freiheit-muss-parteitag-absagen-a-
    738994.html, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

the Freedom Party with regard to SPIEGEL ONLINE's articles during the foundation phase.

Chart 11: The applicability of van Dijk's 'Ideological square'/ strategy of negative polarization in DER SPIEGEL's/ SPIEGEL ONLINE's articles on the Freedom Party during the foundation phase

Headline	Author	Date of publication	Ideological opposition?
'Islam-critic Stadtkewitz wants to found a protest-party'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	10.9. 2010	**Surface structure:** *neutral-descriptive* **Lexical items:** *neutral ('Islam-critic', 'protest party')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *no*
'Provocateurs, frustrated ones, procrastinators'	Florian Gathmann; Philipp Wittrock	14.9. 2010	**Surface structure:** *neutral-descriptive* **Lexical items:** *neutral ('Islam-critic',)* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features: partly**
'The German Geert'	Martin Gutsch	3.1. 2011	**Surface structure:** *neutral-descriptive* **Lexical items:** *partly negative ('Islamophobia')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *no*
'Disaster for Islam-opponents – Freedom Party has to cancel party convention'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	11.1. 2011	**Surface structure:** *neutral-descriptive* **Lexical items:** *neutral ('right-wing populist party', 'Islam-opponents')* **Ideological square/**

			highlighting of negative features: *partly*

2.3.2 Articles during the Berlin electoral campaign (September 2011)

One of the articles displaying the fiercest opposition to the Freedom Party was the account by Thorsten Denkler who attended the 'party convention behind closed doors' featuring a Wilders-speech on 3rd September 2011.

Yassin Musharbash attended the same event SPIEGEL ONLINE, and the more balanced take of this paper on the Freedom Party is continues after a half-year-absence of the party from the digital archives. The contrast between Denkler's and Musharbash's accounts is a shining example of how differently different journalists that are assigned for the same task can interpret and cover an event.

Whereas Denkler's polarization against the Freedom Party was abundantly clear, yes, polemic in its extent, Musharbash's criticism on the party's agenda is applied rather in the ways of irony. For once, Musharbash terms the main topics of the event as 'Getting the creeps from the Islamization' and 'hard-bitten EU-skepticism'. The author ironizes the language use of the orators by pointing out that, in other parties, fellow party members would be addressed as 'comrades' or 'friends', whereas everything would be 'one size bigger' among the right-wing populists – 'freedom fighters' or 'resistance fighters' are the terms commonly used by them. The organizers´ claim that the attendants had risked to get physically harmed by counter-demonstrators when getting to the venue, is used to justify this solemn terminology. Musharbash judges that as a 'enormous exaggeration' and points out that very few demonstrators had gathered hundreds of meters away.

Musharbash points out that Stadtkewitz made exhaustive references to Thilo Sarrazin in his speech – because the controversial best-selling author had already 'written down the truth', as Stadtkewitz put it. This 'truth' essentially covers the conviction that Islam and the Western liberal-democratic world are 'incompatible'. Since in a broader sociopolitical context, nothing had happened since the 'Sarrazin-Debate', Stadtkewitz claims, the Freedom Party is needed to 'force the establishment to take action'. Musharbash identifies the *vertical Othering* towards the German political elites and the European Union as the second big motif of the event. The author concludes that 'one notices quickly that the EU is regarded as an almost equally big threat as Islam here'. Wilders even references the EU and Islam as 'two powers who we need to resist against'.

Musharbash analyzes that the combining element in the audience´s mindset is the feeling of powerlessness towards these 'two powers' – the general impression that they are subordinated under something they disapprove of.

In contrast to Denkler, the SPIEGEL ONLINE-author tries to offer a psychological approach for a better understanding of the event's attendants (and, hence, the German electorate of modern right-wing populist parties). Neither does he judge the attendants by their appearance nor does he explicitly try to write Stadtkewitz down – Musharbash´s opposition to the Freedom Party is employed in a more subtle manner. In addition to the aforementioned ironizing of the Freedom Party´s self-image and language use, the author attempts to disenchant Wilders on the grounds of logical flaws in his speech. Hence, one can say that Musharbash expresses his criticism towards the party in a very calm way. For one, Musharbash acknowledges Wilders´s brilliant rhetoric skills, and – on a non-normative, merely technical level – speaks in rather high terms of them. As an example serves Wilders´s comment on the Norwegian mass-murderer Anders Breivik, who essentially shared the same fiercely anti-Islamic, anti-multicultural and anti-establishment mindset with Wilders, Stadtkewitz and their sympathizers. Wilders claimed that Breivik is none of them, and dismissed him as a psychopath. Despite similar concerns on the 'Islamization of Europe', one crucial dividing line between them and Breivik must be acknowledged: 'We are democrats, we believe in peaceful solutions'. And this self-image is used to attack Islam once again – 'That´s why we reject Islam,' Wilders continued, 'because of its violent nature'.

In spite of acknowledging Wilders´s remarkable rhetoric and populist skills and his confident, calm appearance, Musharbash dismantles the rhetoric 'trick' that makes the Dutchman so convincing. According to the author, Wilders simplifies contemporary matters according to his reading, and coherence appear logical because Wilders 'fudges' them. These simplifications cover the unwillingness to differentiate between Islam and Islamism and between Islam as a religion and Muslims as actual human beings. Moreover, immigrants in Europe (which per se are exposed to Western influence) and the domestic policies in Islamic theocracies are painted with the same brush. This lack of differentiation, this radical simplification, makes Wilders´s claims and anti-Islamic agenda appear as logically coherent, and the Dutchman comes across as a sheer know-it-all.

Nonetheless, Musharbash chooses not to outspokenly oppose Wilders, or to even demonize him. Instead, the author chose to unexcited dismantle the reasons for his persuasive power and leaves it to the readers to draw their own conclusions.

The Freedom Party is not demonized by the author, but he rather implies that the group is unintentionally hilarious (due to the emotive language use and the radically simplified black-white-

world-view). Essentially, **the author portrays the Freedom Party as a marginal party built on emotive populist rhetoric who attracts people that feel politically powerless**.

Musharbash does not highlight the xenophobic element in the party agenda, nor does he muse on any possible fascist implications in the party´s anti-Islamism. Of greater significance to the author is **the populist anti-establishment dimension of the Freedom Party that is centered around a strong sense of nationalism**. This nationalism is juxtaposed by the 'two powers' EU and Islam, and ultimately, the article portrays the party not so much in moralistic-normative dimensions but in abstract-descriptive ones.

In other words – the Freedom Party is illustrated as a group that embodies a political concept that opposes other political concepts. **They are not portrayed as aggressive agitators or xenophobic hotheads that border fascist rhetoric, but as yet another marginal actor in the political arena that works with the 'cheap tricks' of radically simplifying populism**. One gets the impression that the Freedom Party is not worth getting upset about it, as their flawed operational mode (due to the lack of differentiation) makes the party a caricature of itself anyway. Hence, the calm, subtle criticism that Musharbash applied to the Freedom Party appears rather sophisticated.[95]

Notwithstanding the rather sophisticated, subtle criticism of the Freedom Party (that appears all the more so when comparing it to Denkler's account on the very same event), it remains criticism nonetheless. Hence, we can conclude that SPIEGEL ONLINE's take on the party – after its initially neutral, partially almost favorable news coverage – has become more oppositional; the critical distance to Stadtkewitz and his party has become greater.

It is noteworthy at this point that this might have been affected by Breivik's terror-attacks on 22nd July 2011, which had increased the pressure on European right-wing populist parties due to significant ideological convergence between them and the Norwegian terrorist and mass murderer.

However, this logic of opposing the party due to ideological similarities to obvious enemies of democratic societies (or sheer criminals, as in Breivik's case), has been applied before by Süddeutsche Zeitung in linking Stadtkewitz to NPD-positions.

After Breivik, this same logic could be used all the more easily, for Breivik has even explicitly aligned his own ideology with Wilders, after all the great role model of Stadtkewitz and his party.

However, given that Musharbash's ironic, subtle and sophisticated criticism of the Freedom Party leaves it mainly to the reader to draw conclusions, an active polarization against the party cannot be

---

95 Musharbash, Yassin: 'Berliner Wahlkampf: Herr Wilders von rechts außen greift ein', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 3.9. 2011. http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/berliner-wahlkampf-herr-wilders-von-rechts-aussen-greift-ein-a-784243.html, last accessed on 30.1. 2015

satisfactorily identified, yet the article is still tendentious:

Chart 12: The applicability of van Dijk's 'Ideological square'/ strategy of negative polarization in DER SPIEGEL's/ SPIEGEL ONLINE's articles on the Freedom Party during the electoral campaign for the municipal election in Berlin

Headline	Author	Date of publication	Ideological opposition?
'Mr. Wilders from the far Right gets involved'	Yassin Musharbash	3.9. 2011	**Surface structure:** *neutral-descriptive* **Lexical items:** *neutral ("right-wing populists', 'right-wing group')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *partly*

However, the Freedom Party's local activities in Munich and the radicalization of the party that are tied to them, have, as I have shown, had quite a high profile presence in Süddeutsche Zeitung's news coverage on the party. This is, as mentioned before, in vast parts explicable through the papers partial character as a local newspaper in Munich. Consequently, the Hamburg-based DER SPIEGEL, which incorporates no local stories into its editions, has not covered these rather trivial Munich-related news.

Therefore, only one article is listed from the 'disintegration phase' (October 2011-November 2013). A further one from November 2013, reporting on the Freedom Party's 'member migration' to the AfD has been used as a secondary source in my introduction already, and is excluded here for its focus rests upon the AfD.

2.3.3 Articles on the Freedom Party during the disintegration/ radicalization phase (Oct 2011- Nov 2013)

The last article in SPIEGEL ONLINE's digital archives that concerns the Freedom Party – and that was composed long before the emergence of the AfD and its eventual outflanking of the Freedom Party – was published in November 2011, and continues SPIEGEL ONLINE's trend to polarize more openly against the party.

The article takes right-wing populist networks on the internet as its main subject, entitled as *'Online-research on right-wing populism: Brown front at Facebook'*. In that news piece, the author presented the results of a research undertaken by the British think tank Demos. In that research, right-wing populist sympathizers from all over Europe were interviewed on their motivations and backgrounds.[96] Even though the Freedom Party as such is not highlighted in the text, it is included in the outline of the parties the research is referring to. And in that sense, the party is labeled negatively by SPIEGEL ONLINE. Not only does the term *'Brown front'* (which refers to the online-sympathizers of the right-wing parties) have a militaristic ring to it, also does 'brown' as a 'political color' represent *fascism*. Accordingly, the photo illustrating the article shows a skinhead who shouts aggressively towards the observer. All in all, the way the right-wing parties in question are presented in the headline and the visual ways, is one-sided and firmly grounded in ideological opposition to them, The polemic imaging is surprising in so far, as the parties' multifacetedness in the transnational context is mentioned in the article. However, this article marks the culmination of two developments in disfavor of the Freedom Party at SPIEGEL ONLINE: First, the continuing marginalization and decrease of newsworthiness of the party, and second, the more critical, polarizing way in which the group is depicted.

Chart 13: The applicability of van Dijk's 'Ideological square'/ strategy of negative polarization in DER SPIEGEL's/ SPIEGEL ONLINE's articles on the Freedom Party during the disintegration/ radicalization phase

Headline	Author	Date of publication	Ideological opposition?
'Online-research on right-wing populism: Brown front at Facebook'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	10.11. 2011	**Surface structure:** *negative* **Lexical items:** *neutral (' 'brown front'')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *yes*

---

96 'Online-Studie zum Rechtspopulismus: Braune Front auf Facebook', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 10.11. 2011. http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/online-studie-zum-rechtspopulismus-braune-front-auf-facebook-a-796928.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

2.3.4 DER SPIEGEL's/ SPIEGEL ONLINE's accounts on the Freedom Party: From neutral-descriptive acknowledgment to a mixture of ignorance and opposition

The total result for DER SPIEGEL/ SPIEGEL ONLINE in terms of the applied terminology looks as follows:

Chart 14: The distribution of neutral-descriptive, tendentious and openly critical terminology in the articles by DER SPIEGEL/ SPIEGEL ONLINE on the Freedom Party within the time frame of my study.

Lexical item	Appearances (Articles altogether)
Right-wing populist	**2 (6)**
Anti-Islamic	**0 (6)**
Islam-critical	**3 (6)**
Right-wing party	**0 (6)**
Protest-Party	**2 (6)**
Islam-opponents	**0 (6)**
Islamophobic	**2 (6)**
Islam-haters	**0 (6)**
Agitators/ extremists	**0 (6)**
Fascism-references	**1 (6)**
Racism-references	**0 (6)**
'Wolves in sheep's clothing'	**0 (6)**

In conclusion of my analysis of SPIEGEL ONLINE's accounts on the Freedom Party, it must be noted that in quantitative terms, the paper has not given much weight to the party. Six accounts in a time period of roughly three years speak volumes in that regard.

Then again, it is remarkable that **the foundation phase of the party has a high profile presence in the paper's digital archives**. This can be interpreted as **a deliberate response of Germany's leading political journal to the sociopolitical climate at that time** which was first and foremost expressed through the Sarrazin-Debate. **The Freedom Party was, in that reading, a potentially important new political actor who wanted to pick up where Sarrazin had left off with his controversial best-selling book** *'Germany abolishes itself.'*

The articles from that time are marked by a predominantly neutral-descriptive tone, yet this tone got increasingly critical after Breivik's terror attacks in July 2011.

All in all, the initially rather favorable approach of SPIEGEL ONLINE (including increased attention to the Freedom Party and the acknowledgment of its possible future significance) turned into ignorance and, when the party passed the filter of relevance after Breivik, opposition.

Hence, we can speak of ambiguous results in terms of DER SPIEGEL's/ SPIEGEL ONLINE's accounts as well, yet there is more of a pattern identifiable in the case of this paper – a gradual ideological shift from neutral (and relatively detailed) news coverage on the Freedom Party to opposing and ignoring the party.

2.4 BILD

BILD, Germany's biggest tabloid, and usually referred to as 'the paper of the common man', covered the Sarrazin-Debate in a sensationalist fashion. Often, Sarrazin was rather portrayed as a brave actor who dared to voice the concerns of the 'silent majority'. BILD's exhaustive coverage on the hostile response by the German intelligentsia and political elite that Sarrazin was confronted with after the publication of his controversial immigration-and Islam-critical book, made him rather appear as a victim of the circumstances. In that sense, a rather sympathetic stance towards Sarrazin can be identified.[97]

Clearly, Stadtkewitz explicitly tried to associate himself and the Freedom Party to Sarrazin and his controversial theses. Stadtkewitz claimed that the Freedom Party is 'the party to (Sarrazin´s) book'[98]. When taking this into account, a rather exhaustive and possibly even favorable news-coverage of BILD could be anticipated.

This, however, is not the case. In contrast to the benevolent portrayal that the Springer Publisher's house (where BILD us published) conducted for the right-wing populist Roland Schill and his Schill-Party in 2001, the Freedom Party apparently did not pass the 'filter of relevance' for the editorial staff of BILD. This is remarkable in so far, as BILD is a sensationalist tabloid that has the reputation of having leanings towards right-wing attitudes and primarily attracting lower-middle class and working-class readers.[99] One can argue that this would have been exactly the potential electorate of the Freedom Party.

---

97 'Sarrazin: Meine Frau wird gemobbt, weil ich prominent bin', in bild.de, published on 20.1. 2011
    http://www.bild.de/politik/2011/schule/hetzjagd-auf-meine-frau-15380286.bild.html, last accessed on 17.3. 2015
98 Gutsch, Martin: 'Der deutsche Geert', in: DER SPIEGEL 1/ 2011
99 Goethe Institut: Tageszeitungen.
    http://www.goethe.de/wis/med/pnt/zuz/de8418130.htm, last accessed on 28.1. 2014

In fact, the BILD-archive is only listing four articles in total with relevance to the object of my study, most of them centered around the Wilders-scandal caused by Stadtkewitz as a CDU-member, hence a time preceding the actual existence of the Freedom Party.

On 29th October, BILD published a brief article covering the foundation of the Freedom Party. In fact, the editorial staff only used a composition by the German press agency (dpa). Stadtkewitz is termed as an 'Islam-critic', and is supposedly trying to 'offer frustrated non-voters a political home and compete with the outermost right-wing of the CDU'.[100]

On 11th January, the day when the party convention had to be canceled with short notice, BILD published a news piece prior to the cancellation, reporting on the change of location. Again, the piece has not been composed by a member of the editorial staff of BILD, but is a text by the German press agency (dpa). The Freedom Party is labeled as 'a new Islam-critical party' and Stadtkewitz as a politician who 'sympathizes with the Dutch right-wing populist Geert Wilders who is widely considered as an Islam-hater'.[101]

The actual cancellation of the party convention is covered on the very same day in yet another brief news piece composed by the dpa, yet the demonstration surrounding the failed event and Stadtkewitz's hostile statements towards the demonstrators are not covered at all.[102]

In fact, no other articles taking the Freedom Party as the subject are surfacing at BILD until the actual electoral campaign in the municipal elections in Berlin in September 2011, where in one brief news piece it is soberly stated that 'the Islam-critical Freedom Party left the Berlin voters cold'.[103] BILD did not have the ideological square in the works at all, for the news coverage they published on the Freedom Party was neutral, yet in van Dijk' terms, **relevance** was the key issue here: In contrast to SPIEGEL and Süddeutsche Zeitung, BILD did not grant the party any significant news worthiness at all.

The results of my study with regards to BILD's digital archives can be summarized in a compact fashion like this:

---

100 'Berliner Ex-CDU-Mitglied grundet neue Partei', in: bild.de, published on 29.10. 2010
  http://www.bild.de/regional/berlin/berlin-regional/berliner-excdumitglied-gruendet-neue-partei-14473822.bild.html,
  last accessed on 14.1. 2015
101 'Partei Die Freiheit tagt im Prenzlauer Berg', in: bild.de, published on 11.1. 2011
  http://www.bild.de/regional/berlin/berlin-regional/partei-die-freiheit-tagt-in-prenzlauer-berg-15443852.bild.html,
  last accessed on 14.1. 2015
102 'Sprecher: Parteitag 'Die Freiheit' fällt aus', in: bild.de, published on 11.1 2011
  http://www.bild.de/regional/berlin/sprecher-parteitag-die-freiheit-faellt-aus-15448038.bild.html,
  last accessed on 15.3. 2015
103 'Islamkritische Partei Die Freiheit lässt Wähler kalt', in: bild.de, published on 18.9 2011
  http://www.bild.de/regional/berlin/islamkritische-partei-die-freiheit-laesst-20030902.bild.html, last accessed on
  15.3. 2015

Chart 15: The applicability of van Dijk's 'Ideological square'/ strategy of negative polarization in BILD's articles on the Freedom Party in all analytic phases

Headline	Author	Date of publication	Analytic phase	Ideological opposition?
'Ex-CDU-member from Berlin is founding a new party'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	29.10. 2010	Foundation phase	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** *('Islam-critic', 'right-wing')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *no*
'The Freedom Party gathers in Prenzlauer Berg'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	11.1. 2011	Foundation phase	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** *('Islam-critical party')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *no*
'Party convention of the Freedom Party is canceled'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	11.1. 2011	Foundation phase	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** *('Islam-critical party')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *no*
'The Islam-critical Freedom Party leaves the voters cold'	*Not explicitly mentioned*	18.9. 2011	Electoral campaign for the municipal election in Berlin	**Surface structure:** *neutral* **Lexical items:** *('Islam-critical party')* **Ideological square/**

				highlighting of negative features: *no*

There is no speak of 'Islamophobia', 'Islam-hatred' or other tendentious terms in the articles on the Freedom Party published by BILD, yet none of those has an analytic-in-depth-angle, they are exclusively brief news pieces. They are essentially lacking any political-ethic positioning, and are rather superficial. Nonetheless, it must be noted that the only term for labeling the Freedom Party in political-ideological terms was 'Islam-critical'.

This does surely imply a rather neutral-descriptive, possibly even favorable take on the party (as there is no opposition to it identifiable whatsoever), let alone, the articles were so sparse and insignificant, that it did not really matter how the party was portrayed in the first place.

2.5   Berliner Zeitung

2.5.1 Articles during the foundation phase (July 2010-March 2011)

Given that t**he Freedom Party was founded in Berlin**, a closer investigation of the digital archive of a **local newspaper** will be useful. As mentioned before, Stadtkewitz himself styled the Freedom Party's first electoral campaign – the municipal one in Berlin – as a fateful milestone of the party right away, as its result would determine whether or not the party could carry on afterward.   Consequently, the fourth news-platform to be examined is the online-archive of the local daily newspaper 'Berliner Zeitung'.

Indeed, the total amount of articles on the Freedom Party is the second-highest among the chosen media, righter after Süddeutsche Zeitung, listing fourteen accounts altogether:

Chart 16: The articles by Berliner Zeitung on the Freedom Party within the time frame of my study

Headline	Author	Date of publication	Analytic phase
'Right-wing party after Dutch design'	Sebastian Höhn	11.9. 2010	Foundation phase
'Geert, we love you!'	Sabine Rennefanz	4.10. 2010	Foundation phase
'Muslims feel chased'	Sabine Rennefanz	14.10. 2010	Foundation phase

'The outsider'	Sabine Rennefanz	16.11. 2010	Foundation phase
'The Freedom Party in the open air'	Jan Thomsen	12.1. 2011	Foundation phase
'No more beer for right-wing extremists'	Birgitt Eltzel	28.1. 2011	Foundation phase
'Politician of the Liberal Party defects to the Islam-critical Freedom Party'	Sabine Rennefanz	15.4. 2011	Consolidation phase
'Fighting against Islam in a suit'	Thomas Rogalla	16.5. 2011	Consolidation phase
'Electoral campaign with Wilders'	Sabine Rennefanz	30.8. 2011	Electoral campaign for the municipal election in Berlin
'Mr. Wilders and his pale disciple'	Sabine Rennefanz	4.9. 2011	Electoral campaign for the municipal election in Berlin
Attrition warfare and dumb rallying cries'	Karin Schmidl	19.9. 2011	Electoral campaign for the municipal election in Berlin
'Crisis among Islam-haters: Fierce competition among right-wing actors'	Steven Geyer	21.9. 2011	Electoral campaign for the municipal election in Berlin

Chart 17: Distribution of articles by Berliner Zeitung according to my analytic phases

Articles in total	Foundation phase	Consolidation phase	Berlin election	Disintegration phase
12	6 (50%)	2 (16,7%)	4 (33,3%)	0 (0%)

The nature of the accounts on the Freedom Party published by Berliner Zeitung combines elements of those in DER SPIEGEL and those in Süddeutsche Zeitung.

For once, very much like DER SPIEGEL, Berliner Zeitung has mainly focused on the foundation phase of the Freedom Party. Whereas in DER SPIEGEL's case, this can be most plausibly explained through approaching the Freedom Party as a possibly important future political actor due to its self-proclaimed status as 'the party to Sarrazin's book', one must take the local dimension of Berliner Zeitung into account.

Hence, the trivial-descriptive aspect of merely covering local political phenomena that could be observed in Süddeutsche Zeitung's news coverage on the Freedom Party's activities in the streets of

Munich, does surface in Berliner Zeitung's accounts as well. Simultaneously, there are in-depth articles on the Freedom Party in general and Stadtkewitz in particular (essentially, a portrait) as DER SPIEGEL had published them as well.

Another striking similarity with Süddeutsche Zeitung in Berliner Zeitung's accounts is, however, that one particular journalist has quite a high profile presence in covering the Freedom Party. Whereas Bernd Kastner composed a great deal of the local news on the Freedom Party in Munich, in Berliner Zeitung's case the monopoly on articles on the party is with Sabine Rennefanz.

This could indicate a higher degree of coherence in the portrayal of the party, yet this could be assumed in Kastner's case as well, and yet, it did not apply. It remains to be seen what it will be like in the case of a Sabine Rennefanz and Berliner Zeitung.

On 11th September, Sebastian Höhn contributed a news piece entitled as *'Right-wing party after Dutch design',* Stadtkewitz's declarations of intent regarding the nascent new party are extensively quoted. Stadtkewitz stated that his party is not supposed to be 'a copy' of Wilders´s party – despite the similar name, and that Sarrazin's notions on immigration – primarily, it should be (economically) useful for Germany, and not be steered by humanitarian or idealistic principles – are key principles of the party program. Islam, in Stadtkewitz´s reading, is 'rather an obstacle' for that mode of – in the party´s reading – reasonable immigration and successful integration. Ultimately, Stadtkewitz´s ambitions of passing the 5% threshold in the municipal elections are expressed, as much as his 'dream' to run electoral campaigns with the Freedom Party nationwide.[104] Regardless of Stadtkewitz alignment with Wilders and the scandal that had culminated in his exclusion from the CDU, the article is perfectly neutral, and introduces the nascent Freedom Party as a potentially relevant new actor in Berlin's political landscape.

The aforementioned Sabine Rennefanz – assigned for most of the articles on the Stadtkewitz and the Freedom Party – attended both the first Wilder-event in Berlin that Stadtkewitz had organized and lost his CDU-membership for, and conducted an in-depth-interview with the Freedom Party-leader within roughly one month (October/ November 2010).

Her account on the Wilders-event is marked by a skeptical tone. For one, it 'feels a bit like a Pop-concert' to her, and she mentions that the event took place in a windowless room, which she links to a clandestine mindset of Stadtkewitz, the organizer – firmly isolated from the general public. This attempt to attach a certain obscure tone to the convention is reminiscent of SPIEGEL-reporter

---

104 Höhn, Sebastian: 'Rechtspartei nach holländischem Vorbild', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 11.9. 2010.
http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/ex-cdu-mann-stadtkewitz-gruendet—die-freiheit--rechtspartei-nach-hollaendischem-vorbild,10810590,10742054.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Gutsch's assessment that the new right-wing populists 'are sitting in their world-view of fear like in parallel societies'.

In accordance with her assessment of a deliberate isolation, Rennefanz argues in her article that the audience 'does not want to learn anything new', that it 'does not want to reflect' upon what Wilders claims – it only 'wants to be re-assured'.

Interestingly, the author includes a quick analysis of the audience as such – and states that out of the 550 people the vast majority consisted of males between 30 and 60 years of age. Most of them had a sophisticated middle-class clothing style – which leads Rennefanz to the judgment that 'fear and a lack of orientation among white middle-class men of middle age appears to be so great that they are longing for figures like Wilders and Sarrazin'.

In a manner quite reminiscent to the one already shown by several journalists from the papers analyzed previously (Denkler, Musharbash), Rennefanz includes a normative element into her article. Not only does she portray the convention as a clandestine happening, also does she take a critical stance on Wilders – and judges the entirety of the audience as 'fearful' and 'lacking orientation'. This way, the convention in itself comes across as some obscure gathering where a demagogic, rather unsympathetic politician ('cold glance') is circulating dangerous ideas. The event is described as something dubious ('windowless room', 'pseudo-scientific speech', 'the audience does not want to reflect, only be re-assured') that hardly passes as a convention presenting the personnel and voters of a new party that would offer a serious alternative to Stadtkewitz´s ex-party, CDU.

Consequently, Rennefanz ends her article on a neutral yet somewhat skeptical note: She states that Stadtkewitz is 'no Pop-star like Wilders, but he is riding on a wave of euphoria' – now he has to prove whether or not his new-founded Freedom Party does really represent the 'silent majority'.[105]

In her two following accounts, Rennefanz in sending somewhat contradictory signals regarding the Freedom Party to the readership. In one, '*Muslims feel chased',* she acts as a protector of Muslims and subtle opponent to critics of multiculturalism.

The author does so in claiming that the Sarrazin-Debate has led to a climate where it is 'en vogue' to label migrants as 'lazy, averse to learning and useless'. In response to that unpleasant trend, Rennefanz has interviewed several Muslims with German citizenship on their personal perceptions of being eyed suspiciously or being discriminated against. She justifies the emphasis on these

105 Rennefanz, Sabine: 'Geert, wir lieben dich!', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 4.10. 2010.
    http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/eine-gruppe-gleichgesinnter-feiert-in-berlin-den-rechtspopulisten-geert-wilders—ein-deutscher-ableger-soll-den-erfolg-seiner-freiheitspartei-kopieren--geert--wir-lieben-dich-,10810590,10746600.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

subjective contributions of a few Muslims by the results of a poll initiated by the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation, a political NGO with leanings towards the Social Democratic Party (SPD).[106]

The result expresses a noticeable resentment towards migrants, and particularly Muslims, among the German population. For one, 33% of the ones partaking in the survey, believed that migrants only want to exploit the German Welfare system, and 58% wanted to cut down the amount of freedom of practicing Islamic faith in Germany. Probably most alarmingly, 10% of the participants expressed a longing for a 'leader' who would rule the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants.

Rennefanz ties Stadtkewitz and the Freedom Party to that political climate by musing that they might benefit from that atmosphere. The article was published on 14th October 2010, prior to the actual foundation of the Freedom Party, and hence prior to any concrete party program – yet, Rennefanz labels Stadtkewitz's planned political project already an 'Anti-Islam-Party'. However, **the party is implicitly introduced as some kind of threat to Muslims** – which are, according to the structure and the logic of this article, victimized and needy.[107]

Hence, it is safe to say that the Freedom Party is already filled with a negative connotation because of having a supposedly 'inhumane agenda'. The article is composed in a way that would raise sympathy for Muslims and perceive the nascent party as nasty and xenophobic.

This active polarization against the party does, however, not continue in the next article by the very same author. Quite contrarily, Rennefanz gives an empathetic portrait of Stadtkewitz whose tone is reminiscent of that published by Martin Gutsch for DER SPIEGEL two months later.

In her account, Rennefanz characterizes Stadtkewitz as the one who carries the hopes of 'the new right' in Germany. Notwithstanding, she mentions that he 'speaks with a soft voice', and from there, draws the conclusion, that he 'by no means wants to appear as radical'.

Nonetheless, Rennefanz's previous article had somewhat portrayed the nascent Freedom Party as an inhumane threat to Muslims. This does not correlate with the picture she is painting of Stadtkewitz now. In an attempt to dissolve the seeming contradiction between the party's agenda and Stadtkewitz's balanced, calm appearance, Rennefanz examines what events had led Stadtkewitz on his anti-Islamic path.

She points out three events that are supposedly meant to explain an irrational, emotional take on

---

106 'Politische Stiftungen', in: Bundeszentrale fur politische Bildung.
   http://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/lexika/handwoerterbuch-politisches-system/40359/politische-stiftungen, last accessed on 19.1. 2015
107 Rennefanz, Sabine: 'Muslime fühlen sich verfolgt', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 14.10. 2010.
   http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/studie-belegt-wachsende-islamfeindlichkeit-muslime-fuehlen-sich-verfolgt,10810590,10748552.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Islam. For one, the Mosque-building project in his home district in Berlin was met with his fierce resistance, and Stadtkewitz felt like 'a star, a hero of the people', as he gave voice to anti-Islamic sentiment of the majority of the residents in that particular area – and, consequently, those people cheered for him. The second event is an arson attack on his house whose perpetrators never get caught. Stadtkewitz, however, assumed that there was a connection between the arson attack and his engagement against the mosque. 'He turned into a martyr,' as Rennefanz put it. As a consequence, he 'buried himself in the topic' and 'did self-studies on Islam'.

The third event was a robbery conducted by a presumably Turkish or Arabic perpetrator on his nephew, who thereby got severely injured in the face. Stadtkewitz tried to investigate the case and find the perpetrator on his own, but did not succeed in doing so. Stadtkewitz´s ex-fellow party members came to the conclusion that Stadtkewitz had become obsessed with Islam, and Rennefanz's portrayal of the past events **make Stadtkewitz´s anti-Islamic agenda rather appear as a personal crusade than a reasonable, balanced figure of thought**.

Even though no explicit dislike is expressed towards the Freedom Party-founder by the author, she applies a subtle criticism of Stadtkewitz. In fact, the subtext implies that Stadtkewitz is driven by personal motives that lie beyond the rational, and therefore he passes as a political actor that should not necessarily be taken seriously.[108] This strategy of empathetic explanation in order to dismantle logic flaws of the opponent's argument, and to attach a certain lack of seriousness to him, has been used successfully by Musharbash for SPIEGEL ONLINE in his account on the second Wilders-speech in Berlin already. Rennefanz is making use of a similar strategy here. In short: Stadtkewitz is not portrayed as a serious, trustworthy politician by the author.

The forced cancellation of the first party-convention in January 2011 got covered in greater detail by journalist Jan Thomsen than by his aforementioned counterparts of Süddeutsche Zeitung, DER SPIEGEL and BILD. For one, Thomsen includes more statements of Stadtkewitz clearly indicating his outrage on the last-minute cancellations of the rights to use the school premises.

Stadtkewitz is quoted with *'What is wrong with our country? How far is the Left taking this?'* The demonstrators are described as 'young people', and they were shouting slogans like *'Germany – never again!'* and *'Nazis, Freedom Party, CDU – no rest for racists!'*. Such statements, Stadtkewitz is reported to have said, dismantled the opponents of his party quite clearly. Though the term 'left-

---

108 Rennefanz, Sabine: 'Der Aussenseiter', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 16.11. 2010.
http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/ren--stadtkewitz-hat-eine-eigene-partei-gegruendet--damit-fangen-die-schwierigkeiten-erst-an-der-aussenseiter,10810590,10754804.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

wing extremist' was not used, one might rightfully ask which politically educated person would put Nazis and Germany's biggest and historically most influential post-war party, the catch-all party CDU, into the same context and label them as 'racists'. After all, the CDU is a party that has traditionally represented the majority of the German electorate. Despite this revealing portrayal on parts of the Freedom Party-opponents that were present on that occasion, they do not get mocked on by the author, yet the supporters of Stadtkewitz do. The response to the demonstrators shown from the Freedom Party-camp get emphasized: They were holding up Thilo Sarrazin´s book 'Germany abolishes itself' in a fashion 'how exorcists do it with the Bible'.

The final note by the author, however, highlights again the importance of the coming municipal election in Berlin. Since the German capital´s societal reality served as Sarrazin´s main example on the failure of immigration policies, the city´s German electorate should be predestined to embrace a party picking up those issues.[109]

The subtle element of ideological opposition against the Freedom Party is identifiable in the different ways the author describes the two camps: **Whereas he mocks people from the Freedom Party-camp as irrational laughingstocks (comparing their gestures to those of religious fanatics)**, the slogans of the demonstrators do not get commented on ('Germany – never again!', the accusation to the CDU of being racist). In that sense, there is an implicit solidarity with or least leaning towards the anti-Freedom-Party-demonstrators noticeable.

In another local news piece, entitled as *'No more beer for right-wing extremists'*, from 28th January, the subtly expressed antipathy towards the Freedom Party in the editorial staff of Berliner Zeitung continues. The party gets mentioned only briefly, yet is aligned to the activities of the NPD once again. In substance, the article covers the goal of the parliament of Berlin district Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf to discharge a waiter employed in the district's city hall. The waiter in question had rented out premises of the city hall's restaurant to members of the NPD for their gatherings. The local delegation of the Freedom Party had been founded in the very same premises, and at that point was planning on holding their frequent gatherings in the very same location in the future as well. A local politician of the Green Party, which had started the initiative against the waiter alongside the Social Democrats (SPD), essentially put the Freedom Party and the NPD into the same category by declaring them both something that needs to be opposed - 'Security personnel of the NPD, agitation against immigrants and Islam – we don´t want something like that – and especially not in our city halls.' He continued, that it is a 'fundamental question of sensitivity' that

---

109 Thomsen, Jan: 'Die Freiheit im Freien', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 12.1. 2011.
   http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/anti-islam-partei-muss-ersten-parteitag-nach-zwei-raumkuendigungen-
   absagen—die-freiheit—im-freien,10810590,10765324.html, last accessed on 19.1 2015

'right-wing extremists and demagogues are not permitted space in public premises'.

By declaring both the NPD and the Freedom Party as unacceptable, the Green Party politician aligns the latter to a significant degree to the former. In that sense, the Green politician made an attempt of tainting the reputation of one (new and yet relatively unknown) political opponent by tying him to a commonly despised party. The author of the news piece, Birgit Eltzel, reinforced that undifferentiated view of the Green Party-politician by **only making use of the term 'right-wing extremists' in the headline**.[110] Consequently, it contains a strong negative judgment that relates to the Freedom Party, and the terminology used by the leftist politicians in the article *('demagogues', 'agitation against immigrants and Islam')* are not filtered or commented on by the author. This might not be necessarily an example of a journalist's deliberate polarization against the Freedom Party, yet it is bad journalistic work, and the result is similar to applying the **ideological square** actively.

However, In terms of van Dijk's ideological square, the following chart suggests mixed results for the Freedom Party regarding Berliner Zeitung's articles during the foundation phase:

Chart 18: The applicability of van Dijk's 'Ideological square'/ strategy of negative polarization in Berliner Zeitung's articles on the Freedom Party during the foundation phase

Headline	Author	Date of publication	Ideological opposition?
'Right-wing party after Dutch design'	Sebastian Höhn	11.9. 2010	**Surface structure:** *neutral-descriptive* **Lexical items:** *neutral ('right-wing party')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *no*
'Geert, we love you!'	Sabine Rennefanz	4.10. 2010	**Surface structure:** *neutral-descriptive (with an ironic undertone)* **Lexical items:** *neutral ('right-wing', 'right-wing populist')*

110 Eltzel, Birgitt: 'Kein Bier mehr fur Rechtsextreme', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 28.1. 2011
http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/bezirksparlament-charlottenburg-wilmersdorf-will-dem-wirt-im-rathaus-schmargendorf-kuendigen-kein-bier-mehr-fuer-rechtsextreme,10810590,10768252.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

			Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features: *partly*
'Muslims feel chased'	Sabine Rennefanz	14.10. 2010	**Surface structure:** *neutral-descriptive* **Lexical items:** *neutral ('Anti-Islam-Party')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *partly*
'The outsider'	Sabine Rennefanz	16.11. 2010	**Surface structure:** *neutral-descriptive (with a slightly negative connotation)* **Lexical items:** *neutral ('new right', 'right-wing party')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *partly*
'The Freedom Party in the open air'	Jan Thomsen	12.1. 2011	**Surface structure:** *neutral-descriptive* **Lexical items:** *neutral ('Anti-Islam-Party')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *partly*
'No more beer for right-wing extremists'	Birgitt Eltzel	28.1. 2011	**Surface structure:** *negative* **Lexical items:** *negative ('right-wing*

			extremists') **Ideological square/** **highlighting of** **negative features:** *yes*

2.5.2 Articles during the consolidation phase (March-August 2011)

So far, a pattern reminiscent of the one identified in DER SPIEGEL's accounts can be observed in the articles of Berliner Zeitung: A gradual increase in polarization against the party over time. Another feature dismantled in the local-news pieces by Süddeutsche Zeitung surfaces in this case again as well: The absence of a coherent labeling of the Freedom Party by one and the same author.

Sabine Rennefanz expressed a fairly critical stance on the party before, yet also approached Freedom Party-founder Stadtkewitz in an empathetic fashion in her portrait of him. These contradicting signals towards the readership continue in a brief news piece from 15th April, again contributed by Sabine Rennefanz, the Freedom Party is not portrayed as arousing suspicion of being a particularly right-wing or even extremist political group – on the contrary, they are termed as 'Islam-critic', and are called a 'melting pot for frustrated CDU- and FDP-members'. The context of the article is about a local politician of the Liberal Party (FDP) – at that time a government party after all – changed sides and would run an electoral campaign for the Freedom Party now.[111]

The absence of a coherent image of the Freedom Party continues throughout the spring and summer of 2011. In a further in-depth article by Thomas Rogalla, *'Fighting Islam in a suit'*, published on 16th May, it gets emphasized that many politicians of the Freedom Party had previously been members of the CDU, the party's press spokesman had even been a member of the German Communist Party (DKP) in the 1970s. Using the label 'Anti-Islam-Party' and reporting on a party convention that he attended, the author portraits the Freedom Party as a political group consisting of a 'primarily male, well-off membership between 30 and 60 years of age'. Rogalla also mentions that the party convention he reports on has provoked 'the usual leftist counter-demonstration', but all in all the state of affairs was 'quiet'. In fact, the event had the air of a meeting of 'a sailors´ club or automobile club', according to the author.

---

111 Rennefanz, Sabine: 'Politiker der Liberalen lauft zur islamkritischen Freiheit uber', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 15.4. 2011.
http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/fdp-fraktion-in-friedrichshain-kreuzberg-wird-aufgeloest-politiker-der-liberalen-laeuft-zur-islamkritischen-freiheit-ueber,10810590,10782352.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Interestingly, Rogalla shares Stadtkewitz's statements expressed at the convention without a filter, and thereby paints a genuine picture of the Freedom Party's political agenda. Stadtkewitz stated that 'German policies have to sort immigrants, depending on whether they are willing to integrate or not'. At Berlin schools, 'the conquest of political Islam must be stopped', and 'we have to part ways with foreign families who let their children become criminals'. Moreover, the Freedom Party-leader shared his personal experience of visiting Turkish tea rooms in Berlin, where he had encountered Islamic 'religious guardians' who controlled if people lived according to Islamic law, the Sharia.

Moreover, Stadtkewitz attacked the 'tax-financed integration industry in Berlin' which should be 'profoundly looked into'. In fact, the author chose to not filter these statements or comment on them in any way, and hence the political convictions of the Freedom Party speak for themselves and are left for the reader´s personal judgment. Nonetheless, Rogalla paints the picture of a strongly leader-centered, male-dominated small-party that is highly immigration-critical and per se provoking negative response from 'leftist counter-demonstrators'. Thereby, the author indicates the hardened fronts between leftist pro-multiculturalism citizens and immigration-critical ones. In any case, the Freedom Party does by no means appear as an extremist party in this news piece, but rather as a relatively marginal political group. The party is portrayed as an association of well-off males with an immigration-critical, but no final judgments are made. None but one: The Berlin municipal election will determine the future of the Freedom Party.[112]

An equally in-depth, yet fundamentally differently colored article was published on 17th June 2011 by Jörg Schindler, entitled as *'The true Germans'*. The headline is a clear hint at the Finnish right-wing populist party *'Perussuomalaiset'*, at that time internationally referred to as the *'True Finns'*.

The title has two implications: First, the Freedom Party is directly counted to the same party-family that also Perussuomalaiset belongs to. Second, and more importantly, in the context of Germany's political culture – that in many ways has been impacted by the collective memory of the horrors of the Third Reich – the labeling of a party as 'The True Germans', implies that party is a nationalistic, possibly even elitist/ fascist group that practices an aggressive form of ethnicity-based Othering. In short: When taking Germany's political culture into consideration, **the very title of the article is a stigma in itself**.

However, the article is informative, yet composed in quite a skeptical manner. As his colleagues Sabine Rennefanz and Thomas Rogalla have done it before him, Schindler attended an event of the Freedom Party and built his article on the grounds of that experience. In fact, the author was present

---

112 Rogalla, Thomas: 'Kampf gegen den Islam im Anzug', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 16.5. 2011, http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/partei—die-freiheit--hofft-auf-acht-prozent-bei-der-wahl-kampf-gegen-den-islam-im-anzug,10810590,10787424.html, last accessed on 13.1. 2015

at the foundation of the Freedom Party´s regional delegation in Hamburg. He describes the area where the premises of that party convention are located, and states: 'There is actually very little one could be afraid of here.' In a scornful fashion, Schindler then portrays the party personnel that has gathered, and states 'fear wears suit and a tie here'. The author makes it abundantly clear that **he does not take the political concerns of the Freedom Party-sympathizers- and members in question seriously**: For one, a military officer in the group sees himself 'encircled by 'criminal immigrants' and another one in the audience is 'passionately afraid of the Islamization as if the Taliban were right at the door'.

Regardless of expressing mockery towards these Freedom-Party-sympathizers' political concerns, Schindler is quoting parts of Stadtkewitz´s speech without a filter. The party's top candidate stated that it is 'unbelievable that German Euros are getting transferred to Athens while potholes are growing at home'. Starting from this refusal of German financial aid for Greece, he then expressed that Turkey must not become a EU-member state, as it does not belong to Europe. The same applies, according to Stadtkewitz, to Islam, and if its expansion in Europe does not get stopped, 'won´t have any say in anything anymore in two or three generations'. At the end of his speech, Stadtkewitz expressed the hopes of being able to change the political landscape in Germany in a similar manner as the Green Party did in the 1980´s – forcing political issues onto the agenda that had been previously disregarded. Stadtkewitz, however, also uttered a fundamental condition for the possibility of such an evolution of the Freedom Party: 'We have to keep lunatics and idiots at bay.' Given that right at the start of the party´s history, he expressed the necessity to keep a distance to right-wing extremists and people with Nazi-ties, he probably first and foremost meant those with 'lunatics and idiots'.

Furthermore, the author underlines that the Freedom Party-members see themselves as 'the defenders of the Occident that are firmly rooted in the grounds of the Basic Law'. Other anti-Islamic groups in Germany, such as 'Pro Deutschland', had reached out to join forces with the Freedom Party, but Stadtkewitz had turned them down. Due to the fact that these groups had members with past right-wing extremist affiliations, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, had been monitoring them already – which was an unacceptable flaw, an exclusion criterion for Stadtkewitz.

Despite the dividing line between the Freedom Party and right-wing extremists being drawn repeatedly by Stadtkewitz, the author does either put no effort into differentiating or does not buy into Stadtkewitz's claims. Schindler states that 'the Freedom Party wants to *'fill the blank spot (= Germany) on Europe´s brown map'*. The term 'brown' in that context, however, is offensive, as

brown as a political color is commonly associated with Nazism/ Fascism. This is due to the fact that the Sturmabteilung (SA) in the Third Reich, the original paramilitary wing of Hitler´s NSDAP, was called 'brown-shirts'. As a matter of fact, the author of the article paints all new right-wing/ nationalist parties with the same (fascist) brush by speaking of the 'brown map of Europe', and he clearly counts the Freedom Party to that family.

Apparently, **the author opposes anything that he labels as 'right-wing'**, since he claims that 'right-wing actors are trying to find their electorate in the borderland of the liberal-democratic constitutional order, sometimes even beyond it'. It is clear that the author ties a right-wing political attitude per se to a dubious gray zone that is on the very margins of the constitution – as it appears, **'loyalty to the constitution' and 'right-wing policies' are rather opposite concepts in the author's reading**. As a consequence, he continues his scornful portrayal of the Freedom Party. He sarcastically states that it is 'the honorable task of every true German to fight against Eurabia', and that this battle takes place 'in the name of human rights against the evil Mussulmans'.

Based on the semantics and choice of words by the author, it is safe to say that he takes a very critical stance on the Freedom Party and is willing to disqualify them by both scorn and polemic semantics. Schindler colors his article with his own political orientations, which appear to be leftist-liberal and pro-multiculturalism. Unwilling to grant the Freedom Party the status of being a group that voices a legitimate political opinion – no matter if it is an opposite one – **he openly tries to write the party down and stigmatize it**. After highlighting 'fear' as the prime mover of the party´s electorate, Schindler ties the party to a xenophobia and fascism, and, finally, quotes the already-introduced, normative German scholar Alexander Häusler to justify his characterization of the Freedom Party: *'This is a movement that intensely threatens intercultural peace by evoking enemy stereotypes in a racist fashion.'*

This normative assessment **leaves the reader with the impression that the Freedom Party represents an unacceptable political agenda that is to be located in the borderland of racism and fascism**.[113] In that sense, it is Berliner Zeitung's most openly hostile article on the Freedom Party so far, and its assumptions and tones are reminiscent of the one by Thorsten Denkler in Süddeutsche Zeitung.

---

113 Schindler, Jörg: 'Die wahren Deutschen', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 16.6. 2011
    http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/newsticker/die-wahren-deutschen,10917074,10923412.html, last accessed on 16.3.
    2015

Chart 19: The applicability of van Dijk's 'Ideological square'/ strategy of negative polarization in Berliner Zeitung's articles on the Freedom Party during the consolidation phase

Headline	Author	Date of publication	Ideological opposition?
'Politician of the Liberal Party defects to the Islam-critical Freedom Party'	Sabine Rennefanz	15.4. 2011	**Surface structure:** *neutral-descriptive (with a slightly negative connotation)* **Lexical items:** *neutral ('Islam-critical party')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *no*
'Fighting against Islam in a suit'	Thomas Rogalla	16.5. 2011	**Surface structure:** *neutral-descriptive* **Lexical items:** *neutral ("Anti-Islam-party')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *no*
'The true Germans'	Jörg Schindler	16.6. 2011	**Surface structure:** *negative* **Lexical items:** *negative ("brown map of Europe)* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *no*

2.5.3 Articles during the electoral campaign for the municipal elections in Berlin (September 2011)

Not surprisingly, as a local phenomenon of Berlin, the municipal election in Germany's capital

got covered most extensively by Berliner Zeitung among the four newspapers I have chosen.

In its role as one of Berlin's leading local newspapers, Berliner Zeitung had initiated a poll in the run-up to the municipal elections in order to find out how strong the right-wing potential among the electorate was. Between 20th June and 29th June, the polling body 'Forsa' interviewed 1001 Berlin residents on matters such as xenophobia, Antisemitism, Chauvinism, Social Darwinism and playing downplaying National Socialism. As Karin Schmidl, Thomas Rogalla and Sabine Rennefanz state in their news piece *'Every 8th Berliner wishes for a Führer'*, the result of the poll suggests a strong potential of right-wing attitudes in Berlin.

The authors of the article introduced the right-wing parties competing for this electorate's votes as the Freedom Party, the NPD and Pro Deutschland. Berlin's potential right-wing electorate's convictions expressed in the poll, however, were mostly in accordance with the agenda of the NPD (e.g. claiming that National Socialism has good aspects and that Germany needs a string leader again). Quite oppositely, the Freedom Party is least extreme party among these three. In that sense, the dismantled 10% of right-wing (extremist) attitudes among the Berlin population do not necessarily suggest a strong standing of the Freedom Party with regard to this electorate, even if the party had been well-known among these voters.[114]

On one hand, it is certainly justified to count the Freedom Party to the right-wing parties competing for votes for roughly the same electorate. On the other hand, the content questions of the poll that was the article's main subject rather aimed at revealing right-wing extremist attitudes. In that sense, the Freedom Party, arguably, got aligned way further to the right than its political program would actually call for.

The more detailed approach and extensive news coverage of Berliner Zeitung around the Berlin electoral campaign is also reflected through the fact that Sabine Rennefanz contributed even two articles on the second Wilders-speech in Berlin. One was published in preparation of the event, (*'Electoral campaign with Wilders'),* and one covered the event afterwards (*'Mister Wilders and his pale disciple').*

It is noteworthy that Rennefanz, who holds the monopoly on Freedom-Party-related articles at Berliner Zeitung, had already attended the first Wilders-speech in Berlin in October 2010, and one of her main conclusions – deeming the the nature of the event as 'clandestine' – is picked up in her new articles again. This time she calls the oncoming Wilders-event 'a highly conspiratorial meeting'.

---

114 Rennefanz, Sabine; Rogalla, Thomas: 'Jeder Achte wunscht sich einen Führer'. In: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 8.7.2011. http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/forsa-umfrage—vier-prozent-der-berliner-wollen-rechtsextrem-waehlen-jeder-achte-wuenscht-sich-einen-fuehrer,10810590,10942386.html, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

due to the fact that the venue would only be sent via an SMS to registered attendants 24 hours prior to the beginning of the event – out of security concerns.

Rennefanz then sheds light on the reason for Wilders´s second visit in Berlin within one year. Whereas his first appearance served the purpose of helping the Freedom Party to get publicity and establish its name in the media, the Dutchman now attempts to get involved with the electoral campaign. This is, according to Rennefanz, especially necessary, as the electoral campaign has not gone smoothly so far for the Freedom Party. One of the reasons the journalist offers as an explanation is the 'invisibility' of top candidate Stadtkewitz. As the leader of a party under development, he had been traveling across the country to steer the formations of state associations of the Freedom Party in various federal states. 'The relative inconspicuousness of the Anti-Islam-Party,' as Rennefanz puts it, is partly also explained through the personality of Stadtkewitz. In contrast to 'the blonde Wilders with the cold eyes', Stadtkewitz is averse to 'poignant statements'. As a result of that obstacle, the Freedom Party´s own expectations of the election results of '8 % + x' have been lowered to at least breaking the 5%-threshold.

Rennefanz objects that even that goal is difficult to reach due to the competition among the right-wing parties. The author points out that both the NPD and Pro Deutschland try to attract a 'similar electorate' as the one the Freedom Party is reaching out for. Regardless of the Freedom Party´s urgency to gain more publicity in the wake of the oncoming elections, the organizers tried to portray the event as something bigger than a mere pre-election party. According to the Freedom Party, the event was first and foremost about the limits of free speech, which are supposedly confined within the boundaries of political correctness. On a similar note, the author highlights, that the right-wing populists 'want to in-scene themselves as an international movement', as the guest list including Spanish, Swedish and Australian people suggests. Interestingly, no one from Norway had been invited, Rennefanz continues, and thereby includes Anders Breivik into the picture. Stadtkewitz stated that 'this case should not get too much space, but would certainly be mentioned'. According to him, the Freedom Party needed to emphasize that 'criticism of the system and violence have nothing to do with each other'. The last say in the article, however, has the author, who soberly states: 'Breivik was a fan of Wilders too.'

Quite similarly to Musharbash's DER SPIEGEL-article, Rennefanz conducted a descriptive-informative style and took no polemic stance against the the Freedom Party. As the journalist of Berliner Zeitung who had conducted an in-depth-interview with René Stadtkewitz half a year ago, she has a descriptive and explanatory angle in her article. In her covering of the actual event,

however, Rennefanz chose to be more outspoken.[115]

In Rennefanz's following account on the actual event, entitled as *'Mister Wilders and his pale disciple'*, she questions the self-image of the Freedom Party as a citizen rights party ('who supposedly wants to be as citizen rights party'), and mocks the practical security regulations on the spot. The fact that the event is not sold out, gets highlighted, and then Rennefanz references Freedom Party-members' and sympathizers' criticism of the electoral campaign's operational mode. – the only big pre-election party was held behind closed doors and there were hardly any posters to be seen on the streets. Stadtkewitz opposed this criticism by stating that the electoral campaign should be entirely focused on September. Motorcades with loudspeakers were planned to spread the Freedom Party's message throughout Berlin in a mobile fashion. Afterwards, Rennefanz emphasizes the huge contrast between Wilders and Stadtkewitz (as the article's title hinted at already). The duo gets characterized as 'the hero and his admirer, the teacher and his disciple'.

Regardless of Stadtkewitz's apparent shortcomings as a top candidate of a populist party, the atmosphere in the hall has a populist air: It resembles the one of Thilo Sarrazin's public readings. Notwithstanding, the author points out that there are converging agendas between the Freedom Party and right-wing extremist parties – which Wilders and the Freedom Party do not want to be linked to at all. Wilders's remark on the supposed superiority of the Western culture over other cultures leads Rennefanz to the comment: *'The National Socialists used to speak in a similar fashion.'*

After elaborating on Wilders's critical stance on the European Union, Rennefanz draws the final conclusion that 'Sarrazin´s spirit was omnipresent' at the event. Not only had Stadtkewitz during his 30-minutes-speech constantly given praise to the controversial best-selling author. On top of that, Rennefanz claims, Stadtkewitz believes that the book had touched upon the *zeitgeist* in Germany, and *that Germany would need a party 'to save it from its abolition through Islam'*. The Freedom Party, the author argues, was meant to be the party to the book.

Polls suggested, Rennefanz continues, that 24 % of the electorate would vote for an Anti-Islam-party. Right after that she sharply contrasts those old figures with current ones: Only 2% of the Berlin electorate were planning on voting for the Freedom Party. The international guests at the event, Rennefanz continues, did not understand why Wilders´s winner´s formula – soft in social policies, yet tough against immigrants – does not appeal to the German electorate. A British guest of the event is reported to have pointed out 'the German guilt complex' (about National Socialist Rule,

---

115 Rennefanz, Sabine: 'Wahlkampf mit Wilders', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 30.8. 2011.
http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/der-umstrittene-hollaendische-islamgegner-unterstuetzt-den-deutschen-ableger-seiner-partei-wahlkampf-mit-wilders,10810590,10951374.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

World War II and the Holocaust) as a possible explanation.

Rennefanz, on the contrary, wonders if it all had been 'a misunderstanding'. She suggests that a great deal of Sarrazin's readers were satisfied with 'expressing their uneasiness through the purchase of a copy'. In any case, 'a right-wing populist of Wilders´s format' would not be in sight in Germany, Rennefanz argues, and he/ she would have a hard time to gain ground anyway, according to her.[116]

Obviously, Rennefanz has written off the Freedom Party already. Not only does she sharply contrast past polls of a more abstract nature (24% would vote for a new right-wing party) with current ones directly linked to the concrete party Freedom Party (2%). Rennefanz also puts emphasis on Stadtkewitz's lack of charisma, leadership skills and media literacy. Moreover, the operational mode of the electoral campaign (too few posters in the streets, the one big pre-election party behind closed doors, the planned use of motorcades with loudspeakers) gets portrayed in a rather critical fashion. **One gets the impression of a disorganized, chaotic small party that is lacking professionalism in its electoral campaign**. **More importantly, the author suggests that the wide-spread assumption that there is need for such a party after the 'Sarrazin-Debate' was 'merely a misunderstanding'. All in all, the reader is led to believe that there is no point in voting for the Freedom Party at all** – slightly fascist-rhetoric (the supposed supremacy of the Western culture), bad pre-election poll results of only 2% and a disorganized, unprofessional electoral campaign are three key-points of the negative portrayal.

The author's eventual questioning of the Freedom Party´s purpose in Germany and her thesis on the absence of the party's necessity for life – an actually significant electorate – weighs probably heaviest in the final conclusion. **Ultimately, the Freedom Party is portrayed as an inauspicious political actor who is fighting for a lost cause**.

On Monday following the election Sunday (18th September), Karin Schmidl's article on the election outcome of the three right-wing parties NPD, Pro Deutschland and the Freedom Party was published (*Losses despite attrition warfare and dumb rallying cries')* – which have received 'significant defeats' in all parts of Berlin. The author states that the Freedom Party had put 'extremely much effort to distance themselves from the other right-wing parties'. However, after rather detailed and pictorial portrayals of the campaigns by NPD and Pro Deutschland, the part on the Freedom Party is quite short in comparison. Schmidl merely mentions that 'anti-Muslim racism was the main subject', and that the conservative-bourgeois milieu was the party´s main target group. As a consequence of the aversion towards provocative slogans, the electoral campaign of the

---

116 Rennefanz, Sabine: 'Herr Wilders und sein blasser Schuler', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 4.9. 2011.
     http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/newsticker/herr-wilders-und-sein-blasser-schueler-,10917074,10929334.html, last
     accessed on 19.1. 2015

Freedom Party was 'quite colorless' in Schmidl´s judgment.[117]

As before in the case of Berliner Zeitung, there has been an account of ideological alignment of the Freedom Party with the right-wing extremist NPD. Even though the Freedom Party is accurately labeled as a *'right-wing populist'/ 'right-wing party'* have been used to label the Freedom Party, the author aligns them ideologically the NPD (in a broader perspective) and calls both parties' electorate 'racist'.

Two days later, a more profound article on the election outcome for the three right-wing parties, contributed by Steven Geyer, was published in Berliner Zeitung. The news piece, entitled as *'Crisis among Islam-haters: Fierce competition among right-wing actors'*, covers the actual election outcome and the responses from members and supporters of the parties in question. The NPD reached 2,1 % of the votes, Pro Deutschland 1,2% and the Freedom Party merely 1%. The author remarks that even all right-wing votes combined – 4,3% – would not have been sufficient to pass the 5% threshold to enter the Berlin parliament (Senat).

The devastating result for the right-wing parties gets highlighted by Geyer's reference to the high hopes that they had nursed prior to the election. The author argues that the right-wing scene had tried to equal Geert Wilders's success in the Netherlands, and that 'a nation-wide victory march' was planned to be started in Berlin. By means of 'anti-Muslim agitation' and 'the usurpation of Sarrazin´s theses', the author continues, the right-wing parties had wanted to get 8 % of the votes. Given the desolate outcome, the Freedom Party´s state association in the federal state Hessen, had left the party collectively. Geyer states that 'despair and depression are reigning among the Islam-haters in Germany,' as both the Freedom Party and Pro Germany are 'stone-dead' after the election. The author is grounding his judgment in the responses he analyzed in common internet-forums of Germany´s anti-Islamic scene.

According to the sources that Geyer incorporates in his account, the enmity between the parties was centered around different understandings of the necessity to explicitly distance oneself from Nazi-movements. Whereas the Freedom Party had put much effort into not being linked to fascist groups, Pro Deutschland had run the election with candidates formerly associated with the NPD, DVU and the Republicans. The divide that had opened between PRO-Deutschland and the Freedom Party on that issue, had manifested itself in mutual refusal of possible cooperation.

Freedom Party-members accused PRO-Deutschland of harming 'the Islam-critical project' by

---

117 Schmidl, Karin: 'Verluste trotz Materialschlacht und dumpfer Parolen', in berliner-zeitung.de, published on 18.9. 2011. http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/newsticker/materialschlacht-und-dumpfe-parolen,10917074,10930268.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

allowing ex-NPD members to run elections for their party, and by using symbols that imply a 'broad-brush agitation against Muslims'. According to the Freedom Party-sympathizers at politically incorrect, these two factors alone had damaged the 'Islam-critical scene as much as Anders Breivik'.[118]

   All in all, Geyer's account is informative and does shed light on the different shades of right-wing attitudes among the parties, yet ultimately they are rather depicted as akin to one another than different in key aspects (like their stance on right-wing extremists). Hence, this article again manifests an attempt to align the Freedom Party with the far right, and the author's accusation of all parties using 'anti-Muslim agitation' continues the motif of portraying the party as harmful to society due to its 'inhumane agenda'.

All in all, Berliner Zeitung's take on the Freedom Party during the electoral campaign for the municipal election in Berlin and shortly after it can be summarized as follows:

Chart 20: The applicability of van Dijk's 'Ideological square'/ strategy of negative polarization in Berliner Zeitung's articles on the Freedom Party during the electoral campaign for the municipal election in Berlin

Headline	Author	Date of publication	Ideological opposition?
'Electoral campaign with Wilders'	Sabine Rennefanz	30.8. 2011	**Surface structure:** *neutral-descriptive* **Lexical items:** *neutral ("right-wing populists')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *partly*
'Mr. Wilders and his pale disciple'	Sabine Rennefanz	4.9. 2011	**Surface structure:** *neutral-descriptive* **Lexical items:** *neutral ("right-wing populists')*

---

118 Geyer, Steven: 'Hauen und Stechen unter Rechten', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 21.9. 2011.
    http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/neue-rechte/krise-bei-islamhassern-hauen-und-stechen-unter-
    rechten,10911114,10879706.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

			Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features: *yes*
'Attrition warfare and dumb rallying cries'	Karin Schmidl	19.9. 2011	**Surface structure:** *negative* **Lexical items:** *negative ("anti-Muslim racism')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *yes*
'Crisis among Islam-haters: Fierce competition among right-wing actors'	Steven Geyer	21.9. 2011	**Surface structure:** *negative* **Lexical items:** *negative ('anti-Muslim agitation, 'Islam-haters')* **Ideological square/ highlighting of negative features:** *yes*

2.5.4 Berliner Zeitung's accounts on the Freedom Party: The most outspoken critic

The total result for Berliner Zeitung in terms of the applied terminology looks as follows:

Chart 21: The distribution of neutral-descriptive, tendentious and openly critical terminology in the articles by Berliner Zeitung on the Freedom Party within the time frame of my study.

Lexical item	Appearances (Articles altogether)
Right-wing populist	**3 (12)**
Anti-Islamic	**3 (12)**
Islam-critical	**1 (12)**
Right-wing party	**5 (12)**
Protest-Party	**0 (12)**
Islam-opponents	**0 (12)**

Islamophobic	**1 (12)**
Islam-haters	**1 (12)**
Agitators/ extremists	**2 (12)**
Fascism-references	**4 (12)**
Racism-references	**2 (12)**
'Wolves in sheep's clothing'	**0 (12)**

As my analysis has shown, a somewhat similar pattern between the trends of news coverage on the Freedom Party by DER SPIEGEL and Berliner Zeitung can be identified. Differing in the extensiveness of their news coverage, both papers have become more critical towards the Freedom Party over time. One peculiar feature in the case of Berliner Zeitung is, however, due to the focus on the municipal election in the German capital, t**he recurrent alignment of the Freedom Party to its competitors for right-wing-votes, the NPD and PRO-Deutschland.** Even though Stadtkewitz's explicit distancing from these more extremist groups (and the growing mutual enmity growing from it) is repeatedly mentioned, the three parties, and especially their supposedly 'racist' electorate get frequently painted with the same brush by various journalists writing for Berliner Zeitung.

In the more in-depth, detailed accounts that seek to explore and explain the phenomenon of the Freedom Party, a similarly wide array of opinions is present in the editorial staff of Berliner Zeitung as in the case of Süddeutsche Zeitung. They range from neutral, empathetic accounts (*'The outsider'*, *'Fighting Islam in a suit'*) to polemic open opposition that accuses the party of being quasi-fascist (*'The true Germans'*). Hence, we can speak of **ambivalent results**, and **an absence of coherence altogether in terms of the Freedom Party's portrayal**. Nonetheless, it must be noted that the journalist with the highest profile presence in reports on the party, Sabine Rennefanz, has in large parts applied an explanatory, analytic angle in her accounts. She often was seeking to grasp the psychology that is at work behind the party program, yet in doing so, she often used a partly subtle, partly open mockery of the party (similarly to DER SPIEGEL's Yassin Musharbash).

In conclusion, and regardless of a few more empathetic accounts, **the image of the Freedom Party shaped was often rather negative, and as a frequent reader of the paper one was led to perceive the party as small, unprofessional, disorganized, 'invisible' in the electoral campaign, and promoting an 'inhumane agenda' of 'anti-Muslim agitation', that made it potentially attractive to racist voters** – let alone, that those probably found the party to 'tame', and might be alienated by it due to Stadtkewitz's tireless distancing from right-wing extremism.

3. CONCLUSION: THE IMAGE(S) OF THE FREEDOM PARTY THAT WAS (WERE) CREATED BY THE GERMAN MAINSTREAM MEDIA BETWEEN JULY 2010 AND NOVEMBER 2013

The main objective of my study was to test the validity of Frank Decker's thesis of the 'anti-fascist-reflexes' of the German media towards a small stereotypical right-wing populist party that entered the political stage in the autumn of 2010: The Freedom Party. Decker's thesis covers the assumption that **the political culture of contemporary Germany is built upon the normative post-Auschwitz perspective, and the effect are 'anti-fascist reflexes' in media and the elite alike**. Quite frankly, Decker is accusing the German media of a biased approach towards national right-wing parties; which is at odds with the claim of a nonpartisan news-coverage.

I have incorporated four significant German newspapers into my study, varying both in publication mode (weekly political journal – *DER SPIEGEL;* daily tabloid – *BILD*; daily nation-wide newspaper – *Süddeutsche Zeitung*; and daily local newspaper – *Berliner Zeitung*) and in political orientation, in order to avoid a one-dimensional picture of the German media, and do different segments of German society justice. Moreover, I argue, this broadening of scope has given my study more validity and significance.

Even though the Freedom Party has in large parts been portrayed as what it is by the standards of numerous prolific German scholars – namely a modern stereotypical right-wing populist party – it **was impossible to identify one truly coherent image that was created by the newspapers**.

In what follows, I will summarize the results of my study in a conclusive manner.

First of all, there is a great deal of variation in terms of how much **relevance** Süddeutsche, SPIEGEL, BILD and Berliner Zeitung granted the Freedom Party as a new political phenomenon worth reporting. At first sight, it seems that BILD more or less ignored the party entirely, whereas DER SPIEGEL had a relatively low coverage as well. In contrast to that, Süddeutsche Zeitung and Berliner Zeitung had a significantly higher news coverage on the new party. Judging these results, however, solely in quantitative terms, is of course gravely insufficient.

It is safe to say that BILD indeed did ignore the Freedom Party for the most part, for neither the quantitative (four articles in three years) nor the qualitative dimension indicate any interest in reporting on the party: All BILD-articles were brief news-pieces without any ambition for in-depth-coverage. That is quite surprising if one takes three aspects into account:

1. BILD´s editorial staff is generally considered to be a rather conservative/ right-wing with leanings towards the CDU, after all the party that is Stadtkewitz's ideological point of departure.

2. The news coverage of BILD on the 'Sarrazin-Debate' was very exhaustive and often appeared to be sympathetic towards the persona of Thilo Sarrazin himself.[119]

3. The editorial house of BILD – Springer Verlag AG – conducted a favorable news coverage on right-wing populists in the past. This was the case when Roland Schill and his Schill-Party stepped onto the political stage in Hamburg back in 2001.

However, a possible continuation of coverage on the immigration-critical controversy caused by Sarrazin could have been to focus on the activities of the Freedom Party, the self-proclaimed 'party to the book'. As my analysis has shown, this did not take place.

DER SPIEGEL, in any case, might not have reported much on the party in quantitative terms, but all the more in qualitative terms. 66 % of its news coverage was focused on the foundation phase of the Freedom Party. One can argue that this evident focus on the origin of a new political phenomenon is in accordance with DER SPIEGEL's status as Germany's leading political journal. In other words: In the wake of the Sarrazin-Debate and the controversy around Stadtkewitz's ties with Wilders, *the Freedom Party appeared as a noteworthy political phenomenon*. In the cause of the year 2011, this news-worthiness decreased and died down entirely after the party's disastrous results in the municipal election in Berlin in September 2011.

Süddeutsche Zeitung and Berliner Zeitung are leading the chart with twenty-one respectively twelve articles on the Freedom Party. There is, however, a great difference in terms of the temporal focus of reports: Whereas Berliner Zeitung focused its reports – just like DER SPIEGEL – on the foundation phase of the party, Süddeutsche gave more relevance to the party as a newsworthy phenomenon after its radicalization under Stürzenberger. As mentioned before, this opposite orientation of these two newspapers can be explained through their local character. Since the Freedom Party was founded in Berlin and since the Berlin-election was styled to be a fateful one by the party leadership, the party had initially a significantly higher presence in Berlin than anywhere else in the Federal Republic. As one of the leading local newspapers in Berlin, Berliner Zeitung treated the Freedom Party as a local phenomenon – which has naturally a higher importance for a

119 Approximately 600 news pieces on Sarrazin in the weeks surrounding his book´s publication speak volumes:
    http://www.bild.de/suche.bild.html?type=article&query=Thilo+Sarrazin&resultsStart=340&resultsPerPage=10

local newspaper than for a nation-wide one.

With Süddeutsche, it was exactly the other way around. Even though the paper is published nation-wide, it also has a local dimension in its news coverage: stories from Munich – where the publisher's house is located. After the Freedom Party's failure in Berlin and Stadtkewitz's loss of power, Stürzenberger's rise shifted the power and activities to Munich – hence, the Freedom Party became a local phenomenon again for a – on some level – local newspaper.

In this context, it is noteworthy that Stadtkewitz's early Berlin-based Freedom Party and Stürzenberger's Munich-based delegation of the party differ in several ways. The early Freedom Party was closely associated with several former members of Berlin's CDU (and, to some degree, Geert Wilders), whereas Stürzenberger's Freedom Party delegation was labeled as extremist, and therefore monitored by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution in Bavaria. To put it differently: Berliner Zeitung focused on the Freedom Party in a time when Stadtkewitz tried to firmly distance his political project from extremists, and rather tried to appeal to the bourgeois-middle class camp, whereas Süddeutsche Zeitgeist's focus lies on a local delegation of the party that had gotten radicalized by Michael Stürzenberger. Consequently, relatively different images and semantics could be expected in the chosen media's portrayal of the Freedom Party. Yet, is this the case after all?

Two conclusive charts on the applicability of van Dijk's analytic framework 'the ideological square'/ the strategy of polarization, holds the ultimate answer to this question, and summarizes the empirical results of my study:

Chart 22: The distribution of neutral-descriptive, tendentious and openly critical articles on the Freedom Party within the time frame of my study.

Degree of polarization	SZ	SPIEGEL	BILD	Berliner Zeitung	Total
	21	6	4	13	44
Explicit ideological opposition	9	1	0	4	14
Tendentious news coverage	3	1	0	6	10
Neutral news coverage	9	4	4	3	20

Chart 23: The distribution of neutral-descriptive, tendentious and openly critical terminology

on the Freedom Party within the time frame of my study.

Term	Süddeutsche	SPIEGEL	BILD	Berliner	Total (Articles in total)
Right-wing populist	**9**	**2**	**-**	**2**	**13 (44)**
Anti-Islamic	**2**	**-**	**-**	**4**	**6 (44)**
Islam-critical	**2**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**9 (44)**
Right-wing	**-**	**-**	**-**	**7**	**7 (44)**
Protest-Party	**1**	**2**	**-**	**2**	**5 (44)**
Islam-opponents	**3**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**3 (44)**
Fascism-references	1	1	-	4	6 (44)
Racism-references	1	-	-	1	2 (44)
Agitators/ extremists	5	-	-	1	6 (44)
Clandestine	1	-	-	2	3 (44)
Islamophobic	1	2	-	2	5 (44)
Mockery	-	1	-	3	4 (44)
'Wolves in sheep's clothing'	2	-	-	-	2 (44)

These two charts reinforce in a compact fashion my main research result: The German mainstream media has not painted a coherent picture of the Freedom Party between July 2010 and November 2013. Hence, the media-critical notion of Brettschneider that a coherent media coverage is akin to the 'mind-numbing propaganda in totalitarian states' can certainly (and luckily) not be applied in case of the Freedom Party.

Regardless of Decker's thesis of 'anti-fascist-reflexes' of the German media, **one cannot identify a collective, politically motivated effort of journalist acting as 'the watchdog of society' to stigmatize the Freedom Party as Nazis, and thereby marginalize it on purpose.**

Certainly, occasionally there have been such normative, yes, polemic accounts where a very obvious polarization against the Freedom Party has occurred. These rather extensive articles of ideological opposition were, however, limited to both Süddeutsche Zeitung and Berliner Zeitung. BILD – regardless of its tiny news coverage in quantitative terms – has been neutral towards the

Freedom Party all along (and thereby continued its tradition of having right-wing political leanings in its accounts), and DER SPIEGEL has applied any kind of criticism in a non-polemic, more sophisticated manner that never explicitly crossed the line of labeling the Freedom Party as fascist or right-wing extremist. Germany's leading political magazine played its role as 'watchdog of society' by analyzing and dismantling the programmatic and rhetoric shortcomings of the party in a rather in-depth-fashion. Interestingly, the persona of Stadtkewitz got highlighted quite a bit, and his political goals were clearly put in the wider context of him being a firm opponent to the 'social-democratization' of his former party, the CDU. In that sense, DER SPIEGEL has taken into account that the Freedom Party has emerged from a conservative-middle class point of departure, and not a right-wing extremist one. Still, the editorial staff's overall-judgment of the party remains critical and rests upon the conviction that the Freedom Party is a group driven by fear of Islam.

The most critical and openly stance on the Freedom Party was taken by Süddeutsche Zeitung (57% opposition in van Dijk's terms) and Berliner Zeitung (77%), revealing an inherent ideological opposition to the party's political agenda. Berliner Zeitung in particular has in its articles on the municipal election in Berlin, frequently tied the Freedom Party to the far right. The effect is obvious: Those right-wing extremists who the newspaper has portrayed as the potential electorate for the Freedom Party have most likely felt alienated from the party program due to its pro-Israel agenda and the 'tame' politically correct rhetoric. At the same time, the electorate that the Freedom Party actually sought to appeal to (Sarrazin-sympathizers, frustrated CDU-voters, politically frustrated citizens without party affiliation) was either ignorant of the existence of the party (especially he BILD-readership) or was lead to perceive it as 'too far right' as it was repeatedly mentioned in the same breath as the NPD. By repeatedly being counted to the 'right-wing camp' (that, in addition to the Freedom Party, was made up by right-wing extremist parties NPD and Pro Deutschland) by Berliner Zeitung, a whole different image of the Freedom Party than the one intended by Stadtkewitz was manifested in the public eye. As a consequence, it is safe to say, that the Freedom Party fell between the cracks and failed to attract the voters it first and foremost sought to attract. With the benefit of hindsight, one can easily conclude that, in this configuration, Stadtkewitz's ambition to establish the Freedom Party as a more right-wing alternative to the CDU (and hence, as a respectable democratic party) was bound to fail.

At this point, it must also be noted, however, that some journalists in particular were apparently 'assigned' to media coverage on the party. Hence, the individual opinions of these journalists came into play more significantly and influenced the overall-image a particular newspaper created of the party. The most articles on the party were indeed composed by Sabine Rennefanz (Berliner Zeitung)

and Bernd Kastner (Süddeutsche Zeitung), each contributing seven accounts on or related to the Freedom Party. Interestingly, Rennefanz – who also met the Freedom Party-founder-and first leader for a personal in-depth-interview – revealed at times a rather empathetic take on the party, and on Stadtkewitz in particular, and at times a normative opposition. However, ultimately one can probably summarize her stance on the party as a 'mild opposition', for she chose to both mock the nature of the party conventions and to apply fascism-references to one of her accounts, but all in all tried to explain and analyze rather than to condemn.

Kastner's stance on the party, however, was more openly critical, and to his contributions, it was in vast parts possible to apply van Dijk's ideological square. Then again, it must be noted that Kastner's accounts were exclusively written on the radicalized Munich-delegation of the Freedom Party after Michael Stürzenberger had taken over. In that sense, both journalists were reporting on the party on two different stages of its history, and I argue that those two development stages of the party almost equal two different parties. Whereas the initial Freedom Party was closer the conservative-bourgeois camp and represented a response to the social-democratization of the CDU under Angela Merkel, the late Freedom Party under Stürzenberger was closer to the extremist image of former right-wing parties like the Republicans or the DVU.

In conclusion, it is safe to say that, in substance, the way the German media has reported on the Freedom Party is just as pluralistic as the opinions to be found in German society. Certainly, **there have not been any truly favorable accounts of the Freedom Party, no positive 'media hype' occurred around the party. In so far, one can argue, that Decker's thesis of the reserved attitude of the German media towards new right-wing parties was valid on some level at all times.** Indeed, a possible alternate scenario (and one closer to the liking of Freedom Party-founder Stadtkewitz) would have been to give an image of the new-founded party as a serious alternative to those 'homeless conservatives' that had been alienated from the CDU/CSU through its process of 'Social-democratization' under Angela Merkel's leadership.

In theory, it could have been possible to frame the Freedom Party as a mere new conservative protest-party that closes a gap in the political spectrum between the CDU/CSU and openly nationalist or Nazi parties. Let alone, as my analysis of the party program has shown, this would have been a too euphemistic take on the party. The political agenda and rhetoric of the Freedom Party identified it at all times as a modern stereotypical right-wing populist party. Hence, this was the most accurate terminology to label it, even in academic terms.

Interestingly, this scientifically accurate term 'right-wing populist' was indeed the most used in the forty-four articles I analyzed: Thirteen articles in total made use of the term explicitly to introduce

the Freedom Party to the readership. Even though this term is on the pole position in then chart above, one has to acknowledge that we speak about only approximately 29,5 % of the articles here.

Other than that, *'Islam-critical' (20%)*, *'right-wing-party' (16%)*, and *'Anti-Islam-Party' (14%)* were the most used lexical items to label the party; their neutral-descriptive character perfectly covered by the actual party program. On the other hand, 14% of the articles on the Freedom Party had explicit or implicit references to fascism/ right-wing-extremism, by either aligning it to the NPD in some way, or accusing it of a quasi-fascist agenda (which is not justified).

Nonetheless, with the exception of a few polemic articles, the political agenda of being immigration-critical and anti-Islamic was not constantly met with open hostility throughout the three years of my analysis. At the same time, a significant amount of (possibly even favorable?) media coverage – especially during the foundation phase of the party – could not be observed either.

Ultimately, **my study certainly has given some kind of indication to why the Freedom's Party enterprise in German politics was rather a short-lived and ill-fated one**. **Nonetheless, the failure of a party can of course never be fully explained by the relationship it has or has not established with the mainstream media.** Certainly, publicity and media exposure are useful in reaching out for an electorate, yet blaming the media for a party's failure in establishing itself in a pluralistic democracy, would be short-sighted and unfair.

Hence, I am fully aware that this study does not offer any extensive answers as to why the Freedom Party turned out to be another failure in German right-wing populism. Addressing such questions was beyond the scope of my study, as the term 'political culture', which in the German case is claimed to be such an obstacle for the success of new right-wing parties, covers much more than just the media's role as a 'watchdog of a given society'.

In fact, 'political culture' covers the electoral system of a state as much part as the collective political memory of elites and voters, and the degree of pluralism in the party landscape. These are factors I did not look into, and hence, I cannot claim to fully offer an explanation to why events took such an unfavorable cause for the Freedom Party.

Then again, some other researcher might just pick up where I left off, and looking into these factors can be the point of departure for yet another in-depth-study of the phenomenon.

For one thing seems to be certain: With the AfD having entered several federal and the European parliament throughout the last year, the phenomenon of German right-wing populism should draw increased attention from both domestic and international scholars in the future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY[120]

I: Primary sources

Online articles

Süddeutsche Zeitung

'Anti-Islam-Kampagne - Rechtspopulistische Partei will Unterschriftenaktion starten', in: suddeutsche.de, published on 13.10. 2011 http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/anti-islam-kampagne-rechtspopulistische-partei-will-unterschriftenaktion-starten-1.1161620, last accessed on 11.3. 2015

Bielicki, Jan: 'Geert Wilders light', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 1.2. 2011 http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/anti-islam-partei-die-freiheit-geert-wilders-light-1.1053605, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

Bielicki, Jan: 'Geert, du bist mein Held!', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 3.10. 2010 http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/islamkritiker-wilders-auf-berlin-besuch-geert-du-bist-mein-held-1.1007543, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

Buillon, Constanze von: 'Geert Wilders entzweit Berliner CDU'. In: sueddeutsche.de, published on 23.7. 2010. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/rechtspopulismus-geert-wilders-entzweit-die-berliner-cdu-1.978523, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

Buillon, Constanze von: 'Berliner CDU wirft Abgeordneten raus'. In: sueddeutsche.de, published on 27.7. 2010, http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/reaktion-auf-wilders-einladung-berliner-cdu-wirft-abgeordneten-raus-1.980114, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

Denkler, Thorsten: 'Lektionen fur die 'Endlich sagt es mal jemand'-Fraktion', in: sueedeutsche.de, published on 5.9. 2011. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/geert-wilders-in-berlin-lektionen-fuer-die-endlich-sagt-es-mal-jemand-fraktion-1.1138801, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

---

120 The bibliography is structured as follows – I Primary sources (online articles; articles in print magazines); II Secondary sources (books and master's theses; articles in print magazines; online articles). The primary sources are divided according to the four newspapers I analyzed, with the order of the newspapers being identical to the one applied in the analysis. Within their own sections, all sources are ordered alphabetically.

Fuchs, F; Kolb, M: 'Zwischen Geert Wilders und Martin Luther', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 23.7. 2010, http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/cdu-berlin-rene-stadtkewitz-zwischen-wilders-und-luther-1.978765, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

Haimerl, Kathrin: 'Comeback der Hetzer', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 5.8. 2011 http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/rechtspopulismus-in-deutschland-comeback-der-hetzer-1.1127643, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

'Hetzrede in Berlin', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 2.10. 2010 http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/geert-wilders-auf-deutschlandbesuch-hetzrede-in-einem-berliner-hotel-1.1007501, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

Islamfeind Sturzenberger attackiert', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 24.10. 2013. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/kundgebung-gegen-moscheeprojekt-islamfeind-stuerzenberger-attackiert-1.1803130, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Kastner, Bernd; Muller-Jentsch, Ekkehard: 'Banken kundigen Sturzenbergers Konten', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 30.9. 2013. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/rechte-partei-die-freiheit-banken-kuendigen-stuerzenbergers-konten-1.1784508, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Kastner, Bernd: 'Das gefährliche Gift des Hasses', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 14.4. 2013, http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/rechtspopulisten-der-freiheit-und-pi-das-gefaehrliche-gift-des-hasses-1.1648379, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Kastner, Bernd: 'Der grosse Agitator', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 21.4. 2013. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/islamgegner-michael-stuerzenberger-der-grosse-agitator-1.1654428, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Kastner, Bernd: 'Die Freiheit und PI gelten in Bayern als verfassungsfeindlich', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 12.4. 2013. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/bayern/einstufung-des-bayerischen-innenminsteriums-die-freiheit-und-pi-gelten-in-bayern-als-verfassungsfeindlich-1.1647727, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Kastner, Bernd: 'Islamhasser machen weiter', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 24.10. 2013, http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/rechtspopulistische-partei-die-freiheit-islamhasser-machen-weiter-1.1802278, last accessed on 26.3. 2015

Kastner, Bernd: 'Keine Strafe fur Himmler-Plakat', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 13.5. 2013. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/prozess-gegen-stuerzenberger-keine-strafe-fuer-himmler-plakat-1.1671618, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Kirchner, Thomas: 'Internationale des Hasses', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 15.9. 2010 http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/islamfeinde-in-europa-und-den-usa-internationale-des-hasses-1.999936, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

'Niederlage fur Islamgegner Sturzenberger', in: suddeutsche.de, published on 25.7. 2013. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/entscheidung-gegen-rechtspopulisten-niederlage-fuer-islamgegner-stuerzenberger-1.1730693, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Obdachlose Rechtspopulisten', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 11.1. 2011 http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/partei-die-freiheit-obdachlose-rechtspopulisten-1.1045138, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

Rost, Christian: 'Ach, leck mich doch am Arsch', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 15.7. 2013. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/rechtspopulist-beleidigt-beamten-ach-leck-mich-doch-am-arsch-1.1722140, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

SPIEGEL ONLINE:

Gathmann, Florian; Wittrock, Philipp: 'Fuhrungsprsonal fur Protestpartei – Provokateure, Frustrierte, Zauderer', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 14.9. 2010. http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/fuehrungspersonal-fuer-protestpartei-provokateure-frustrierte-zauderer-a-717143-7.html, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

'Islamkritiker Stadtkewitz will Protestpartei grunden', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 10.9. 2010   http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/ex-cdu-politiker-islamkritiker-stadtkewitz-will-protestpartei-gruenden-a-716851.html, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

Musharbash, Yassin: 'Berliner Wahlkampf: Herr Wilders von rechts außen greift ein', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 3.9. 2011.
http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/berliner-wahlkampf-herr-wilders-von-rechts-aussen-greift-ein-a-784243.html, last accessed on 30.1. 2015

Online-Studie zum Rechtspopulismus: Braune Front auf Facebook', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE published on 10.11. 2011.
http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/online-studie-zum-rechtspopulismus-braune-front-auf facebook-a-796928.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

'Pleite fur Islam-Gegener: Die Freiheit muss Parteitag absagen', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 11.1. 2011 http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/pleite-fuer-islam-gegner-die-freiheit-muss-parteitag-absagen-a-738994.html, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

BILD

Berliner Ex-CDU-Mitglied grundet neue Partei', in: bild.de, published on 29.10. 2010
http://www.bild.de/regional/berlin/berlin-regional/berliner-excdumitglied-gruendet-neue-partei-14473822.bild.html, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

Islamkritische Partei Die Freiheit lässt Wähler kalt', in: bild.de, published on 18.9 2011
http://www.bild.de/regional/berlin/islamkritische-partei-die-freiheit-laesst-20030902.bild.html, last accessed on 15.3. 2015

'Partei Die Freiheit tagt im Prenzlauer Berg', in: bild.de, published on 11.1. 2011
http://www.bild.de/regional/berlin/berlin-regional/partei-die-freiheit-tagt-in-prenzlauer-berg-15443852.bild.html, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

'Sprecher: Parteitag 'Die Freiheit' fällt aus', in: bild.de, published on 11.1 2011
http://www.bild.de/regional/berlin/sprecher-parteitag-die-freiheit-faellt-aus-15448038.bild.html, last accessed on 15.3. 2015

Berliner Zeitung

Eltzel, Birgitt: 'Kein Bier mehr fur Rechtsextreme', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 28.1. 2011
http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/bezirksparlament-charlottenburg-wilmersdorf-will-dem-wirt
im-rathaus-schmargendorf-kuendigen-kein-bier-mehr-fuer-rechtsextreme,10810590,10768252.html,
last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Geyer, Steven: 'Hauen und Stechen unter Rechten', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 21.9. 2011.
http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/neue-rechte/krise-bei-islamhassern-hauen-und-stechen-unter-
rechten,10911114,10879706.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Höhn, Sebastian: 'Rechtspartei nach holländischem Vorbild', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on
11.9. 2010.
http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/ex-cdu-mann-stadtkewitz-gruendet—die-freiheit--
rechtspartei-nach-hollaendischem-vorbild,10810590,10742054.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Rennefanz, Sabine: 'Der Aussenseiter', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 16.11. 2010.
http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/ren--stadtkewitz-hat-eine-eigene-partei-gegruendet--damit-
fangen-die- schwierigkeiten-erst-an-der-aussenseiter,10810590,10754804.html, last accessed on
19.1. 2015

Rennefanz, Sabine: 'Geert, wir lieben dich!', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 4.10. 2010.
http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/eine-gruppe-gleichgesinnter-feiert-in-berlin-den-
rechtspopulisten-geert-wilders—ein-deutscher-ableger-soll-den-erfolg-seiner-freiheitspartei-
kopieren--geert--wir-lieben-dich-,10810590,10746600.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Rennefanz, Sabine: 'Herr Wilders und sein blasser Schuler', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on
4.9. 2011.
http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/newsticker/herr-wilders-und-sein-blasser-
schueler,10917074,10929334.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Rennefanz, Sabine; Rogalla, Thomas: 'Jeder Achte wunscht sich einen Führer', in: berliner-
zeitung.de, published on 8.7.2011.

http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/forsa-umfrage—vier-prozent-der-berliner-wollen-rechtsextrem-waehlen-jeder-achte-wuensch-sich-einen-fuehrer,10810590,10942386.html, last accessed on 14.1. 2015

Rennefanz, Sabine: 'Muslime fühlen sich verfolgt', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 14.10. 2010. http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/studie-belegt-wachsende-islamfeindlichkeit-muslime-fuehlen-sich-verfolgt,10810590,10748552.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Rennefanz, Sabine: 'Politiker der Liberalen lauf zur islamkritischen Freiheit uber', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 15.4. 2011. http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/fdp-fraktion-in-friedrichshain-kreuzberg-wird-aufgeloest-politiker-der-liberalen-laeuft-zur-islamkritischen-freiheit-ueber,10810590,10782352.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Rennefanz, Sabine: 'Wahlkampf mit Wilders', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 30.8. 2011. http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/der-umstrittene-hollaendische-islamgegner-unterstuetzt-den-deutschen-ableger-seiner-partei-wahlkampf-mit-wilders,10810590,10951374.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Rogalla, Thomas: 'Kampf gegen den Islam im Anzug', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 16.5. 2011. http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/partei—die-freiheit--hofft-auf-acht-prozent-bei-der-wahl-kampf-gegen-den-islam-im-anzug,10810590,10787424.html, last accessed on 13.1. 2015

Schindler, Jörg: 'Die wahren Deutschen', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 16.6. 2011 http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/newsticker/die-wahren-deutschen,10917074,10923412.html, last accessed on 16.3. 2015

Schmidl, Karin: 'Verluste trotz Materialschlacht und dumpfer Parolen', in berliner-zeitung.de, published on 18.9. 2011. http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/newsticker/materialschlacht-und-dumpfe-parolen,10917074,10930268.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Thomsen, Jan: 'Die Freiheit im Freien', in: berliner-zeitung.de, published on 12.1. 2011. http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/anti-islam-partei-muss-ersten-parteitag-nach-zwei-

raumkuendigungen-absagen—die-freiheit—im-freien,10810590,10765324.html, last accessed on 19.1 2015

Articles in print magazines

DER SPIEGEL

Gutsch, Jochen-Martin: 'Der deutsche Geert', in: DER SPIEGEL 1/2011

II: Secondary sources

Books and Master's Theses

Bell, Allan; Garrett, Peter (edit.): Approaches to media discourse. New Jersey 1998.

Bossetta, Michael: Cultural Racism without a Race – An explanatory insight into the discrimination and self-perception of the Sweden Democrats. Master's Thesis, Lund University 2012.

Conradt, David P.: The German polity. Boston 2009.

Decker, Frank: Wenn die Populisten kommen: Beiträge zum Zustand der Demokratie und des Parteiensystems. Wiesbaden 2012.

Festenstein, Matthew & Kenny, Michael (edit.): Political ideologies: a reader and guide. Oxford 2005.

Harris, Geoffrey: The dark side of Europe – the extreme Right today. Edinburgh 1990.

Jandura, Olaf: Kleinparteien in der Mediendemokratie. Wiesbaden 2007.

Karvonen, Lauri: Fascismen i Europa. Lund 1990.

Schneiders, Thorsten Gerald (ed.): Verhärtete Fronten – Der schwere Weg zu einer vernünftigen Islamkritik. Wiesbaden 2012.

Von Alemann, Ulrich; Marschall, Stefan: Parteien in der Mediendemokratie. Wiesbaden 2001.

Articles in print magazines

Amann, Melanie: 'Unheimlich gute Freunde', in: DER SPIEGEL 36/2013

Amann, Melanie; Baumgärtner, Maik; Deggerich, Markus; Müller, Ann-Katrin; Röbel, Sven; Winter, Steffen: 'Obenauf und unten durch', in: DER SPIEGEL 39/ 2014

Decker, Frank: 'Warum der parteiförmige Rechtspopulismus in Deutschland so erfolglos ist'. In: Vorgänge. Zeitschrift fur Zeitgeschichte und Gesellschaftspolitik. 1/2012.

Von Deggerich, Markus; Ertel, Manfred; Mittelstaedt, Juliane von; Rohr, Mathieu von; Schlamp, Hans-Jürgen; Simons, Stefan: Kontinent der Angst. In: DER SPIEGEL 39/2010

'Neue deutsche Welle' in: DER SPIEGEL 51/ 2014

Online articles

'20 Prozent fur Rechtspartei möglich', in: RP online, published on 13.9. 2010. http://www.rp-online.de/politik/deutschland/20-prozent-fuer-rechtspartei-moeglich-aid-1.2292654, last accessed on 16.1. 2014

'AfD streitet uber Aufnahme von rechten Uberläufern', in: Welt Online, published on 6.10.2013. http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article120669457/AfD-streitet-ueber-Aufnahme-von-rechten-Ueberlaeufern.html, last accessed on 9.1. 2015

Amann, Melanie; Reinhold, Fabian: 'AfD-Erfolg: Lucke, Henkel und Co im Siegesrausch', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 25.5. 2014, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/afd-chef-lucke-feiert-gutes-ergebnis-bei-europawahl-a-971600.html, last accessed on 9.1. 2015

Ausländerfeindliche Hetze bei Facebook: Pegida-Chef Bachmann tritt zuruck', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 21.1. 2015, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/lutz-bachmann-zieht-sich-bei-pegida-zurueck-a-1014270.html, last accesed on 10.3. 2015

Beikler, Sabine; van Bebber, Werner: 'CDU bekommt Konkurrenz von Stadtkewitz', in:

tagesspiegel.de, published on 8.9. 2010, http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/ex-parteifreund-will-partei-gruenden-cdu-bekommt-konkurrenz-von-stadtkewitz/1929146.html, last accessed on 30.1.2014

'Berliner Erklärung: Sozialdemokratische CDU.', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 17.5. 2010, http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/berliner-erklaerung-sozialdemokratische-cdu-1.73040, last accessed on 30.1. 2014

Brocchi, Davide: 'Die Presse in Deutschland', in: Cultura 21, published on 6.12. 2008. http://magazin.cultura21.de/kultur/wissen/die-presse-in-deutschland.html, last accessed on 30.1. 2014

Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. http://www.bpb.de/politik/wahlen/wer-steht-zur-wahl/bundestag-2013/165517/pro-deutschland, last accessed on 12.3. 2015

Decker, Frank; Lewandowsky, Marcel: 'Rechtspopulismus als neue Strategie der politischen Rechten', in: Online Akademie der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/akademie/online/08320.pdf, last accessed on 12.3. 2015

Von Drach; Markus C. Schulte: 'Islamisierung ist ein ideologischer Kampfbegriff', in: sueddeutsche.de, published on 22.12. 2014, http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/sechs-fragen-zu-pegida-islamisierung-ist-ein-ideologischer-kampfbegriff-1.2275618, last accessed on 17.3. 2015

Geyer, Christoph: 'So wird Deutschland dumm', in: FAZ online, published on 25.8. 2010. http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buecher/rezensionen/sachbuch/thilo-sarrazin-deutschland-schafft-sich-ab-so-wird-deutschland-dumm-1999085.html

Goethe-Institut: Tageszeitungen in Deutschland. http://www.goethe.de/wis/med/prj/dzz/tag/sz/deindex.htm, last accessed on 17.3. 2015

Haus der Niederlande. 'Rechter Populismus in Deutschland', in: http://www.uni-muenster.de/HausDerNiederlande/Zentrum/Projekte/Schulprojekt/Lernen/Populismus/70/rechterpopulismusbrd.htm,last accessed on 15.1. 2015

Häusler, Alexander: 'Die PRO-Bewegung und der antimuslimische Kulturrassismus von Rechtsaussen', in http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/do/08253.pdf, last accessed on 25.3. 2015

Hebel, Christine: 'Die Freiheit' – Anti-Islam-Partei will sich der AfD anschliessen', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 1.10. 2013, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/die-freiheit-stellt-wahlkaempfe-zugunsten-der-afd-ein-a-925504.html, last accessed on 29.1.2014

Hebel, Christina; Medick, Veit: 'Jetzt muss die NPD zittern', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 3.12. 2013. http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/zweites-npd-verbotsverfahren-jetzt-ist-wieder-karlsruhe-am-zug-a-936805.html, last accessed on 15.1. 2015

Hebel, Christina; Otto, Ferdinand: 'Massenprotest in Sachsen. Fünf Grunde fur Pegidas Erfolg in Dresden', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 7.1. 2015
http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/pegida-fuenf-gruende-fuer-den-erfolg-in-dresden-a-1011490.html, last accessed on 9.1. 2015

'Integration: Merkel erklärt Multikulti fur gescheitert', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 16.10. 2010, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/integration-merkel-erklaert-multikulti-fuer-gescheitert-a-723532.html, last accessed on 10.3. 2015.

Klarmann, Michael: 'Zerfall einer Splitterpartei', in: heise.de, published on 17.12. 2011
http://www.heise.de/tp/news/Zerfall-einer-Splitterpartei-2010188.html, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Kohl, Helmut: 'Regierungserklärung zur 12. Wahlperiode des Deutschen Bundestages', in: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung: Helmut Kohl. http://helmut-kohl.kas.de/index.php?menu_sel=17&menu_sel2=&menu_sel3=&menu_sel4=&msg=609, last accessed on 10.3. 2015

'Kritik an Protestpartei: Schäuble nennt AfD 'Schande für Deutschland', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 9.10. 2014, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/schaeuble-ueber-afd-schande-fuer-deutschland-a-996347.html, last accessed on 9.1. 2015

'Neue Partei Die Freiheit in Berlin gegrundet', in: tagesspiegel.de, published on 29.10.2010, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Beikler, Sabine; van Bebber, Werner: 'CDU bekommt Konkurrenz von Stadtkewitz', in: tagesspiegel.de, published on 8.9. 2010, http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/ex-parteifreund-will-partei-gruenden-cdu-bekommt-konkurrenz-von-stadtkewitz/1929146.html, last accessed on 30.1.2014

'Neujahrsansprache der Kanzlerin: Merkel prangert Hass bei Pegida-Märschen an', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 31.12. 2014, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/merkel-kritisiert-pegida-bei-neujahrsansprache-scharf-a-1010785.html, last accessed on 10.3. 2015

Politische Stiftungen', in: Bundeszentrale fur politische Bildung. http://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/lexika/handwoerterbuch-politisches-system/40359/politische-stiftungen, last accessed on 19.1. 2015

Reinbold, Fabian: 'Danke, Pegida, das war's!', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 10.2. 2015 http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/pegida-das-ende-der-bewegung-kommentar-a-1017581.html, last accessed on 10.3. 2015.

Ruf, Christoph: 'Studie zu deutschen Einstellungen: Wie gross Sarrazins Basis wirklich ist', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE, published on 13.10. 2010 http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/studie-zu-deutschen-einstellungen-wie-gross-sarrazins-basis-wirklich-ist-a-722789.html, last accessed on 16.3. 2015

'Sarrazin: Meine Frau wird gemobbt, weil ich prominent bin', in bild.de, published on 20.1. 2011 http://www.bild.de/politik/2011/schule/hetzjagd-auf-meine-frau-15380286.bild.html, last accessed on 17.3. 2015

Schlegel, Matthias: 'Wulff: Islam gehört zu Deutschland', in: tagesspiegel.de, published on 3.10. 2010 http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/rede-zur-einheitsfeier-wulff-islam-gehoert-zu-deutschland/1948760.html, last accessed on 10.3. 2015

Wittrock, Philipp: 'Alternative fuer Deutschland – Partei der Besserwisser', in: SPIEGEL ONLINE,

published on 11.4. 2013

http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/gruendungsparteitag-der-anti-
euro-partei-alternative-fuer-deutschland-a-893374.html, last accessed on 9.1. 2015