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FRAMING OF “US-VS-THEM” IN RIGHT-WING COMMUNICATION

HOW TWEETS ARE USED AS FORMS OF COMMUNICATION BY A
GERMAN RIGHT-WING PARTY

MASTER'S THESIS

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<p>The world in which we live and communicate is complicated and complex. This is also true for political communication, which has moved, in some part, to newer forms of media, such as social media platforms. Politicians have gained the opportunity to communicate directly with their followers online, without any mediators. This allows political actors to present the image of themselves and the version of reality they want to convey.</p> <p>Twitter is one example of such a platform, which provides an interactive channel of communication between political actors and their audience. This thesis aims to analyse how the 280 characters long tweets are used as forms of communication by employing and combining Erving Goffman's concepts of framing and self-presentation. Frames are interpretative frameworks which are activated by our brains to make sense of situations and events and the understanding of self-presentation describes how actors portray themselves in social settings. (Political) actors can change the way the narrative is framed, depending on which frame of reference they are highlighting in their communication.</p> <p>For the case sample, 1785 tweets by the German party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) have been collected over a period of four weeks at the beginning of 2020. Their categorization as a right-wing party as well as their active presence on Twitter makes them an interesting subject of study. To structure the collected data, the tweets are divided into 12 categories of framing strategies, which are based on the differentiation between a Positive Self-Presentation and a Negative Other-Presentation.</p> <p>The analysis of the tweets and the employed framing strategies showed that the party emphasised the (perceived) differences between themselves and the other, which ranges from political elites, oppositional political parties and their supporters to civilian groups such as activists, migrants or critics of the party. Language is important for the portrayal of the framing strategies, either through the usage of personal pronouns – for example, "us" or "them" – or through the invention of mocking names classifying the other. The self, here the AfD, is always presented positively and the others are depicted in a negative light.</p> <p>It has been found that the combination of different framing strategies can lead to a stronger emphasis on the positive self and the negative other. The tweets generally portray one version of reality or one version of the narrative that fits best to the objective the party wants to portray.</p> <p>The data sample and the period of data collection are rather limited and would need to be expanded for further analysis. Nonetheless, the results give an indication of how framing strategies can be used daily in political communication, which can add to the knowledge of political researchers and communicators.</p>			
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Ohjaaja tai ohjaajat – Handledare – Supervisor or supervisors Pertti Ahonen			
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Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information			

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I. List of Abbreviations

AfD	Alternative für Deutschland (translation: Alternative for Germany)
BfV	Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (translation: Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution)
BVG	Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe (translation: Berlin Public Transport Services)
CDU	Christlich-Demokratische Union (translation: Christian Democratic Union)
CSU	Christlich-Soziale Union (translation: Christian-Social Union)
GDR	German Democratic Republic
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei (translation: Free Democratic Party)
Die Grünen	The Green Party (translation: the green ones)
GroKo	Große Koalition (translation: the big coalition)
Die Linken	The Left Party (translation: the left ones)
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei (translation: Socialist Unity Party of Germany)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (translation: Social-Democratic Party Germany)

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1. Introduction

Reality can be regarded as an elusive concept. What is true for one is not necessarily true for another; what is my reality might not be yours. In recent times, the advent of the Internet and the growing importance of what has been titled “fake news” has changed reality again. What we know of the world is no longer brought to us by established media publications, but by an abundance of different actors who can disseminate their ideas across the Internet. The Internet and social media, in particular, have also removed one barrier between politicians and the public. Before, it was the mainstream media that reported to the public on what politicians have said, now political parties and actors can communicate directly to their “followers” online without any medium between them (Hemphill, Culotta, & Heston, 2013).

This, however, also means that there are not necessarily any institutions checking every fact before something is spread. Any actor can write about his or her version of reality and share it with a big audience. It is not only fake news that twist the truth, but it can also be much more subtle to frame current happenings in a way that fits one’s narrative.

Twitter is a public social media platform on which users can post short, 280 character long so-called tweets about their ideas, opinions, and worldviews. Politicians have discovered Twitter as a means of direct communication with their electorate. One of the most well-known examples of this is the current American president Donald J. Trump, who uses the social media platform daily (Ott, 2017, p. 63). However, German politicians have also taken note of the advantages of the micro-blogging tool; politicians on the right side of the ideological spectrum especially seem to use Twitter on a frequent basis (Caja Thimm, Jessica Einspänner, & Mark Dang-Anh, 2012).

This thesis looks at different strategies in which tweets can be used to frame the narrative by political actors. The research questions guiding the analysis are:

- Which words or phrases are used to frame reality in a particular way?
- How do the words used fit into the “Us-vs-Them” categorisation?
- How are the categories situated in a wider societal context?

The subject of analysis is the German right-wing party “Alternative für Deutschland” (*Alternative for Germany*), AfD for short. 1785 tweets of prominent Twitter accounts have been collected in a period of four weeks at the beginning of 2020 to conduct the analysis. To make sense of the various tweets, they are structured into 12 categories of framing strategies, which are in turn divided into two main sections: Negative Other-Presentation and Positive Self-Presentation. The categories belonging to the first section explore framing strategies which

focus on painting the *other* in a negative light, while framing strategies associated with categories in the second section aim at highlighting the good of the *self*, in this case, the AfD.

As Dieter Rucht, a German scholar, has said: “[t]he right-wing populist semantics and symbolism, usually described by intellectuals as primitive and clichéd, is multifaceted and flexible” (Rucht, 2016, p. 31). To help understand and determine order within the seemingly chaotic semantic, Goffman’s ideas on Framing and Self-Presentation are used as the theoretical framework of this thesis. Goffman is regarded as one of the leading scholars who has developed the concept of framing (Johansson, 2007), which is defined as “the way in which we define situations in terms of regularised encounters or social episodes in order to make sense of the social world” (Chandler & Munday, 2011). The concept of Self-Presentation, in turn, describes how we present ourselves to others in social situations.

The structure of the categories is based on the categorization of “Us-vs-Them”. This is closely related to the concept of *othering* and differentiates between two groups; one associated with the *self* and one connected to the *other*. The perception of another person is, here, largely dependent on their group membership, as a member of one’s own group will be regarded more positively than an outsider. Furthermore, the use of language is important as it helps to separate the two groups. This can also be observed in the collected data sample as the AfD seems to have made up their own words to emphasize their framing strategies. In addition, in the last part of the analysis, we will take a closer look at the personal pronouns used in the data sample.

Both concepts, framing and self-presentation, build the basis for the analysis of the tweets. The thoughts of scholars such as Snow, Benford and Rucht, who have extended the understanding of framing, help to guide the application of the concept on the Twitter analysis. It has been found that politicians of the AfD engage in various framing efforts, relating especially to issues such as migration, left-wing extremism, and climate change, as well as the portrayal of mainstream parties and the perceived political elite.

This thesis contributes to the literature by examining (1) how framing strategies are conducted on digital social media platforms which function as mediums of political communication, (2) how the polarization of “Us-vs-Them” is used to substantiate the framing strategies, and (3) how Goffman’s concepts on framing and self-presentation can be combined in the analysis.

Tweets have served as the basis of social scientific analysis in numerous studies; however, the literature on framing strategies of political communication found on Twitter is scarce. This thesis, therefore, addresses a research gap in looking at how a right-wing party uses various framing strategies in their communication on the social media platform.

To understand the German context, Chapter 2 gives a short overview of the AfD, while Chapter 3 explores Twitter as a medium of political communication with specific attention to the Twitter

use of the AfD. In Chapter 4, the framework of analysis is outlined. It examines Goffman's understanding of framing and self-presentation, while also looking at various extensions of the concept. Chapter 5, in turn, aims to describe the methodological background. Here, the implications of Othering and the concept of "Us"-vs-"Them" are also examined.

The most important event during the data collection was the election of the Minister-President in the state of Thüringen and the subsequent scandal. Chapter 6, therefore, focuses on the situational context surrounding the collected tweets. The analysis, Chapter 7, is divided into three parts: The Negative Other-Presentation, the Positive Self-Presentation and the use of personal pronouns. The analysis aims at identifying framing strategies and their usage in shaping the narrative. The results are discussed in Chapter 8, and the thesis concludes in Chapter 9, which also examines options for further research.

1.1 Literature Review

Goffman's theories have been used as the basis of quite a few studies. Within the field of framing, Snow and Benford are notable scholars who employed the concept for the study of social movements. For their application, they have extended the concept by three dimensions – *diagnostic, prognostic and motivational* – which break frames down into identified problems, possible solutions and incentives to the audience.

The German scholar Dieter Rucht, in turn, based his conceptualisation of three dimensions of framing on Goffman's understanding of the concept as well as Snow and Benford's extension. For his study of German right-wing social and political movements, he identified the dimension of problematization, in which an outer threat is portrayed while the self is stylised as the victim, the dimension of the assignment of blame, in which the perceived guilty actors are outlined, as well as the dimension of motivation factors, which are the incentive factors for the readers. To make sense of the tweets, which are to be analysed, Rucht's dimensions will be employed, as his extensions were developed on the study of German right-wing movements. This makes his categorization applicable to the study of the AfD.

As the analysis is structured by the categorization of "Us-vs-Them", a look at some of the literature relating to the topic of study is important. The scholars Caiani & Della Porta (2011), for example, have done a study about right-wing, non-party groups analysing their documents with the help of frame analysis, also under the viewpoint of "Us-vs-Them". This was before the AfD formed in 2013, and Twitter was not the chosen medium of analysis. Political communication has changed since then, and recent global events (e.g. the so-called "refugee crisis", increased awareness of climate change, etc.) have brought other actors onto the political stage, which did not exist (or, to be more precise, had not organised themselves) at

the point they have done their study. Burnap and Williams (2016) apply the categorization to Twitter in their analysis on hate in cyberspace. Their analysis, however, does not take place in the sphere of political communication.

For a better comprehension of the analysis, an understanding of the German right-wing party and their standing in the German political landscape is needed. In this context, the understanding of anti-sentimental parties can be of significance. One of the prevalent scholars in this field is Andreas Schedler, who outlined the concept in 1996, which describes political parties with anti-elitist sentiments against a perceived political class.

Various scholars and researchers have identified framing strategies and applied them to their studies. A relevant paper for this thesis is the one by Masroor et al. (2019), who took a look at the Twitter discourse of Pakistani politicians. Their identification of the binary categorization of a Negative Other-Presentation and Positive Self-Presentation will also be employed here. Framing strategies can also be found, for example, in the works of Hänggli and Kriesi (2010) who studied the impact of framing strategies on the media, Eilders' and Lüter's (2000) study on war discourse in Germany, or the study by (Hemphill et al., 2013) on the hashtag used by US congress members.

A lot of the existing literature, however, looks at framing strategies by the media with only a smaller percentage studying the strategies conducted by politicians directly on newer mediums such as Twitter or Facebook. For example, Wasike (2013) has analysed how social media editors use framing to interact with their audiences on Twitter, and Valenzuela, Piña, and Ramírez (2017) have studied the influence of frames on the news sharing behaviour of social media users. Due to this, this case study on the German right-wing party and their usage of framing on Twitter adds to the existing literature.

2. The Alternative für Deutschland

As this paper looks at the framing of the AfD's political communication, it is necessary to take a closer look at the party before convening with the analysis. The party was only founded in 2013, and has since then attracted considerable public attention and polarised the political debate. Some believe that the rise of the AfD, their public positioning, and electoral successes pose new challenges to the social and political scientists and researchers in Germany. This is because their continued successes and subsequent entry in all German parliaments on federal and state levels close the political gap to the right of the conservative Christian Union parties (CDU and CSU). The AfD is the first right-wing party in the German federal parliament, the Bundestag, since the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949 (Häusler, 2016, p. 1).

According to the scholars Morstatter, Shao, Galstyan, and Karunasekera (2018), the AfD identifies as alt-right; a concept which they define as a set of ideologies and actors who stand against multiculturalism and immigration. Furthermore, they are mainly found in the online world, secluded from mainstream media as their opinions and beliefs do not conform to common opinion. Similarly to this, the AfD has also largely started online and mobilised support through online discourse (Morstatter et al., 2018, p. 621).

Karin Priester (2019) regards the AfD as a populist party. So far, the party has seemingly succeeded in mobilising anti-establishment protest and social discontent. It seems to have recognised the signs of the times and is aimed at a target group representing large sections of the population. According to Priester, it seems to strive to become a permanent fixture in the German party system as a national conservative people's party: "democratically legitimised, but illiberal in its goals" (Priester, 2019, p. 453).

This assessment is shared by Armin Schäfer (2020), who states that "there is no doubt in research that the AfD fulfils all the characteristics of right-wing populism" (p. 16). This is because the party is contrasting a supposedly corrupt elite with the rest of the allegedly homogenous society, denies that in a pluralistic democracy there are legitimately different interests, and tries to mobilise, above all, public opinion against immigration. In addition, with each change in leadership, the party seems to have become further radicalised (Schäfer & Zurheide, 2020).

To give readers some information on the ideological situation of the German political parties, Figure 1 illustrates their placement on the Left-Right ideological scale according to a representative survey by Infratest dimap, (Gothe, 2015) one of the most important institutes providing political and electoral research in Germany.

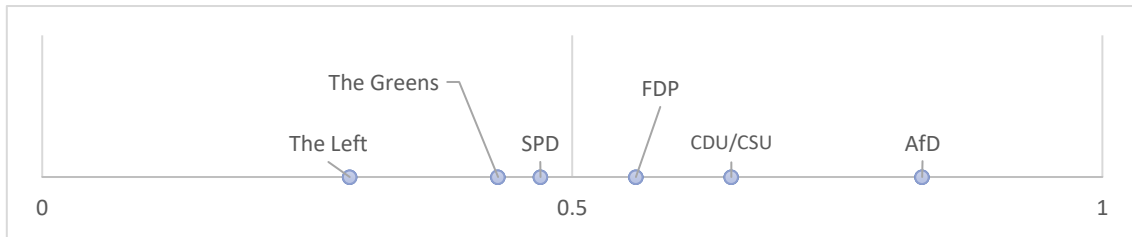


Figure 1 - Positioning of the German Parties on the Ideological Scale (2015)

In the table below, the numerical values of Figure 1 are shown. We can see that the AfD is 0.18 normalised value points to the right than the conservative Christian Democratic Party (CDU). The ideological scale has been criticised in the past and faces various challenges (Mölder, 2013, pp.37-38). Nonetheless, it is one of the most widely used and accepted tools to structure the ideological placement of political attitudes. The concept is easily understood and, therefore, serves it need to give a quick overview of the ideological sentiments of political parties in Germany (Fuchs & Klingemann, 1988, p. 484).

Political Party	Infratest dimap (2015)	Normalised value (2015)
CDU/CSU	6.5	0.65
SPD	4.7	0.47
FDP	5.6	0.56
Die Grünen	4.3	0.43
Die Linke	2.9	0.29
AfD	8.3	0.83

Table 1 - Numerical Values of Ideological Placement (2015)

2.1 Anti-Establishment Parties

One theoretical concept that should be mentioned is that of anti-establishment parties. According to Schedler (1996), these parties share a partial resentment towards the political elite – the establishment – with populist thought. Schedler defines anti-establishment actors to “declare war” (ibid, p. 292) against the political class. He uses a model which will be of relevance for the later analysis, namely the “Anti-Political Triangle”. Here, anti-establishment parties divide the political landscape into three different groups: the political elite, the general

public, and themselves. The first group represents the enemy, the second the victims, and the last the saving heroes (ibid, p. 293).

The political class is far removed from the ordinary people; they have formed, so to say, their own coalition and no longer belong to the general public. It is significant to note that the different political actors are all regarded as one antagonistic group by anti-establishment actors, which are oftentimes described with unflattering and insulting names (ibid, pp. 294-295). In addition to the clear differentiation of the perceived political elites, anti-establishment parties are also said to see the political class as incompetent, self-serving, and insincere. Such claims, however, are oftentimes unsubstantiated and overly generalised. Single occurrences are taken as indisputable proof for the overall party failure (ibid, pp. 296-297).

Another important point is that anti-establishment parties, according to Schedler, like to portray themselves as being victimised by the political elites. He states that some of the strategies of these political actors are to manipulate the general public and to paint the political class as a force suppressing emerging alternatives (ibid, p. 300). At the same time, however, they seem to portray themselves as the ones reversing the antagonistic situation the political elite created and as saving the normal citizens. While they do oppose the other political parties, they do not oppose the democratic political system as such (ibid, pp. 300-302).

This thesis does not attempt to label the AfD as an anti-establishment party, nor does it claim to have any such proof in its analysis. However, one can find some parallels in their political communication on Twitter to the definition of such political actors, which is why a basic understanding of this theoretical concept is significant for the analysis.

2.2 The AfD Twitter Profiles in this Paper

For the subsequent analysis, it is also important to know who the members of the party behind the Twitter handles are. Thirty-one accounts have been considered for the analysis. Out of those, thirteen are prominent party members with a strong online presence, and eighteen are official accounts representing the party on European Union, on federal, as well as on state level. In the table below, all the accounts with their actual names as well as with their Twitter handles are listed.

Name	Twitter Handle
Jörg Meuthen	Joerg_Meuthen
Tino Chrupalla	Tino_Chrupalla
Alice Weidel	Alice_Weidel
Stephan Brander	StBrandner
Beatrix von Storch	Beatrix_vStorch
Christian Lüth	Christianlueth
Gottfried Curio	GottfriedCurio
Hugh Bronson	HughBronson_AfD
Martin Reichhardt	M_Reichardt_AfD
Götz Frömming	GtzFrmming
Leif Erik Holm	Leif_Erik_Holm
Bjoern Höcke	BjoernHoecke
Joana Cotar	JoanaCotar
AfD	AfD
AfD in the Bundestag	AfDimBundestag
AfD in the EU-Parlament	AfDimEUPArI
AfD-Fraktion Nordrhein-Westfalen	AfD_FraktionNRW
AfD Berlin	AfDBerlin
AfD Hamburg	AfD_Hamburg
AfD-Fraktion Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	AfDFraktion_MV
AfD Nordrhein-Westfalen	AlternativeNRW
AfD Bayern	AfD_Bayern
AfD-Fraktion Berlin	AfDFraktionAGH
AfD-Fraktion Sachsen	AfD_SLT
AfD Thüringen	AfD_Thueringen
AfD Kompakt	AfDKompakt
AfD Rheinland-Pfalz	RLP_AfD
AfD-Fraktion Rheinland-Pfalz	AfDFraktionRLP
AfD Niedersachsen	AfDNds
AfD-Fraktion Niedersachsen	AfD_FraktionNds
AfD-Fraktion Hamburg	AfD_Fraktion_HH

Table 2 - List of Twitter Accounts

Now, who are the people or the entities behind the accounts and why are they important for the analysis? In this paper, the party leaders are included as well as important members of the German Bundestag, and the parliament of the European Union.

Jörg Meuthen and Tino Chrupalla are the two chairmen of the party. The economist Meuthen took office in 2015 and is, since 2017, a member of the EU Parliament, in which he is the vice-chairman of the far-right political group “Identity and Democracy”. Tino Chrupalla began his position as the second chairman in November of 2020. Alice Weidel, Stephan Brander, and Beatrix von Storch are the three vice-chairmen and chairwoman of the party. These five

constitute the leadership of the party and have their seats in Berlin (Deutscher Bundestag, 2020b).

Christian Lüth is the media spokesman, Gottfried Curio the domestic speaker, and Leif-Erik Holm, the Deputy Chairman of the AfD parliamentary group in the German Bundestag. Götz Fömming and Joana Cotar are two additional members of the German federal parliament working in Berlin (Biermann et al., 2017).

One interesting member of the party is Björn Höcke, who is quite a prominent politician. This is largely due to his leading role in the establishing of a right-wing extremist AfD movement, which formed their own wing called “der Flügel” (*the Wing*) within the party in 2015 (ntv, 2019). Both social scientists and historians believe Höcke to be a right-wing extremist, an opinion which is shared by the German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV). Since the beginning of 2020, the BfV keeps his activities under surveillance (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2019). The *Flügel* has divided the sentiments of the AfD, with some members supporting and others opposing it; the party leadership condones it. As an example, Stephan Brandner is a supporter (Müller, 2019).

Martin Reichardt is another member of the German Bundestag and is considered another important supporter of Höcke’s right-wing extremist wing. In addition, he is the chairman of the regional association AfD Sachsen-Anhalt (Saxony-Anhalt) (Mdr, 2018). The last individual politician considered for this thesis is Hugh Bronson, who was the Deputy Chairman of the AfD Berlin between June 2015 and November 2017. Since 2016, he is a member of the Berlin House of Representatives as well as part of the executive committee (Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin, 2020).

The other accounts are official profiles of the party’s organisation. The one called *AfD* is the main account of the party. *AfD in the Bundestag* and *AfD in the EU Parliament* are, respectively, the accounts of the organisation inside the German federal parliament and inside the European Parliament.

All the accounts which contain the word “Fraktion” are the official accounts of the state parliamentary group. In this case, there are the: *AfD-Fraktion Nordrhein-Westfalen*, *AfD-Fraktion Mecklenburg-Vorpommern*, *AfD-Fraktion Berlin*, *AfD-Fraktion Rheinlandpfalz*, *AfD-Fraktion Niedersachsen* and *AfD-Fraktion Hamburg*. Not every state parliamentary group is active on Twitter, which is why only those mentioned above are considered. The same is true for the official state accounts, which are *AfD Berlin*, *AfD Hamburg*, *AfD Nordrhein-Westfalen*, *AfD Bayern*, *AfD Sachsen*, *AfD Thüringen*, *AfD Rheinland-Pfalz* and *AfD Niedersachsen*. The account *AfD Kompakt* is a membership magazine of the party, which has its own Twitter profile.

Not all of Germany’s 16 states are represented in the list above. This is due to the fact that not every state account or parliamentary group is active in their Twitter presentation to the same

degree. For a visual clarification, Figure 2 depicts a map of Germany, highlighting the states with active state accounts, active parliamentary groups, and politicians, who are part of the analysis, operating from there.

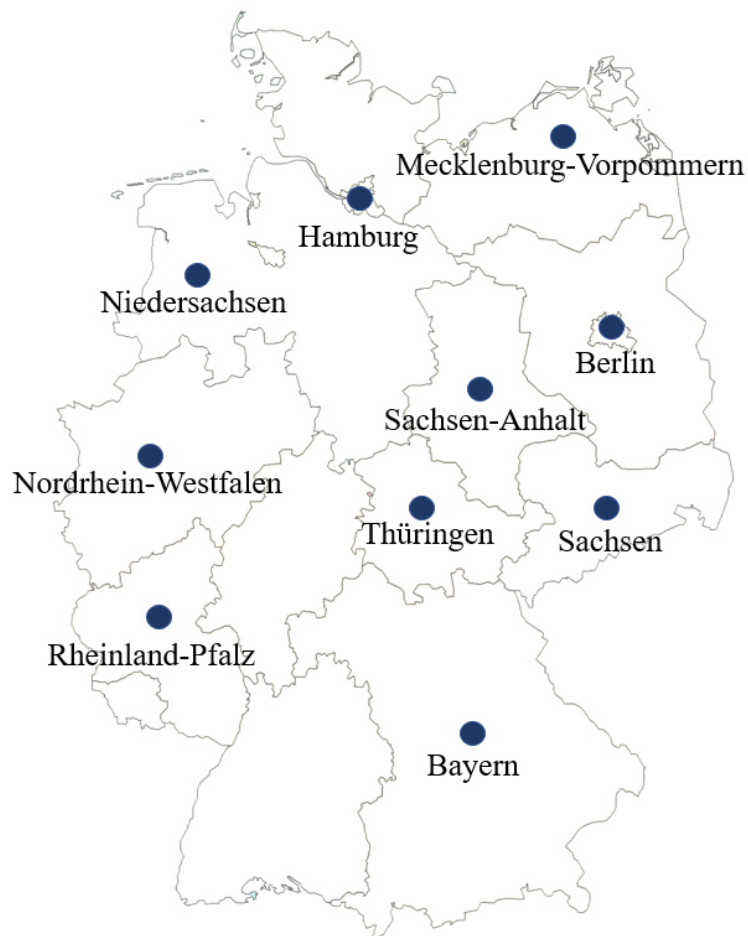


Figure 2 - Map of Germany with Active Accounts

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the AfD is very active in the online world. The next chapter will take a closer look at the social media platform Twitter, from which the data is derived, and the way it is used by political actors, the AfD in particular.

3. Twitter as a Form of Communication

Various social media channels have long since become a stable part of our lives (Posegga & Jungherr, 2019, p. 2590). Established in 2006, Twitter is a microblogging service that allows users to share short, 280 characters-long messages called tweets with their followers online. When Twitter was founded, the original idea was for it to be a platform on which users can share personal status updates. Nowadays, however, tweets can cover snippets of the users' day, personal opinions, pieces of product information, or political news. The formats of the tweets can vary extensively, ranging from short sentences, links to third party websites, pictures, or even direct messages to other users (Andranik Tumasjan, Timm Oliver Sprenger, Philipp G. Sandner, & Isabell M. Welp, 2010, p. 178). Tweets of public figures can be accessed by any member of the public, even without a Twitter profile.

3.1 Its Function as a Political Medium

An interesting fact: German chancellor Angela Merkel does not have a Twitter account. This is in stark contrast to the Twitter use of the current president of the United States, Donald J. Trump, whose active participation on the online platforms seemed to have given new momentum to its importance in political communication (Wells et al., 2016). Not a day seems to go by without him sharing at least one tweet with the world.

However, the usage of social media in the political landscape has been of importance even before. Some scholars credit Obama's successful handling of social media during his first presidential campaign as one of the headstones that established the various social media platforms, Twitter in particular, as an essential part of modern political campaigns (Andranik Tumasjan et al., 2010, p. 178).

In Germany, it is said that social media first played a role during the federal elections in 2009. The focus here, however, was neither Facebook nor Twitter, but so-called VZ-networks, e.g. SchülerVZ and StudiVZ (Schmidt, 2017, p. 616), which have been social media platforms in the German-speaking area mainly aimed at students and young adults. These platforms have lost their importance due to the rise of Twitter and Facebook and are, nowadays, partly shut down (Reißmann, 2012). In the subsequent years and political campaigns, Facebook and Twitter gained in popularity as part of the political campaign toolbox for German politicians. A study showed that in 2012, 98 per cent of all members of the Bundestag were already represented on at least one social media platform. 61 per cent have had a Facebook account, and 32 per cent have made a profile on Twitter (Oelsner & Heimrich, 2015, p. 457). Just one

year later, during the election of the 17th German Bundestag in 2013, the number of social media accounts of German politicians has risen even further as then 83 per cent had a Facebook and 53 per cent a Twitter account. However, Twitter plays a rather inferior role within the general population (Schmidt, 2017, p. 616).

In 2017, the Statista Research Department published a survey analysing the Twitter habits of the Bundestag's 709 members. The data shows that members of the Green Party have by far the most accounts with 88 per cent, while the conservative CDU/CSU had the least with only 51 per cent. Interestingly, only 59 per cent of the members of parliament belonging to the AfD had a Twitter account in 2017. The following figure shows the results of the survey in detail:

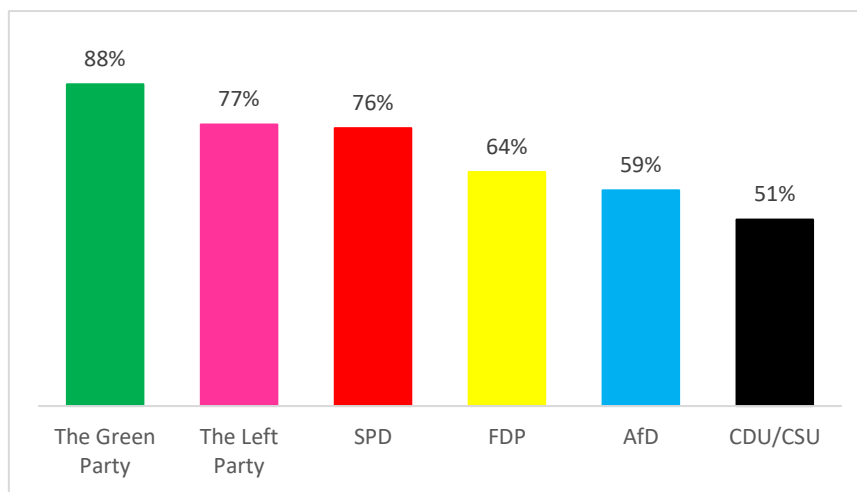


Figure 3 - Share of the Twitter-Users in the German Bundestag (2017)

Source: Statista Research Department, 2017

3.2 The Twitter-Use of the AfD

Looking through the Twitter landscape, it is clear that the AfD is represented on the social media platform at various levels. It is claimed that right from the start, the AfD relied on alternative media channels to spread its message and provide a communication channel outside mainstream media (Gäbler & Bernd, 2018).

Many party members, no matter the level of their parliamentary representation, have their own accounts, party leaders and prominent members leading the way. And, of course, there are also the official party accounts of the parliamentary factions on EU, federal, and state level, which are included in this analysis. Furthermore, one can also find accounts of even smaller legislative levels, such as cities and communes.

Alto Analytics has analysed 9.65 million posts from 756,000 users over a three-month period in 2019. About 80 per cent of the contributions were published on Twitter, with the rest on

Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. The aim of the analysis was to examine the political discourse in German-speaking countries. This study shows that around 47 per cent of all political discussion on social media platforms in German-speaking areas have a thematical connection to the AfD, despite the fact that the group of right-wing supporters only accounts for around 10 per cent of users. Furthermore, in posts which explicitly address German political parties, the AfD was named in more or less a third of the cases – both positive and negative mentions (Altland, Eckstein, Kampf, Kuch, & Strozyk, 2019).

Furthermore, the study revealed that numerous members of the AfD were represented in the list of the 30 most influential users during the evaluation period. This is in stark contrast to the members of other parties, who either did not make the list at all – as was the case for the CDU/CSU – or were just represented by one politician. The concept of influence, in this case, resulted from the user's reach plus the reach of those that interact with his or her posts. It can be assumed from this that the members of the parties represented in the Bundestag, with the exception of the AfD, do not directly communicate with other users on social media platforms sufficiently, or that the posts published there receive insufficient attention (ibid). These findings suggest that the right-wing party is more active in the interaction which their followers than other parties in the Bundestag.

Serrano, Shahrezaye, Papakyriakopoulos, and Hegelich (2019) claim that one of the social media strategies of the AfD is to make their online content go viral. To achieve this, they ask their followers to share and interact with their content, as well as use provocative tones and a critical stance towards political correctness, which is stated to be mirrored in their anti-establishment and anti-immigrant stances (pp.3-4). In their study on the social media use of the party, they have found that the AfD is the party with the largest number of tweets. Of those, 77 per cent are retweets from the regional state Twitter accounts or prominent politicians. During their time of study in 2017, the AfD seemed to be the most active party on Twitter, despite them having fewer accounts than the other political parties. This also results in them having the greatest reach and interaction compared to their political opponents (ibid, pp. 8-10).

When asked, an official statement of the AfD read that "[s]ocial media is important to us, but its influence on elections is not measurable. The members of the AfD share what is important to them of their own accord." (cited in Altland et al., 2019). The media and communication scientist, Prof. Dr Thomas Zerback, explains that "social media is a way for parties like the AfD to gain direct access to citizens. In traditional media, they have a harder time to do so than other parties" (Grieben, 2019).

4. Framing – A Framework for Analysis

The world around us is complicated. Every day, our brains are confronted with a mountain of new information consisting of words, ideas, challenges, and dreams. To make sense of this, our brains activate an interpretative framework, which is aptly called a “frame” in cognitive science (Wehling, 2018, p. 28). There are various definitions of the concept found inside the Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communications. For example, it can be defined as “the ways in which representations function to recontextualise (and thus change the meaning of) that which they represent” or as the “relating experiences to a frame of reference” (Chandler & Munday, 2011). Frames of references are, in turn, underlying schemata or mental models which are employed to make sense of our surroundings and which represent basic assumption about it (Chandler & Munday, 2011).

The structure and content of each frame are made up of our experiences in life. Frames give meaning to otherwise meaningless information by putting it into relation to what we already know, and it is through such frames that we can understand the concepts around us (Wehling, 2018, pp. 29-30). In turn, frames determine the ease with which we understand information. This is because it is only when a piece of information fits an activated frame that it is easily incorporated by our consciousness. In other words, if a certain frame of interpretation is activated in our minds, and if we are then confronted with information that does not fit into this frame, our brain reacts, as Wehling says, like a “stubborn horse” (p. 34) and refuses to accept the deviating information as part of reality (Wehling, 2018, pp. 34-37).

A good analogy is that of a picture frame, as it is most likely no accident that both the physical object and the theoretical concept share the same name. Frames put structure and order around their inner content and, through this action, clearly distinguish it from what is around it. One could also see it as a spotlight which focuses the attention of the audience on a certain issue or specific aspects of it (Hänggli & Kriesi, 2010, p. 142).

In this sense, we need to pay special attention to the verb *framing*, which derives from the noun. Framing, as opposed to the static aspect of a frame of interpretation, refers to the active process of someone doing something. Even more, it describes “an active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction” (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 614). The scholar Entman (1993) describes it as selecting particular parts of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a piece of communication to advocate a certain problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation or treatment recommendation for the issue at hand (p. 52).

Olasunkanmi Arowolo (2017) suggests that the foundation of framing theory is the focus of attention on certain events by the media, which then positions them into a field of meaning.

Therefore, cues, which constitute a specific frame, are presented to the audience, which prompts the viewers to make choices or influences how they process information. In essence, frames are cognitive shortcuts that link events or the actions of others to a bigger picture, and expectations are used to interpret everyday life (Asemah & Edegoh, 2012).

The concept of framing has gained momentum in popular science in recent years. Typing the term into a search engine results in more than 150 million hits (Google, 02.04.2020), with newspapers, journal articles, as well as blogs and dictionaries, analysing, explaining, and using the concept. It has also arrived in the field of political communication, which can be seen in the analysed data that contains tweets speaking about the framing conducted by the other parties. This will be elaborated further in Chapter 7.

One prevalent scholar of frame analysis is Erving Goffman (1974), whose ideas the analysis in this thesis is based on. According to Goffman, frames are “the principles of organization which govern events— at least social ones—and our subjective involvement in them” (pp. 10-11). As the scholars Hollander and Gordon (2006) worded quite nicely, frames help us to make sense of “what is going on here” (p. 194) and deliver an interpretation of the current happenings. This is especially true when we come across new or unfamiliar information and when the need for structure, which can aide the process of interpreting events, is high.

Nonetheless, the answer to the question is subjective, as each person’s experiences differ, which in turn might result in different interpretations of the situation. Therefore, Zerubavel (1993) defines it as such: “a frame is characterized not by its contents but by the distinctive way in which it transforms the content’s meaning” (p.11). This understanding is especially important when we regard tweets as forms of communication. Tweets are just short snippets that nonetheless convey opinions, thoughts, and worldviews of the tweeter. As they are of a communicative nature, they are likely aiming to deliver a message to the reader, trying to convince him or her of the tweeter’s version of reality.

4.1 Goffman’s Understanding of Framing

If we refer again to the Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication, we see that Goffman’s understanding of framing is defined as “the way in which we define situations in terms of regularised encounters or social episodes in order to make sense of the social world” (Chandler & Munday, 2011). Let us take a deeper look into the theory.

Goffman’s most well-known work on framing is his book, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Experience* (1974), which has since then been cited, revised, challenged, and expanded on by a multitude of various scholars. In his work, Goffman outlines his ideas, frameworks, or schemata of interpretation – presenting, as he says, “another analysis of social

reality” (Goffman, 1974, p. 2) by drawing analogies both to a picture frame and to the theatre to illustrate the concept. Goffman describes his intention for developing such a framework for interpretation in the introduction of his book:

“My aim is to try to isolate some of the basic frameworks of understanding available in our society for making sense out of events and to analyze the special vulnerabilities to which these frames of reference are subject. I start with the fact that from an individual’s particular point of view, while one thing may momentarily appear to be what is really going on, in fact, what is actually happening is plainly a joke, or a dream, or an accident, or a mistake, or a misunderstanding, or a deception, or a theatrical performance, and so forth. And attention will be directed to what it is about our sense of what is going on that makes it so vulnerable to the need for these various rereadings” (ibid, p. 10).

This quote refers to the fact that the question “what is going on here?” is not an easy one to answer. As alluded to above, subjectivity and different points of view largely influence what we perceive could be the answer.

Goffman recognises the existence of primary frameworks of interpretation which assign meaning to otherwise meaningless occurrences and events within a sea of various frameworks. The application of these frameworks happens automatically and instinctively. As he says, “we can hardly glance at anything without applying a primary framework” (ibid, p. 38). In our daily societal life, there are two distinct primary networks: natural and social ones. Natural frameworks are those that identify events which are essentially unguided and uncontrolled by humans or society. We have no control over these natural occurrences, whose natures as such are purely physical. Social frameworks, on the other hand, give an understanding of events that include the purposeful agency of an intelligent individual. In other words, such occurrences are controlled and deliberate.

However, it is important to note that these controlled actions and the intelligent agency performing them can be subject to manipulation. As Goffman describes it, they can be “coaxed, flattered, affronted, and threatened” (ibid, p. 22). Those occurrences do not happen in exclusion but in most cases surrounded by social appraisal, which enforces some manner of corrective control and helps the selection of the various social frameworks of understanding which could be applied. Taking this into consideration, it is important to acknowledge that these frameworks are dependent on one’s culture (ibid, p. 27).

Further vital concepts in his book are those of *key* and *keying*. Such a key can be regarded as a collection of conventions that transform an action or an activity – which had already been meaningful in some manner and terms of a primary framework – into something that is regarded as something else by the participants. Such a process is labelled keying by Goffman. An important point here is that the methodical transformation which is introduced by a certain keying might only slightly change the action or event as such. Still, it fully alters the participants’ perception of what is going on (ibid, pp. 43-45). Therefore, keyings might add to our understanding of our surroundings or take aspects away from it.

Continuing this line of thought, if an activity or an event can be keyed, the possibility of “rekeying” also exists. Goffman illustrates this by saying that each transformation can be regarded as another layer or “lamination”. Here, two features become apparent. One is the innermost laying, the heart of the activity, and the other one is the rim of the frame, which gives structure to the inner part (ibid, p. 82).

Another transformational process needs to be mentioned here; namely the one of *fabrication*. Fabrication describes the intentional endeavour of one or more actors to guide the perception of activity in such a way that other individuals or groups of people are led to a false belief of what is going on (ibid, p. 83).

4.2 An Extension of the Concept

Snow and Benford (1988) are scholars who have based their analysis on frame alignment and mobilization on Goffman’s frame theory as well extended and refined the existing ideas in their work. While their work is mainly focused on the study of social movements, their understanding and extension of the concept of framing can still be regarded as beneficial for this paper.

In their study, they propose three different distinctions of framing: *diagnostic, prognostic and motivational*. Diagnostic frames allow for the conversion of a phenomenon into a social problem; prognostic ones suggest possible solutions to the social problems and motivational framing incentives the receivers of the framed communication (Snow & Benford, 1988, pp.199). Such a distinction has an underlying call for action embedded, which makes it a suitable frame of analysis of political communication forms spread by political actors to their electorate and beyond. Snow and Benford call these distinctions the three core tasks of framing, which are vital for the success of participation with the frames. According to them, participation mobilization – which can be regarded as framing aim – depends on how strongly these three tasks were implemented (ibid).

Let us look at the three different types in a bit more detail. Diagnostic frames identify a problem as well as attribute blame or find a causality of the problem. Finding a consensus on the identification of the problem is oftentimes easier achieved than the attribution of causality. Prognostic frames, in turn, offer, in addition to the proposal of possible solutions, strategies, tactics and targets. In most cases, there is a direct link between diagnostic and prognostic framing efforts, even though the identification of solutions might not always be based on the identified causality. Once the problem, its (perceived) roots and the possible solutions have been determined, the third and last framing task, the rationale for action, comes into play. This is a vital aspect of participation mobilisation (ibid, pp. 200-202).

This thesis believes that such a call for action can go beyond physical action, but can also apply to make the participants believe in the framed issues or change their previous pre-conceived notions in accordance to what the frame highlights.

The two scholars, Della Porta and Diani (2006), say that frames

“must generalize a certain problem or controversy, showing the connections with other events or with the condition of other social groups; and also demonstrate the relevance of a given problem to individual life experiences. Along with the critique of dominant representations of order and of social patterns, interpretative frames must therefore produce new definitions of the foundations of collective solidarity, to transform actors’ identity in a way which favours action” (p.79).

While this is written in the context of the study of social movements, similar to the works of Snow and Benford, it can also be applied to the research area of the AfD. As a relatively new party that has quickly come to be established in the political arena and motivates established non-voters to vote for them, there are certain parallels to social movements, especially when one looks at their communication. They are quite active on social media, even more so when compared to some other parties, as seen in Chapter 3.

4.3 Implications of Political Framing

As we have seen in Chapter 4.2, the theoretical concept of framing has been applied in various cases to the dynamics of social movements. In the German context, Dieter Rucht (2015) has studied the political, right-wing movement PEGIDA, which shows that framing can aid in the explanation of political phenomena as well.

In another study in 2016, he takes a look at right-wing populist groups, once again applying the framework of framing. In this analysis, he collected various sources, including press reports, recordings, and transcriptions, but also multiple observations of his own and records of student observation teams. He says that these gathered materials document “bad taste and wild attacks” (p. 31), but also correct and false factual claims, demands to politics, historical misrepresentations, horror scenarios and, on the other side, even excuses for comments taking it too far. Based on Snow and Benford’s three distinctions, Rucht analyses right-wing populism by applying three dimensions of framing; namely: *problematization*, *assignment of blame* and *motivating factors* (Rucht, 2016, p. 31).

What is meant by these dimensions? The first one, *problematization*, refers to two figures of thought: the evocation of an acute threat and self-stylisation as victims. The acute threat may endanger symbolic assets – may they be physical or cultural – in their very existence. Such symbolic assets can be seen as identities of the affected groups, which, for example, see themselves as righteous civilians, Christians, Germans, etc, or concepts such as their shared

culture or the way “things have always been done”. More significant than the real and actual discrimination, however, is the perceived threat.

The second figure of thought within the dimension of problematization identifies the object of the (perceived) threat: the victim, which is in most cases the *self*. Common pictures which are communicated by the groups are that they are allegedly pushed to the edge of society and politics, cheated and lied to, no longer allowed to speak their mind freely, threatened to become a minority within their own country, as well as becoming a plaything of globalisation and foreign powers (ibid p. 32).

As Rucht appropriately says, those who see themselves as victims also know how to name the guilty parties. This is the second dimension: assignment of blame. In the case of right-wing populist movements, these guilty parties are, firstly, political decision-makers and, for example, the entirety of the “old parties” (a frame which is of special significance to the AfD as well and will be analysed in-depth in later chapters). Secondly, there are the cultural elites, the intellectuals, the leftists, the Antifa groups, who allegedly gloss over the perceived sad reality and justify it ideologically, and, thirdly, the outside forces, such as organised foreign groups (e.g. the CIA or Al-Qaeda) and the entirety of refugees and migrants (ibid, pp. 32-33).

The third dimension of framing, the motivating factors, contains the social construction of the own collective and the subsequent call for resistance. The own collective is the positive counterpart to the real and perceived outer threats and a homogeneous and clearly distinguishable group. To differentiate this group from others, a simple “we” or “us” can oftentimes be enough. As Rucht explains, from the scenario of the acute and multifaceted threat that the political decision-makers are not willing or able to fend off, the declared necessity of self-help and resistance arises and with it the call for self-empowerment (ibid, p. 33). An interesting observation of his is that the right-wing populists use a seemingly manageable repertoire of content-related, rhetorical, and symbolic elements. Such a basic pattern can be made accessible in its structure through the concept of framing (ibid, p. 34).

For political parties, framing might be most relevant in times of elections and political campaigning (Hänggeli & Kriesi, 2010). What does this mean for the voters? One framing theory of public opinion says that citizens are incapable of political judgement as they will cast their vote on political issues depending on how it is framed at the moment of choice (Saris & Sniderman, 2018, p. 158). This highlights the importance of framing in political communication, which also extends beyond periods of political campaigning.

To recapitulate, frames are used as frameworks of interpretation that paint situations in a certain light and induces corresponding associations, emotions, and evaluations. Now, it is time to take a deeper look into the second idea, which is being employed for this analysis: The concept of Self-Presentation.

4.4 The Concept of Self-Presentation

In his work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1956), Goffman explains his concept of self-presentation. Important to note is that he illustrated the presentation of the self as opposed to the self as such (Bonsu, 2007, p. 200). As he has done in his book on frame analysis, Goffman once again makes use of analogies to the world of theatre. Such dramaturgical devices, he says, might aid us in understanding everyday life as we, due to social and cultural conditions, play – at least to some extent – parts as if we were on a stage (Fallers, 1962). Therefore, Goffman defines strategies and principles of how we present ourselves in social settings and argues that “when an individual appears before others, he knowingly or unwittingly projects a definition of the situation, of which a conception of himself is a significant part” (Goffman, 1956, p. 242).

Framing and self-presentation are two different concepts. Therefore, one might think that their similarities end at Goffman, as he has worked extensively on both concepts. However, this paper believes that these two concepts can be combined for the analysis. Self-Presentation, or in other words “impression management”, as Goffman has coined the concept, could also be seen as a form of framing. Instead of giving meaning to situations or actions of others, self-Presentation seems to try to frame the perception of oneself in relation to others. As Bonsu (2007) has also written: “the arts of impression management may be phased into action through framing” (p. 200).

This implies that the presence of others is important, as otherwise there would be no one who is the subject of such impression management. Goffman, therefore, established the concept of “teamwork”, which facilitates the presentation of the self through the existence of a supportive group of people. According to him, such team players need to have a corporal presence so that the original actor may achieve most of his goals of self-presentation. Through their support they also share the risk of being discredited should the self-presentation of the original actor fail, which is why they are prone to ignore certain facts that might threaten the intended image one wants to portray (ibid, p. 201).

Back when Goffman first proposed this theory in 1956, the daily usage of social media as a vital part of our lives was most likely a distant thought of the future. For the role of the team players to work, therefore, they needed to have a physical presence in order to support the self-presentation of the actor. In our day and age, we have the whole world at our fingertips without leaving our desks. The interactivity of social media platforms ensures that we do not need to meet face to face in order to facilitate contact nor to communicate. These platforms

allow for the presentations of ourselves to thousands, or even millions of viewers who we, in many cases, might not know personally (Posegga & Jungherr, 2019).

While certain social cues are missing in the online world – such as body language and facial expressions – it could be argued that social media interaction substitutes the need of a corporeal copresence for the establishment of a functioning self-presentation, due to the possibility of commenting, liking, and sharing the pieces of communication. Various scholars have already drawn such a connection. Schau and Gilly (2003), for example, drew similarities at the beginning of the millennium, stating that not only the motivations of self-presentation are similar (p. 399) but that also possibilities of “self-symbolising” exist.

Bonsu (2007) further expands on Goffman’s understanding of self-presentation by studying how actors pursue certain identity goals without the need of the physical presence of others, for example through the use of media. Such an expansion is important for this paper as, in the online universe of Twitter, a corporeal presence of others is impossible.

Furthermore, even if Dieter Rucht did not refer to Goffman’s concept of Self-Presentation, the factor of self-stylisation as the victim within his dimensions of framing can be regarded as a form of self-presentation. Through this, a group is painting the image of themselves as being victimised by a threatening group of others. This understanding will be important in the later analysis of the AfD, as it is one common frame employed by the party in their communication.

4.5 Othering and the Us-vs-Them Categorization

As the framing strategies of the political communication of the AfD makes use of differentiating language, concepts such as othering and in- and out-groups will also need to be considered. Othering is well-studied within the field of social psychology. Dervin (2012, p. 187) describes othering as the process of objectifying another person or whole group by ignoring the complexity and subjectivity of the individual or his or her group (ibid). In other words, othering transforms an entity (be it an individual or a big group of people) into *the other* which in turn allows for the construction of “sameness and difference to affirm [one’s] own identity” (Dervin, 2012, p. 187). This is important because it shows that othering does not only apply to the other but also to one’s self. In the analysis of Us-vs-Them, this is a vital factor.

One of the first studies defining the concepts of the *other* and *otherness* was by Simone de Beauvoir in 1949. Since then, her work has influenced studies in varying fields and schools of thought. However, she herself was, as she acknowledged, influenced by the writings of the German philosopher Georg W. F. Hegel, who verbalised the “identification and distantiation”

in the meeting of the self with some other in his “Master-Slave Dialectic” from 1807 (Brons, 2015, p. 69). Therefore, othering can also be placed within continental philosophy (ibid).

Two relevant aspects within the study of othering are the formation of stereotypes and identity. This thesis will not deeply analyse contested concepts such as identity or stereotypes. As Dervin (2012, p. 187) has worded nicely, studying and using concepts such as (cultural) identity is moving on a slippery slope. However, it is important to realise how closely they are linked to othering and the understanding of “Us-vs-Them”.

Stereotypes can be defined as a “set of beliefs about the characteristics of a social category of people” (Dervin, 2012, p. 186), which includes personality characteristics, attributions, or behavioural descriptions, and are generally regarded as stable and decontextualised (ibid). Othering and stereotypes are central in the “Us-vs-Them” conceptualization. It has been proposed that the origins of stereotypes, as well as ethnocentrism, which describes discriminatory attitudes and behaviours (Hammond & Axelrod, 2016), can be found in social categorisation, in which a subjective classification of others as either part of one’s own group (in-group), or as members of another group (out-group) takes place. Collective pronouns (i.e. *us* and *them*) can be used to designate in-group or out-group membership (Perdue, Dovidio, Gurtman, & Tyler, 1990, p. 475). Whether someone is perceived to be part of one’s own in-group or part of another out-group can have effects on how he or she is regarded as a person. It has been found that members of an in-group tend to be evaluated more positively and are thought of to have more positive attributes (ibid).

The use of language and personal pronouns can, therefore, be significant. Perdue et al. (1990) propose that the usage of “an in-group designator (e.g., *we*) in thought or speech to refer to a person may automatically establish a positive predisposition toward that person”, while, on the other hand, using an “out-group designator (e.g., *they*) may elicit a less positive or even a negative predisposition” (p.476).

A distinction that could be of significance for this analysis is the difference between group identification and group consciousness. According to the scholars Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk (1981), group identification implies a perceived belonging to a certain social stratum in which one locates oneself. Group consciousness, however, possesses the added layer of political awareness, or even ideology, of the group’s location in society, including the possibility of commitment which strives at realising the group’s interests (ibid, p. 495). If we look at political settings, members of a party might come from different social groups, but they are bound by their ideological understanding, common interests, and a collective will for action.

5. Methods

The analysis of political communication is oftentimes analysed through the lenses of the interdisciplinary analytical approach of Discourse Analysis or Critical Discourse Analysis. These methodologies aim to examine language as a form of social practice (Masroor, Khan, Aib, & Ali, 2019, p. 4). While certainly intriguing, this thesis, however, will rather make use of the methodology of content analysis based on Goffman's theories. By structuring the data into categories, various frames can be identified and analysed. The concepts of "Othering" and the "Us-vs-Them" polarization will form the basis for the category building.

As introduced in the Introduction, the following questions guide the research process:

- Which words or phrases are used to frame reality in a particular way?
- How do the words used fit into the "Us-vs-Them" categorisation?
- How are the categories situated in a wider societal context?

In total, 1785 tweets have been extracted within a period of four weeks between January and February 2020. Of these 1785 tweets, 1201 were assigned into coded segments. A coded segment describes the tweet (or part of a tweet) that has been assigned to a category. Not all of the extracted tweets include frames relevant for the analysis and are, therefore, not part of coded segments. For example, many were sharing links or a piece of news information without any subjective messaging. Subsequently, 1536 coded segments have been identified.

It is important to note that some of the coded segments belong to two or even three different categories. In many cases, for example, the tweets portray the user's view of their party – for example, either as innocent, superior or portrayed in a victim role – while contrasting this to the, again, for example, violence or loss of reality of the others.

5.1 Formation of Categories

Categories are needed in order to structure and to make sense of the data sample. As stated above, the aim of this work is to connect Goffman's ideas of framing and self-presentation to online political communication by analysing the case of the German right-wing party AfD. The scholars Masroor et al. (2019) have also looked to Twitter to analyse *othering* at the case of Pakistani politicians. Their categories, which they have published in their peer-reviewed journal article, are divided into the section of "Negative Other-Presentation" and "Positive Self-Presentation". While they did not make use of Goffman's framework of framing, their division of categories can also be applied to the case of the German party.

However, as there are political and structural differences between Pakistan and Germany, it would not be advised to base this analysis on their categories. For example, their category “the Other is a Looter” (ibid, p. 7) does not reflect a sentiment prevalent in the collected data. Therefore, it is important to consider the content of the analysed tweets when thinking of the categories.

In order to analyse the frames used by the AfD in their daily Twitter use, the tweets have also been divided into the two primary categories Masroor et al. (2019) proposed. Within these, two further categories were established to allow for an in-depth analysis. These categories are based on the concepts of othering and the division between in-group and out-group. The categories were developed through the engagement with the collected data and represent the employed framing strategies by the party.

Such an approach is based on “grounded theory”, which assumes that “researchers can and should develop theory from rigorous analyses of empirical data” (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2015, p. 1). This premise implies simultaneous data collection and analysis as the structure of the analysis is based on the data available. Glaser, one of the originators of the theory, for example, developed theoretical codes, which are “thematic groups”, here describing the framing strategies, on the basis of which the individual data segments can be grouped. The aim is to be able to work out relationships and connections (Polit, Beck, Hungler, & Bartholomeyczik, 2012).

Through such a process, the following categories were developed:

Negative Other-Presentation

- The Others are Hostile to Democracy
- The Others are Violent
- The Others are Lying and Untruthful
- The Others are Remote-Controlled
- The Others are Damaging to the Country
- The Others are Clueless
- The Others are Obsolete
- The Others are Spineless
- The Others are Useless

Positive Self-Presentation

- We are the Saviours of the Country
- We are the Victims
- We are the Popular Ones

For the analysis of the tweets, no preselection of tweets was done; this means that all of the tweets composed by the relevant accounts were extracted whether they would prove useful for analysis or not. A reason for this is that the analysis aims to be as objective as possible, and the data selection is a crucial aspect in which personal subjectivity can easily taint the data. Nonetheless, this paper acknowledges that true objectivity is not possible. Despite there

being no preselection, only a few tweets will be outlined in the chapter below for the analysis of the framing. The examples are chosen on the basis of the framing strategies they are depicting.

The analysed accounts are all associated with the party. Followers and supporters, as well as retweets, are not considered. The AfD itself, as well as its party members, parliamentary groups, state representatives, members of parliament, cities and state associations, have in many cases their own Twitter account. Identifying and finding each and every one of these accounts as well as confirming their integrity would have gone beyond the scope of this thesis.

Retweets, which are tweets written by another account than the one sharing the tweets, are not considered within the analysis. Reason for this is that the retweet, in many cases, would have been part of the analysis in any case as the original tweet might have been in great likelihood written by one of the considered accounts. More importantly, however, retweets are not the original words of the analysed accounts. While the retweets do reflect the accounts own opinion in most cases, the possibility is still there that the consideration of them could skew the results of the analysis. Therefore, only original posts have been included within the extracted tweets for the analysis.

To help with the extraction of the data and the qualitative analysis, the digital tool Maxqda has been used. It allowed for the collection of tweets from the designated accounts. In addition, word clouds were created with the help of the programme.

As the original tweets are in German, English translations will be provided for the tweets that are included in this paper. Furthermore, a list of all the accounts with links to their Twitter profiles can be found in the annex of this paper. As they are public accounts, all their tweets can be looked up on Twitter.

Many of the words found are not surprising to political communication. One can distinguish words such as “Fraktion” (*parliamentary group*), “Bundestag”, “Abgeordnetenhaus” (*House of Representatives*), “Wähler” (*voter*), or “Pressesprecher” (*press spokesperson*). This is not surprising. In a similar fashion, we can distinguish hashtags the party seems to use on a daily basis. Examples for this are “nie wieder” (*never again*) and “wähldichwarm” (*vote yourself warm*). Both can be analysed as specific frames relating to the presentation of others as well as to the self-presentation of the party. Speaking of possible frames, the words “Altparteien” (*old parties*) and “Staatsfunk” (*state broadcaster*) are oftentimes found in the party’s communication and will be analysed in the following chapter.

In addition, many of the shown words are account names of notable party members. This suggests a network of sorts between the active members in which they are replying to one another and sharing each other’s’ quotes. This is true for both actual party members as well as official accounts representing the party on the federal or a state level.

Another notable aspect is the presence of current trends within the word cloud. One such trend is the governmental crisis in the state of Thüringen, also called Thüringen-crisis, which took place at the beginning of this year. During the period of extraction, the election of the Minister-President of the state of Thüringen was being held on 5 February 2020. This election turned into a small governmental crisis as the elected Minister-President stepped back after only one day in office due to countrywide criticism. It had been the first time in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany that a Minister-President had been elected through the votes of right-wing populist – and in parts, right-wing extremist – members of the party AfD (Hille, 2020).

The initial situation after the state election in October of the previous year showed that building a coalition proved to be difficult as none of the preferred coalitions had the necessary majority to rule. Yet, none of the parties was willing to enter into coalition talks with the AfD. The FDP for example, Germany’s liberal party, stated already at the end of October that it would not cooperate with said right-wing party nor with the left-wing party Die Linken (Titz & Weiland, 2019).

There were three candidates, most importantly Bodo Ramelow, who was backed by the SPD, the Green Party, and the Left Party, and Thomas Kemmerich, the candidate of the FDP. In the end, Kemmerich won the race. However, the results of the secret voting showed that the AfD unanimously voted in favour for Kemmerich despite having had their own candidate still in the running. Kemmerich’s election, therefore, had been dependent on the votes of the right-wing populist politicians (Hille, 2020). This resulted in a nationwide scandal both in the press as well as in all levels of politics in Germany. State ministers stepped back, and politicians of other parties not only refused to cooperate with Kemmerich but also openly called him a hypocrite and charlatan despite his assurances to be unwilling to cooperate with the AfD (Nimz, 2020). In the political commentary of the press, Kemmerich’s election as Minister-President was

named a “political disgrace” (Fischer, 2020) “limitless opportunism” (Konietzny, 2020), and a “historical incision” (Hebel, 2020).

Just four days later, Kemmerich stepped back, also upon the advice of his party leader. However, he remained the acting Minister-President until later Bodo Ramelow was formally elected one month later. The AfD has been very critical towards the proceedings, which is reflected in their tweets that have been collected for this thesis. In the analysis section, it will be described how party members saw this as an attack on democracy and how they used this to present themselves as the “bürgerliche Mitte”, a German term for the common middle of the civic society which is in contrast to their placement on the ideological scale. We can see the importance of the Thüringen crisis by the appearance of words such as “Thüringen” (740 mentions), “abgesetzt” (*degraded*, 360 mentions), and “Kemmerich” (147 mentions).

Something similar can be observed when regarding the most frequent hashtags. Of all the tweets the five most used ones are, in order #afd (607 times), #cdu (109 times), #thüringen (101 times), #bundestag (97 times), and #merkel (76 times). During the time period in which the tweets were collected, the election and subsequent crisis in Thüringen, therefore, seemed to be one of the central topics the party members tweeted about.

It is interesting to see that the hashtag #cdu was the second most used. Despite being the party closest to the AfD on the ideological spectrum, the CDU distinguishes itself from the AfD (Matthias Dilling, 2018). By analysing the tweets, we can observe that most of these hashtags were also used in relation to the Thüringen-crisis.

It is important to note that the AfD is part of the opposition and, therefore, criticism of the ruling parties is to be expected. Nonetheless, we will see that the tweets and the employed framing strategies can go beyond grounded and substantiated criticism and make use of insults, mocking and negative insinuations. In the next chapter, the tweets and the included frames will be analysed in further detail.

7. Analysis of the Tweets

The name of the AfD alone is a specific frame. “Alternative for Germany” implies that the current mainstream way of operation does not work and that an alternative is needed. This frame is featured in much of the party’s official communication and is accepted and repeated by their voters. Terms such as “wahre Alternative” (*true alternative*), which can be found in various of the tweets, seem to indicate that all the other perceived ways of politics are not true nor efficient. The party’s opponents are addressing this frame as well, by, for example, labelling the AfD to be “without alternative” or to be “no alternative”. As Wehling (2018, p. 52) says, communication within a frame, however, is accepting it, no matter if one negates or opposes it. Negating it means activating it. Even by stressing the negation, the AfD is termed an alternative in such phrases. Opponents of the party are, therefore, seemingly accepting of the fact that an alternative to the current political landscape is needed.

The distribution of the coded segments for both the Negative Other-Presentation and the Positive Self-Presentation is depicted in Table 3 below. Categories of the Negative Other-Presentation are illustrated in a lighter blue, while those of the Positive Self-Presentation are shown in a darker colour.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
The Others are Damaging to the Country	242	15.76
The Others are Useless	190	12.37
We are the Saviours of the Country	185	12.04
The Others are Hostile to Democracy	170	11.07
The Others are Clueless	145	9.44
The Others are Violent	128	8.33
The Others are Obsolete	113	7.36
We are the Victims	102	6.64
The Others are Remote-Controlled	85	5.53
The Others are Lying and Untruthful	77	5.01
We are the Popular Ones	61	3.97
The Others are Spineless	38	2.47
TOTAL	1536	100

Table 3 - Coded Segments of All Categories

In the next sub-chapters, we are going to take a closer look at the various categories and the frames that belong to them. Special attention during the identification and explanation of the

frames used will be paid to Rucht's dimensions of problematization, assignment of blame and motivating factors.

The analysis starts with the Negative Other-Presentation as there are more categories in this section, before going to the study of the Positive Self-Presentation.

7.1 Negative Other-Presentation

Employing a communication of Negative Other-Presentation can be seen as following a strategy which paints an *Other* in a bad light and creates a negative image of them in the eye of the public (Masroor et al., 2019). As in their study, we can also observe various ways and sub-strategies with the help of which such a negative image is constructed. These nine ways are separated into nine different categories in which the according frames are analysed.

There are 1.181 coded segments which have been analysed for the Negative Other-Presentation. It is important to note that not all categories have the same number of coded segments. The reason for this is most likely that some topics and frames belonging to certain categories have been more important to the party members as they were more frequently posted.

Below, we can see the distribution of the coded segments per category:

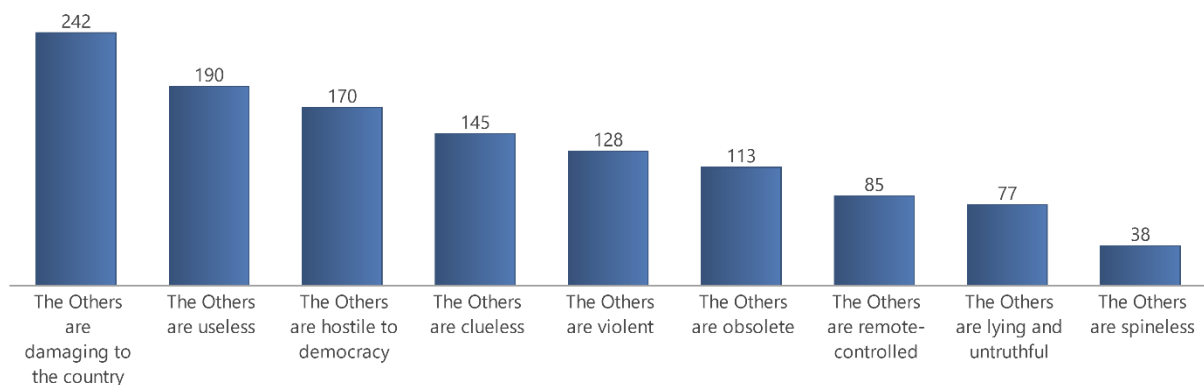


Figure 5 - Coded Segments per Category for the Negative Other-Presentation

The category *The Others are damaging to the country* has the most assigned tweets while the category *The Others are spineless* has the least.

To start the analysis of each category, a word cloud of the most frequent words within the category illustrates the important themes and topics the party members talk about. As in Chapter 6, prepositions, conjunctions, and, here, auxiliary verbs have been removed from the analysis. In most cases, these are the 150 most used words. However, as only words that appear at least on two separate occasions are included in the word clouds, some depict less than 150 words in their illustration. This is especially true for the category *The Others are spineless*, in particular, because this category includes the lowest number of coded segments.

In most of the word clouds, the word AfD is the most frequent one. This is important to know and an interesting result as such, which will be highlighted in the later chapter on the Discussion of the Results. In the following chapters of the categories, however, this will be in most cases left out for now as the other leading words are the crucial ones for the analysis.

7.1.1 The Others are Hostile to Democracy

While it not the one with the most coded segments, its content is significant. The tweets of this category relate nearly exclusively to the state election in Thüringen. As said above, this so-called Thüringen-crisis occupied the country during the period of data collection.

This can also be easily seen in the depicted word cloud of the most frequent words of the tweets in this category. Words such as “Thüringen”, “Ramelow”, “Kemmerich”, and, of course, “Demokratie” (*democracy*), as well as party names such as “CDU” and “SPD” are central topics. All these words have at least 20 mentions in the tweets, with the words “democracy”, “Thüringen”, “Merkel” and “CDU” leading the list.



Figure 6 - Word Cloud of the Tweets of the Category: *The Others are Hostile to Democracy*

Some other words appear which are of interest for the subsequent frames. These are, for example, “rückgängig” (*revoked*), “Ostbeauftragter” (*representative for the East*), and “Amtsmissbrauch” (*abuse of authority*).

Looking through the tweets, it becomes clear that the way the Thüringen-crisis developed seems to be regarded as an attack to democracy by the AfD. They say that a democratic vote has been revoked by chancellor Merkel and her party, CDU, who put their own candidate into place. If we go back to Rucht’s dimensions, we can see that both the aspects of problematization and assignment of blame seem to be fulfilled. The foundation of democracy is, according to the frame, threatened by Merkel and the CDU.

Therefore, it seems to be of no surprise that the frames utilised here are connected to the concept of democracy, as well as the perceived threat to it. One frame that seems to be especially strong is the one of “Demokratiefeinde” (enemies of democracy), “Gefährder der Demokratie” (*a person or a group of people threatening democracy*), and “Demokratieverächter/in” (*person despising democracy*).

Let us start with the following tweet to illustrate the frame:

#Thüringen ist der Tropfen, der das Fass zum Überlaufen bringt. Die #Kanzlerin verfügt selbstherrlich, die demokratisch einwandfreie Wahl von #Kemmerich rückgängig zu machen. Dazu @Alice_Weidel: „Demokratieverächterin #Merkel muss endlich abtreten!“ AfD

Translation: #Thüringen is the drop that causes the pot to boil over. The #Chancellor decrees high-handedly to reverse the flawless democratic election of #Kemmerich. Alice_Weidel: "Democracy despising #Merkel must finally resign!" #AfD

Author: AfD in the Bundestag; Time of Posting: 13.02.2020, 15:55:11

Here, Kemmerich’s election in Thüringen is described as being flawlessly democratic, and Merkel actively sabotaged democracy by reversing the democratic proceedings. The German word *rückgängig* – which can be either be used as parts of a verb, translating *to reverse something*, or as an adjective with the meaning of being *revoked* – is one that the chancellor has used herself. After the election, she was quoted saying that “the election of this Minister-President was a unique process that broke with a basic conviction for the CDU and also for me, namely that no majorities should be won with the help of the AfD” (WELT, 2020a). Furthermore, she stated that the process was “unforgivable” and the election needs to be made *rückgängig* – to be revoked (Pany, 2020).

Therefore, this is not something the party made up. However, Kemmerich stepped back, and a new election led to Ramelow becoming the new Minister-President. This shows that democratic processes did not just stop. After stepping down, the FDP politician Kemmerich was quoted as saying that his “resignation was unavoidable”. In an effort to explain his decision, he said that “the AfD tried to damage democracy with a perfidious trick”. He continued saying that “[d]emocrats need democratic majorities. Which obviously cannot be achieved in

this Parliament" (Thomas Kemmerich, cited in Steinmetz, 2020). The aim of this thesis is not to debate whether democratic principles were disregarded in Kemmerich's election, in the way his electoral victory was treated, or in the subsequent election of Ramelow.

It seems that there is no clear "yes" or "no" to these questions, which are with no doubt being analysed by political scientists in Germany. This thesis does not attempt to pass judgement on the election proceedings nor to evaluate what was right or wrong. Both sides in this argument seem to accuse the other of working against democracy. Nonetheless, it needs to be stated that the chancellor did not install Bodo Ramelow as Minister-President by herself; he gained that title through the new election which was initiated after Kemmerich stepped down (Schulz, 2020).

In this frame, the AfD calls Merkel someone who despises democracy. As an opposition party, it is not strange that they would criticise the government, but saying that the head of government is hostile towards democracy is unusual. The choice of words – despising democracy – is quite strong and paints a clear picture of how the chancellor is viewed by members of the AfD.

Similar aspects can be seen in the next tweet. Here, they talk about a political purge, once again insinuating that the ruling parties are not adhering to democratic principles. The others, in this case, also refer to the political opposition of the AfD and the current ruling government.

Die #Entlassung von Christian #Hirte ist ein Skandal! „Die Entlassung von Christian Hirte trägt Züge einer Säuberungsaktion. Offenbar soll nun jeder politisch zur Strecke gebracht werden, der es wagte dem FDP-Ministerpräsidenten zu seiner Wahl zu gratulieren“

Translation: The dismissal of Christian Hirte is a scandal! "The dismissal of Christian Hirte bears the hallmarks of a purge. Apparently, everyone who dared to congratulate the FDP Minister-President on his election is now to be politically run down.

Author: Leif-Erik Holm; Time of posting: 08.02.2020, 13:09:22 o'clock

This tweet refers indirectly to the Thüringen crisis. Christian Hirte was the Commissioner for the "new states", *die neuen Länder* – a term that describes the Eastern German states which joined the Federal Republic of Germany after the Reunion. He stepped back from this office in February 2020 at Merkel's suggestion (WELT, 2020b).

The reason for this was, as the tweet suggested, his congratulations towards Kemmerich, after which the SPD and the opposition parties (the Greens, the Left Party and the FDP) also insisted on his resignation. The leader of the SPD, therefore, welcomed the resignation by stating that "for [them] his remaining in office would not have been acceptable" (Saskia Esken, cited in *ibid*). The head of the Left Party's parliamentary group declared that the step was "necessary" and "logical", as he told a newspaper, and he stated that "those who congratulate Kemmerich on his election have not paid attention in history lessons. And, therefore, has no

place in the federal government” (Dietmar Bartsch, cited in *ibid*). Such statements highlight the ideological gap between the AfD and the other parties and also reveal how the right-wing party is viewed on the political parkette.

The resignation of Hirte and the perspective with which it is viewed, therefore, change how the issue is framed. For the other parties, it seemed to be Hirte’s responsibility after seemingly celebrating an election which was made possible through the support of, as they regard the AfD, a right-wing extremist party. The AfD, on the other hand, frames it in a way that suggests that Hirte was forced out of office for simply accepting the outcome of a democratic election. Furthermore, they appear to be suggesting that anyone who opposes the views of the other parties will be politically prosecuted.

Again, it needs to be said that this thesis offers no judgement on whether the resignation of Hirte and the issues surrounding this decision were right or wrong. What is relevant for this analysis is the existence of the opposing frames, which both seem to suggest that the *other* is hostile to democracy.

The next tweet moves away from the context of the Thüringen-crisis. Again, the *others* are political opponents; however, this time, politicians of the social democratic party SPD.

Der Realitätsverlust des Hr. Lauterbachs ist pathologisch. Die @spdde ist Steigbügelhalter linksextremer Demokratiefeinde. Daran ändert auch das Scheitern der schlimmsten Antidemokraten @Karl-Lauterbach & Ralf Stegner bei Vorstandswahlen nichts. Hetze und Gewaltaufrufe = #SPD

Translation: The loss of reality of Mr Lauterbach is pathological. The @spdde is a steppingstone for left-wing extremist enemies of democracy. Even the failure of the worst anti-democrats @Karl-Lauterbach & Ralf Stegner in executive board elections does not change this. Hate and calls for violence = #SPD

Author: Martin Reichhardt; Time of posting: 09.02.2020, 15:44:41 o'clock

There are some aspects we need to unpack first. Karl Lauterbach and Ralf Stegner are both politicians of the social democratic party SPD. Lauterbach is a current member of the German Bundestag since 2005 (Deutscher Bundestag, 2020c). Stegner was the Finance Minister (2003-2005) and the Minister for the Interior (2005-2008) of the state of Schleswig-Holstein, and has been since 2008 the chairman of the SPD faction in the state parliament (SPD, 2020). Both are, therefore, experienced politicians and part of integral democratic processes.

In this tweet, however, they are not regarded as representatives of democracy, but are reframed as not only anti-democratic, but as the *schlimmsten*, the worst anti-democrats. The tweet refers to a Twitter post made by Lauterbach, in which he says: “[t]he SPD is not only used as a stronghold against the right. Without the SPD, our welfare state would very quickly become fractured (...). The AfD would benefit from both of these” (Lauterbach, 09.02.2020). This view on the Social Democratic Party is, therefore, out of Reichardt’s view a “loss of reality”.

Let us look at some tweets to illustrate the framing strategy. The first one can be read below:

2-Klassen-Sicherheit: Wenn der Reichstag zur Festung ausgebaut werden muss, mit "Aha-Graben" und 2,5m hohen Mauern, reift innerhalb der Zitadelle hoffentlich endlich das Aha-Erlebnis, dass effektiver Grenzschutz nötig ist und Migrationsbewegungen keine Naturereignisse sind.

Translation: 2-class security: If the Reichstag has to be converted into a fortress, with "aha-trench" and 2.5m high walls, hopefully, the aha-moment will finally mature within the citadel that effective border protection is necessary and that migration movements are not natural phenomena.

Author: Gottfried Curio; Time of Posting: 14.02.2020, 13:34:41 o'clock

Now, first of all, what is meant by the term "aha-trench"? In English, the more common term would be "ha-ha trench", which describes a landscape design that offers an uninterrupted view while providing a vertical barrier. The name is said to derive from the expression of surprise, as one can only notice the trench when they are standing right in front of it (Porter, 2019). In German, this surprise is worded by saying "aha". This expression is also used when someone comes to a realisation, which also explains the term "aha-moment", namely a moment in which the symbolic penny has dropped. In recent discussions, the federal government is considering such a ha-ha trench as a protective measure for the Reichstag, the building of the Federal Parliament (Deutscher Bundestag, 2020a).

Employing Rucht's dimensions of framing, the tweet insinuates that there is an active threat towards the German parliament for which protective countermeasures need to be taken. The tweet frames the migration movements as the guilty party, which makes the need for these actions necessary. It seems to be implied that the political decision-makers have yet to realise the perceived connection between these protective measures and the flow of migration. While there does not appear to be a call to resistance as the motivational factor, the party has a plan for what should be done and what should be believed, namely that the government should initiate stricter border controls, and that the current level of migration is allegedly not part of "natural" events.

As a side note, it should be mentioned that the tweet does not refer to any data which supports the claim that the ha-ha trench is being built in direct response to the supposedly violent threat of migrants.

The next tweet also refers to migrants and refugees as the violent *others*:

#Asylbewerberheim in #Brandenburg: „#Flüchtling“ aus #Afrika übergießt 61-Jährige in Gemeinschaftsküche mit kochendem Wasser – Mann aus dem #Tschad wieder auf freiem Fuß! Frau schwer verletzt in #Spezialklinik

Translation: #Home for asylum seekers in #Brandenburg: "#Refugee" from #Africa pours boiling water over 61-year-old in communal kitchen - man from #Chad at large again! Woman seriously injured in #Special clinic

Author: AfD; Time of Posting: 17.01.2020, 10:02:21 o'clock

First of all, the crime mentioned above cannot be excused, and the perpetrator needs to be held to justice. This tweet as such, however, is an example for which the inclusion of a broader perspective is important for the analysis. As horrible as this crime is, it is a snapshot representing an individual, but not a group of his peers. By picking this example, it can be argued that the AfD is portraying an image of the average refugee from the African continent. Taking the action of one and framing him as the “refugee from Africa” and the “man from Chad” it seems that he is no longer perceived as an individual but as a representative of everyone from his group.

When we employ a wider context of analysis, one could say that the party seems to not just be talking about this specific man and the specific legal proceedings of this case, but also portrays their general view on refugees and migration as such, as well as the current policies of the government regarding the issue. If this man is regarded as representing his whole group, the picture of violent others, who are seemingly exempt from criminal prosecution is painted.

Other groups who are subject to the framing strategy of this category are, as already seen in the list of the most frequent words, people associated with the Left Party and followers of left-wing ideologies. Frames that came up frequently are “left-wing extremists”, “left-wing terrorists” and the word “Mauermörderpartei”, which literally translates to “wall murderer party”. With this label, the party refers to the former SED, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, which was the ruling party in the former German Democratic Republic, the GDR. The words “wall murderer” most likely refers to the shoot to kill policy regarding people trying to flee into the West (Borchers & Krause, 2009).

In their tweets, the AfD refers not only to members of the Left Party (which has roots with the SED, but cannot be regarded as the direct successor and is its own party (Decker & Neu, 2013, pp. 316-318) as the “Wall Murderer Party”, but also associates the SPD and the Green Party with this term. This term has a clear undercurrent of violence. By referring to the other parties as, for example, the “embellisher of the *Mauermörderpartei*” (Stephan Brandner, 19.01.2020), the “communist of the *Mauermörderpartei*” (Beatrix von Storch, 08.02.2020), or as one who has “no scruples to join forces with representatives of the *Mauermörderpartei*” (Stephan Brandner, 06.02.2020), the other parties are framed to accept and empower this perceived violence.

Another term with an undercurrent of violence is “Merkelmiliz” (*Merkel militia*). Such a frame insinuates that the supporters of the chancellor are a violent militia. Interestingly, it can be observed in the data set that members of the AfD use this term as a hashtag behind statements that have otherwise no reference to Merkel nor the supposed violence of her supporters. This seems to have been done to spread the message in their tweets. In addition to implying that the chancellor employs her own militia, the party members are also using words such as “God

Translation: +++Honecker would be proud of you! +++ On the Green "peace research" proposal, #AfD-MP Dr Michael Ependiller explains: "Once again, the Greens are only interested in money behind the do-gooder facade! #Greens

Author: AfD im Bundestag; Time of Posting: 14.02.2020, 10:37:41 o'clock

The object of the framing here is the Green Party. They proposed, in a parliamentary motion, to strengthen the German Foundation for Peace Research through a one-time increase of the foundation capital (Schmid, 2020). The AfD takes this proposal as evidence that the Green Party is seemingly only interested in money, a perceived fact which they are hiding from the public. Interesting is also the insinuation that Erich Honecker, one of the communist leaders of the GDR, would approve of the Green Party today.

By suggesting that the Greens have a "do-gooder façade", the AfD is seemingly accusing the other party of framing the narrative and presenting themselves as something they are not. In their tweet, the party seems to try to expose that framing and unmask what they believe – and what they want their followers to believe – is the truth.

Something similar can be observed in the next tweet by the party:

Günther ist Beispiel für grüne Doppelmoral: Öffentlich Wasser predigen und heimlich Wein trinken. Günther forderte vollmundig, Regierung müsse bei der Umrüstungspflicht für Kläranlagen endlich aktiv werden. Für ihn selbst gilt das offenbar nicht.

Translation: Günther is an example of green double standards: preaching water in public and secretly drinking wine. Günther demanded in no uncertain terms that the government should finally take action when it comes to mandatory retrofitting of sewage treatment plants. Apparently, this does not apply to himself.

Author: AfD Sachsen; Time of Posting: 03.02.2020, 16:46:26 o'clock

Here, the object of the criticism is Wolfram Günther, a Green Party politician who is additionally currently the Minister of Environment in the state of Sachsen. It has been found that he has been several years behind schedule with the modernisation of an outdated sewage treatment plant on his private property (Moritz, 2020). The Green Party has been advocating for more renovations of sewage plants, which is why this incident is depicted as an example of hypocrisy of the Green Party. This hypocrisy is clearly illustrated by saying that the politician is "preaching water in public and secretly drinking wine", which implies that he misleads the public.

Once again, the viewpoint of a wider context aids the analysis. The AfD is not just talking about a single neglect of a single politician. They are clearly stating that Günther is an example of "green double standards", which implies that, in this case, he is representing the party as a whole. He and the party are portrayed as untruthful and living by different standards than those they are demanding of others. In Goffman's words, one could argue that the AfD is rekeying the environmentally friendly image the name of the Green Party might usually evoke into an image of hypocrites who lie about their commitment to sustainability.

To end the analysis of this sub-strategy, there are two further terms we need to name: *Lügenpresse* (*lying press*) and fake news. The usage of the term *Lügenpresse* has been

One of the examples in which the term is used in the tweets can be seen here:

Klasse: Hochbezahlter 🤖 #Staatsfunkler gibt #Altparteien Handlungsanweisungen -
#Deutschland2020 😊

Translation: Wonderful: Highly paid 🤖 #State broadcaster gives #old parties instructions for action - #Germany2020 😊

Author: Stephan Brandner; Time of Posting: 06.02.2020, 09:32:32 o'clock

This tweet is interesting as it seems to imply the opposite as the frame of *Staatsfunk*. Instead of the state controlling what the broadcasters can distribute and the ruling parties deciding what information the public receives from the media, it is stated that members of the public broadcasting system can instruct the (ruling) parties on what to do. This shows that the frame is used in a flexible manner. In the application of Rucht's dimension of problematisation, the perceived threat and the identification of the victims are similar. Both times, the threat is the manipulation of the public; either through active misinformation that the state is allegedly spreading or through the supposed influence of the media on the decision-making of the other political parties. And, while the flow of direction is opposite in both frames (ruling coalition manipulating the media vs media influencing politicians), both actors are seen as the guilty party.

With the hashtag #Germany2020, the party seems to insinuate that this manipulation of political decision-making by the media is common in the country which is not governed by the AfD. This framing strategy, however, goes beyond the perceived political influence of and on the media. In the next tweet it is claimed that the CDU seems to be actively manipulating the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution:

Es zeichnet sich nun auch in Sachsen ab, dass der Verfassungsschutz zum willfährigen Machtinstrument der #CDU umfunktioniert werden soll. Bereits in der Bundesbehörde wurde der Präsident, @HGMaassen, auf das Abstellgleis geschoben. (@Huetter_Carsten)

Translation: It is now also becoming apparent in Saxony that the Office for the Protection of the Constitution is to be converted into a compliant instrument of power of the #CDU. Already in the Federal Office, the president, @HGMaassen, was pushed onto the sidetrack. (@Huetter_Carsten)

Author: AfD Sachsen; Time of Posting: 14:38:06 o'clock

The AfD is referring to speculations in the press that Gordian Meyer-Plath, the head of the Sachsen State Office for the Protection of the Constitution, might need to leave his office (Herold & Debski, 2020). The other person the party is referring to is Hans-Georg Maaßen, who had been the president of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution until 2018, but was forced to retire after a series of controversies, in one of which he stated that there are "radical left-wing forces" inside the SPD. The AfD, on the other hand, supported the former president (Odg & Ghe, 2018).

Going back to Rucht's dimension, the AfD frames the threat as being the perceived manipulation of a Federal and a State Office by one of the ruling parties, with the victims being those that seemingly try to defend right and order, in this case, Meyer-Plath and Maaßen. The guilty party of this frame is named as the CDU. Again, there is no clear call for action or resistance, but it can be argued that the call for action is, in this case, the invitation to adopt a certain belief.

The frame makes use of very direct language by claiming that the CDU is aiming to convert the Office for the Protection of the Constitution into a "compliant instrument of power". This implies that the Christian Democrats are seemingly abusing their democratic power in a supposed governmental overreach. At the same time, the tweet seems to suggest that the Office will no longer have its own authority but will rather be controlled by the government. This shows, however, that many of the framing strategies are interlinked as we could also make a case for a strategy which portrays the *other* as hostile to democracy.

7.1.5 The Others are Damaging to the Country

With this strategy, the AfD is highlighting how the *other* is, allegedly, damaging the country. One could argue that all the other framing strategies are damaging in nature, but this category looks at cases, in which the, mainly political, *other* is seemingly willfully taking damaging actions on a structural level.



Figure 10 - Word Cloud of the Tweets of the Category: The Others are Damaging to the Country

Looking at the word cloud, we see mainly words from the political landscape, such as party names, individual politicians, and political termini. In this case, no specific frames can be distinguished as of special significance due to their frequency. Therefore, let's examine some of the tweets belonging to this category. The first tweet takes a look at an example of monetary politics in the city of Berlin:

Irrsinn, was die #BVG auf Weisung des Senats für dessen #Autohasspolitik alles machen muss. Nach dem Millionengrab #E-Busse, wird nun das Geld für riesige #Abschlepptrucks verschleudert. Bisher ging es auch ohne.

Translation: It's crazy what the #BVG has to do on the orders of the senate for its #car hate policy. After the million-dollar grave of e-buses, the money is now being squandered on huge tow trucks. So far, it was possible without.

Author: AfD-Fraktion Berlin; Time of Posting: 28.01.2020, 16:23:55 o'clock

Here, the party refers to a new initiative which allows the BVG, the Transport Service of Berlin, to use their own towing vehicles to take action against parking offenders on bus lanes, stops, and tracks. Before, the Service had to call the police to have the parking offenders removed, and the BVG is hoping to expect more punctuality for buses and trains through these new measures (Hasselmann & Gies, 2020).

Interestingly, the party claims that the BVG is forced by the city senate to follow this initiative and subsequently waste money on towing trucks. Reading through the media coverage on the issue, however, the BVG seems to welcome the opportunity as they seemingly hope to no longer be dependent on the police in this instance. The initiative is, therefore, being framed from something that is regarded as positive to a damaging issue brought forward by the city politicians. The supposed reason for this policy is the so-called "hate on cars" and is presented as if the actions against parking offenders is part of the senate's "car hate policy".

With this, we have identified the problematisation. The threat comes from the established parties in the city senate, which, seemingly, have an agenda against the car culture in the city. In this instance, the BVG is, besides the cars, another victim of the senate as they, supposedly, have no choice in this matter. The last sentence of the tweet implies how senseless the party regards the initiative and how it wishes the readers will regard the issue as well.

The next tweet moves from local politics to the international stage:

Guten Morgen DE! Entkoppelte Eliten in #Davos sehen nur noch Umweltrisiken. Erst wenn die letzte Industrieanlage geschlossen ist u. die Grundlagen des Wohlstandes gerodet sind, werdet Ihr erkennen, dass man von Klimaschutz nicht satt wird! #Klimahysterie

Translation: Good morning DE! Decoupled elites in #Davos only see environmental risks. Only when the last industrial plant is closed, and the foundations of prosperity are destroyed, will you realise that climate protection is not enough! #Climate hysteria

Author: Jörg Meuthen, Time of Posting: 23.01.2020, 07:36:00 o'clock

This tweet addresses the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos. Similar to Schedler's concept of anti-establishment parties, the AfD clearly distinguishes a political elite

conducting damaging acts. In this case, they are labelled as “decoupled elites”, a term that suggests they are far removed from the reality of the everyday people. Such a frame can be seen as being supported, as critics have labelled the Forum as a symbol of the global elite (Thomas, 2020).

Without stating it explicitly, it seems to be implied that the AfD is not part of these decoupled elites and, therefore, distances itself from the politics discussed in Davos. It is suggested that the others, the elites, are undermining the foundations of prosperity with policies aiming to protect the climate. These policies are seen as a threat to the economic welfare and wealth our society is used to. The foresight to protect the environment and to accept economic restrictions with the aim of long-term environmental gains is framed as a damaging act with the general society as the victim. Such a frame ignores the negative environmental impact on current and future society and prioritises the economy.

The “decoupled elites” are framed as only regarding environmental risks without thinking of the economic implications. While the environment has been a prevalent topic, with around a third of attendees coming from the business field (Thomas, 2020), economic factors such as corporate governance or stakeholder capitalism have been topics as well, however. This thesis does not aim to answer the question whether the World Economic Forum can be regarded as elitist nor whether their discussions help tackle global problems. It is interested in, however, the frame stating that the prioritization of environmental protection policies is harmful to the wealth of our society. Such a frame can be found in a few tweets of the party within the collected data.

This is also supported by some further terms and frames appearing in the data, even though they have not been depicted in the word cloud. In a few of the tweets, terms such as *Autohass* (*car hate*) and *Energiewendewahnsinn* (*energy transition madness*) appear. These indicate, such as the tweet above, that the environmental policy is harmful and, furthermore, seemingly based on a hatred for cars. By employing such a frame, it seems the AfD is speaking to their followers who oppose any restrictions on their automobile behaviour and are, therefore, more likely to support the AfD in their opposition to the energy transition. The frame of *Klimahysterie*, climate hysteria, is also important for the framing strategy depicting the *other* as clueless as we can see in the next category.

7.1.6 The Others are Clueless

This strategy implies that the *others* do not know what they are doing and do not seem to understand the way the world is working. Some frames that appear in this context are, for example, “Klimahysterie” (*climate hysteria*), “Krampf gegen rechts” (*convulsion against right*),

“GenderGaga instead of research”, and these considerations are, therefore, regarded as the threat to the academic status quo in the frame of the party. The others, in this case, the academic senate at Humboldt University and the wider student body, are seen to be out of touch with reality and damaging the reputation of the university.

In Goffman’s understanding, they are applying a negative lamination on top of something that might usually be regarded as positive. Social and academic inclusion of minorities becomes a senseless waste of time that takes away resources from others. This can be regarded as a rekeying of a positive understanding of the linguistic and social expansion of social inclusivity into a negative one.

In the next tweet, the frame of the clueless others is extended by claiming that they are forcing their “abstruse ideas” on “us”, the rest of society. By choosing this wording, the AfD is presenting itself as part of all citizens, who are supposedly threatened by the ideas of the *other*.

Guten Morgen DE! Junge, linksgrüne, selbsternannte "Klima-Aktivisten" versuchen nun, uns Bürgern ihre abstrusen Vorstellungen per Verfassungsbeschwerde aufzuzwingen. Zeit, ihnen ihre Grenzen aufzuzeigen. Zeit für die #AfD. #GreenDeal #Klimahysterie

Translation: Good morning DE! Young, left-green, self-proclaimed "climate activists" are now trying to force their abstruse ideas on us citizens by means of a constitutional complaint. Time to show them their limits. Time for the #AfD. #GreenDeal #Climate hysteria

Author: Jörg Meuthen; Time of Posting: 16.01.2020, 08:37:30 o'clock

This time, the *other* is named as “young, left-green, self-proclaimed ‘climate activists’”. The tweet refers to various climate activists and environmental associations who want to achieve more climate protection through the Federal Constitutional Court, where three constitutional complaints have been filed. According to the plaintiffs, the Climate Protection Act passed by the Federal Government and the Bundestag in autumn 2019 is insufficient and violates the German Constitution (SZ, 2020a). Their constitutional right to participate in democratic actions appears to be disregarded by the tweet.

Here, Rucht’s motivational factors are clearly voiced by the sentence “time to show them their limits”, which seems to be an appeal to the party’s followers to resist the constitutional complaints publicly. In addition, the call for action is also combined with the positive self-presentation of the party by declaring “time for the AfD”, which is an appeal for support as well as a promise to resist environmental actions. In the dimension of problematisation, they are, apparently, regarded as a threat to the daily life of citizens, who do not agree with the supposedly “abstruse ideas”.

Calling the climate action by the activists as “abstruse” in combination with calling them “young” and “self-proclaimed” paints a picture of the *other* who is inexperienced, unrealistic, incompetent and, as the name of this framing strategy suggests, clueless. The AfD positions itself in contrast to this picture of the *other* as the one who, supposedly, takes strong action against the cluelessness and aims to save the citizens of these “abstruse ideas”.

In addition to the frames explored above, there are some further word creations which depict the *others* as clueless. One prominent example is the term *Spezialdemokraten* (*special democrats*), which suggests that the Social Democrats are “special”, which is oftentimes a synonym for mentally handicapped. This is quite a strong framing suggesting the others are clueless. Further frames which support this strategy are *Hirn statt Hetze* (*brain instead of hustle*) and *Intelligenzbestie* (*brainiac*). Both seem to suggest that the *other* is not very intelligent and rather makes use of harassment than using his or her mind.

7.1.7 The Others are Obsolete

It is interesting in this category that it is the only time in which the party name “AfD” is not the most frequent word. Rather it is the name of the CDU, which gives an indication which party is regarded the most as obsolete. Merkel’s name is also represented in a lot of tweets within this strategy. One frame that seems to combine both the CDU and Merkel is the word *Merkelpartei* (*Merkel party*), which was invented by AfD members and insinuates that Merkel stands for the whole party. The word itself has a negative intonation.

Furthermore, one of the party’s most frequent frames can be found within this category. As seen in the word cloud below, the party members make extensive use of the word “Altparteien”, or “old parties” in English. As with the term *Merkelpartei*, it is negative in its connotation and supports the strategy which paints the others as obsolete. Calling the parties *Altparteien* suggests that, beyond their older age of existence, they no longer represent the interests of newer times. The term is used by members of the AfD to distance themselves from these parties and their work, as well as their politics, positions, and attitudes. In contrast to the term “old”, those who do not belong to these parties seem to position themselves as new, modern, and young, and in this sense also as unspent, unbiased and without any negative legacy. In connection to this, the hashtag “Merkel muss weg” (*Merkel must go*) is oftentimes employed.

This framing strategy paints the picture that the *other*, the CDU, is close to being perished. As compared to some other framing strategies, Rucht's dimensions are not directly applicable as the tweet does not highlight a direct threat – perceived or real. Rather this framing strategy seems to be of more mocking nature by anticipating the (perceived) inevitable demise of the conservative party.

The next tweet seems to be of a similar nature:

#Merkel, #AKK, #cdu, #spd, #fdp & Co. sind politisch am #Ende! #GuteNacht

Translation: #Merkel, #AKK, #cdu, #spd, #fdp & Co. are politically at the #end! #Goodnight

Author: Stephan Brandner; Time of Posting: 08.02.2020, 21:10:11 o'clock

While this tweet mostly consists of hashtags, it still speaks volumes. It names various political actors, both politicians and parties, who are regarded as “politically at the end”. This statement is underlined by the hashtag #Goodnight. AKK is the acronym for the conservative politician Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer who is the current Minister of Defense and had been, up to that date, the leader of the CDU, with many regarding her as Merkel's successor. However, after her regional party members in Thüringen acted, as she quoted, “expressly against the recommendations, demands and requests of the federal party” (cited in SZ, 2020b) and voted with the AfD for a minister-presidential candidate, she announced her resignation as party leader (Mischke & Weise, 2020).

The AfD uses the resignation for this framing strategy and portrays it as a further sign of the obsolescence of the Christian Democrats. Again, there is no discernible threat, victim nor motivational factor highlighted in this strategy (except if one would count the party CDU as such as the victim). Nonetheless, the tweet is framing the narrative by suggesting that the named parties and politicians have to political future.

In connection to the term of *Altparteien*, we can mind numerous variations, such as *Altparteienfunktionär* (*old party official*), *Altparteienlabern* (*old parties babble*) and *Altparteienstaat* (*old party-state*). Especially the last term is oftentimes used when the current politics of Germany are criticised. It frames the current as being ruled by the old and depleted parties who, supposedly, leave no room for young alternatives. The next framing strategy, in comparison, regards more individual actors as compared to the current state of affairs as such.

7.1.8 The Others are Spineless

This strategy aims at depicting the *other* as weak and unable to withstand political pressure. It is the category with the smallest sample size, which also explains the relatively low word count in the word cloud. We can see that the names of the other parties are the most prevalent,

This can also be described by Goffman's understandings of keying and rekeying. There are various images one associates with the term "politician" or when one thinks of specific politicians, such as Christian Lindner in this case. The frame here takes these images and replaces them with the allegory of a "whimpering dog". This is how he is supposed to be regarded by the readers of the tweet.

A similar image can be observed in the next tweet:

Überraschung! #Heym sagte vor einigen Tagen: „Merkels Reaktion hat mich an tiefste DDR-Zeiten erinnert.“ Nun kündigt er seinen #Rücktritt als #CDU-Fraktionsvize an. Was lassen sich die Männer dieser Partei eigentlich noch alles von #Merkel gefallen?

Translation: Surprise! #Heym said a few days ago: "Merkel's reaction reminded me of deepest GDR times." Now he announces his #resignation as the #CDU-faction leader. What else do the men of this party put up with from Merkel?

Author: Joana Cotar; Time of Posting: 14.02.2020, 19:11:31 o'clock

The CDU member of the state parliament, Michael Heym, had announced that he does not want to run again for the vice-chair of the parliamentary group in the state parliament a day before the tweet was posted. He indirectly justified this with the criticism of his AfD-friendly course, which he had experienced in his faction (Mdr, 2020). Heym had already made headlines shortly after the state elections in autumn when he called for talks with the AfD in view of the difficult government formation in Thüringen (SZ, 2020c). Despite his seeming support for the AfD in the past, he is depicted as a spineless man who is under the control of Merkel and resigns after criticizing her.

At the same time, he is shown as representing all the men of the CDU. According to this tweet, they are keeping silent in the face of Merkel's supposed machinations without calling her out. This portrays a picture of fearful men powerless a dictatorial figure. This is the framing lamination the party is trying to convey and is different to, for example, the lamination of a strong leader who has the backing of her party members.

7.1.9 The Others are Useless

This is the last category within the section of Negative Other-Presentation. In some sense, it can be regarded as similar to the strategy framing the others as damaging, but the difference here is that there is no agency. The others are seen as simply too incompetent to understand the perceived negative impact of their actions. This framing strategy is, at least on a secondary basis, one that is employed quite often.

#Maasmännchen ist stets und überall „bemüht“...wird nur bei und mit ihm stets und überall nichts. Nie! Er kann halt nix... 🤔 Typisch #sozi, #typisch #Altpartei!

Translation: #Maasmännchen is always and everywhere "endeavoured"...but nothing comes out of it anywhere or anytime. Never! He just cannot do anything... 🤔 Typical #social, #typical #old party!

Author: Stephan Brandner; Time of Posting: 26.01.2020, 22:25:41 o'clock

Maasmännchen is one of the made-up words describing one of the *others*. Similar to the language current American president Donald Trump employs when talking about political opponents or critics (Winberg, 2017), some politicians of the AfD also seem to invent insults. This particular one is a play on words. A literal translation of *Marsmännchen* (note the slightly different spelling to *Maasmännchen*) is: "a little man from Mars"; *Maasmännchen* can be translated as "little man Maas" and it can be assumed that the implication of "being from Mars" is intended as well.

It is said that Maas always tries but never achieves any results. The tweet goes as far as portraying the minister as someone who "cannot do anything". This presentation of the politician is again framed as being representative for the whole party. The portrayed uselessness is regarded as typical for all Social Democrats (here named as "Sozis", a rather derogative term for Social Democrats, and, as the last part declares, all established parties (here: *Altparteien*).

Other terms which employ the same framing strategy are, for example, *Gutmenschgeplauder* (*do-gooders' prattling*), *Steinzeitsozialisten* (*Stone Age Socialists*), *Tadelkönige* (*kings of reprimanding*), and *Steinmeierquatsch* (*Steinmeier nonsense*). All of these terms emphasise the supposed incompetence and uselessness of the *other*, who, seemingly, does not seem to achieve more than simple "prattling". This is in stark contrast to the frames of the next chapter, in which we look not at how the *other* is framed negatively, but rather how the self – the party – is presented in a positive manner.

7.2 Positive Self-Presentation

The strategy of the Positive Self-Presentation aims to achieve the opposite of the Negative Other-Presentation with the own group as the subject of the framing efforts. Here, the "star" is the party and their achievements. Furthermore, the obstacles they face are highlighted. Such obstacles are, in many cases, brought forward by the *others*. Through a direct comparison between the party and the *others*, Positive Self-Presentation can also be achieved.

For the Positive Self-Presentation, three categories have been identified. Similar to the analysis of the categories within the Negative Other-Presentation, the sub-strategies here start

with the identification of the most frequent words, before the analysis dives deeper into the common frames employed to achieve the positive self-image. In these strategies, Goffman's understanding of Self-Presentation plays a larger role than for the strategies painting a negative other picture.

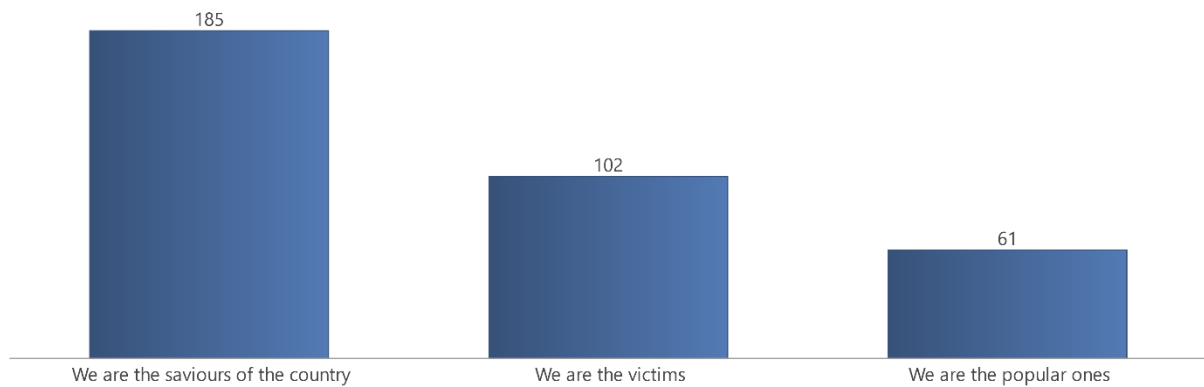


Figure 15 - Coded Segments per Category for the Positive Self-Presentation

7.2.1 We are the Saviours of the Country

Tweets which include frames alluding to the AfD being the only saving grace of the political landscape in Germany are part of this strategy. It aims to portray the party as the saving force of the country, especially doing so by comparing their accomplishments with the real (and perceived) failures of the other parties. This can be seen by the repeated words used such as “congratulations”, “AfD works”, or “freedom” and “democracy”.

Let us look at the next tweet:

Auf massiven Druck der anti-demokrat. Parteiführung der Union sowie linker Straßenkräfte, die Kemmerichs Familie bedrohen, wird ein gewählter Ministerpräsident zur Aufgabe gezwungen. Verrat der CDU und FDP an allen bürgerlichen Wählern! Bürgerliche Politik gibt es nur mit der AfD

Translation: Following massive pressure from the Union's anti-democratic party leadership and left-wing street forces threatening Kemmerich's family, an elected prime minister is forced to resign. Betrayal of the CDU and FDP to all middle-class voters! Civic politics exists only with the AfD

Author: Gottfried Curio; Time of Posting: 06.02.2020, 15:15:26 o'clock

Again, there is a direct comparison. The others are the “anti-democratic” ones who threaten and betray the democratic processes and the electorate. In contrast, there is the AfD, who is the “only” way out.

Important to note here is the use of the word *bürgerlich*. Unfortunately, there is no exact English translation that encompasses the full meaning of the word. Therefore, it is translated in the tweet above once as “middle-class” and another time as “civic”. One possible translation could also be bourgeois, for example when the AfD talks about *bürgerliche Mehrheit* – the bourgeois majority – in their tweets. The word, in short, can, therefore, be understood as describing the normal citizen, belonging to the social middle class.

Now, especially in the aftermath of the Thüringen-crisis, the AfD is framing themselves as the bourgeois majority of Germany. In the case of the election in Thüringen, the parliament was too fragmented and polarised to form a government. The opportunity to elect Thomas Kemmerich arose, because none of the politically viable coalition variants could provide a majority of the members of parliament. Armin Schäfer, Professor of Comparative Political Science at the University of Münster, believes that the situation was used by the AfD to “ridicule the other parties” and, subsequently, “portray itself as part of the bourgeois majority” of the county (Schäfer & Zurheide, 2020).

This self-portrayal can be observed by the frequency of the word in their tweets. It was used twice in the single tweet above. In the sample of tweets, the word appears 54 times in total; all mentions after the election in Thüringen on 6 February, with no mentions before that date. This indicates that this framing strategy was only actively employed after this event. Terms which appear in that context are, of course, bourgeois majority, but also bourgeois politics, bourgeois parties, as well as bourgeois forces.

One other interesting aspect of this strategy is the frequent use of hashtags with slogans such as *AfD wirkt* (*AfD works*), *Nur noch AfD* (*only AfD from now on*), *Wähl dich warm* (*vote yourself warm*), as well as catchphrases that highlight the difference to other parties, such as *Nie wieder Sozialismus* (*never again socialism*). The usage of these hashtags and phrases can be found

One of such tweets refers to the criticism and protests the FDP faced in the aftermath of the Thüringen-crisis.

Was die #FDP seit einigen Tagen erlebt, ist für die AfD seit sieben Jahren Alltag. In einem Land, in dem wir gut und gerne leben?

Translation: What the #FDP has been experiencing for a few days now is everyday life for the AfD for seven years. In a country in which we live well and gladly?

Author: AfD-Fraktion Niedersachsen; Time of Posting: 10.02.2020, 17:06:36 o'clock

In this tweet, the party highlights that the protests the FDP faces are part of the daily life for the AfD. Such sentiment has been found in numerous tweets of the data sample. This victim-narrative seems to emphasise that the AfD, despite the political marginalization and all the hurdles, continues in their work. Such a sentiment connects to the previous strategy and tries to highlight the strength of the party despite their perceived victimhood. This victimization can create a bond with voters who feel excluded or maltreated by politics. It creates an image that says "look, everyone is against us. But the established parties cannot stop us from making politics".

The other part of the tweet is criticizing the current state of the country by using the electoral slogan of the CDU. Turning their slogan into a question seems to suggest that the current situation does not reflect a country in which "we live well and gladly". Furthermore, this state of affairs seems to be particularly negative for the AfD. There is no direct guilty party named as the perpetrator in this tweet, however. This changes in the next example:

Auf Antrag der #CDU, #FDP und #SPD debattiert der #ltNRW über Bedrohungen gegenüber Kommunalpolitikern. Hinweise auf die #Antifa und bedrohte #AfD-Funktionäre findet man in den Anträgen keine. Verdienen jene, die nicht im Strom der Altparteien schwimmen, etwa keinen Schutz?

Translation: At the request of the #CDU, #FDP and #SPD, the #ltNRW [regional parliament] debates threats to local politicians. There are no references to the #Antifa and threatened #AfD officials in the motions. Do those who are not swimming in the current of the old parties not deserve protection?

Author: AfD-Fraktion NRW; Time of Posting: 22.01.2020, 11:23:04 o'clock

Here, many framing strategies are combined in one tweet. We can find the "violent Antifa" who is threatening harm to the AfD officials as well as party members of the CDU, FDP, and SPD, who are portrayed as not fulfilling their democratic obligations by portraying the threats towards the right-wing party. This is emphasised by the rhetorical question which questions whether the "old parties" regard those that do not "swim in their current" as deserving of protection. Therefore, we can see the depiction of the violent other and the other hostile towards democratic principles compared to the self-presentation as the victim. Rucht's dimensions of problematization and assignment of blame are, therefore, fulfilled twofold.

Author: AfD; Time of Posting: 15.01.2020, 14:48:32 o'clock

The word "GroKo" is an abbreviation for the *Große Koalition*, the big coalition. This term is used to describe the current ruling coalition, consisting out of the CDU and the SPD, the two majority parties of Germany. Interesting, however, are phrases such as "wins the most!" and "clear winner". The usage of linguistic methods, such as repetitions and hyperboles, aims to emphasise the perceived popularity of the party which aids in their positive self-presentation.

This framing strategy does not identify a threat, nor does it assign any blame. The purpose of the strategy is to highlight the popularity of the self and present it in the best possible light. Therefore, both Snow and Benford's, as well as Rucht's, dimensions and extensions are not applicable here. Goffman's concept of Self-Presentation is the underlying thread in this strategy. The party's self-presentation is framing done in relation to the *other*. Even though the other parties are not named directly, by using competition terminology (such as "winner" and "wins"), the AfD is comparing itself to its political environment. The party, therefore, conducts its impression management by highlighting its popularity. This is something which can also be observed in the next example:

Das muß man sich mal auf der Zunge zergehen lassen: Wir (#AfD) liegen nur 6 Punkte hinter den #Grünen und deutlich vor den #Sozis! Trotz milliardenschwerer linksrotgrüner Einheitspropaganda auf sämtlichen Staatsfunkkanälen, dutzenden #SPD-Zeitungen usw.

Translation: You have to let it melt in your mouth: We (#AfD) are only 6 points behind the #Greens and clearly ahead of the #Sozis! Despite billions of dollars of left-red-green propaganda on all state radio channels, dozens of #SPD newspapers etc.

Author: Stephan Brandner; Time of Posting: 15.01.2020, 12:50:20 o'clock

Here, we can find once again a direct comparison to the *other* who performs worse than the AfD, despite their efforts and undertakings. This time, the negative actions of other parties are emphasised to portray a Negative Other-Presentation at the same time as a positive self-presentation. It is highlighted how other parties seemingly strive to manipulate public opinion through their "multi-billion dollar, left-red-green propaganda".

The AfD, on the other hand, portrays itself as not needing any propaganda for their success. They are "clearly ahead of the Sozis" (an oftentimes derogatory name for a member of the socialist or social-democratic party) without such resources. Nonetheless, their impression management seemingly depends on the comparison to other parties. And, as has been found in the framing strategies portraying a negative picture of the *other*, mocking names as well as blending their ideologies (i.e. "left-red-green) are employed to paint a better picture of the self in relation.

7.3 The Usage of Personal Pronouns

One further step of analysis could be the observation of the frequency of pronouns, as Masroor et al. (2019) have done in their study as well. (Perdue et al., 1990), as explained in Chapter 5.1, have studied the significance of personal pronouns in the establishment of in-groups and out-groups. Therefore, to complete this analysis, the usage of personal pronouns by the AfD has been examined.

In the table below, we can see the frequency of the pronouns “us”, “we”, “you”, and “they”. The first two imply belonging to the own group and, therefore, represent the Positive Self-Presentation. At the same time, the last one, “they”, indicates differentiation from the group and belong to the Negative Other-Presentation. The pronoun “you” is, in most cases, a direct response to someone else.

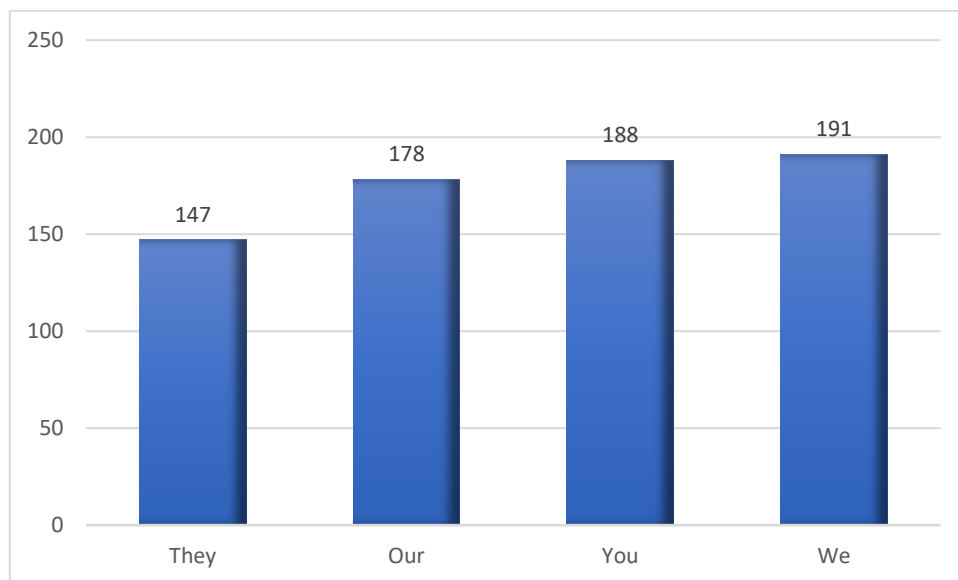


Figure 19 - Use of Personal Pronouns of all tweets

In sum, there have been only 704 identified tweets which included a personal pronoun. 191 tweets included “we”, 188 addressed someone or a group directly through the use of “you”, and 178 tweets regarded something as “our(s)”. Only 147 of those included the pronoun “they”, which is surprising. One possible reason for this could be that, in many cases, instead of using the pronoun, the *other* was directly named, e.g. “the Greens”, “the Left”, the “Spezialdemokraten”, etc. As we have seen in the analysis above, many of the tweets included made-up names for the others, which might substitute some of the pronouns which would have

otherwise been used. Similarly, this can also be said about inclusive pronouns. Instead of saying “we”, the posters oftentimes used the party’s name instead.

The pronouns can be used to create polarization between who is considered as “we” and “us” and those who are outside that group. The following (parts of) tweets aid in illustrating this. As short points of explanation to begin with, Lindner is the chairman of the FDP, Habeck is the chairman of the Green Party, and “the yellow ones” in the last example refers to the FDP, whose party colour is yellow,

We won't put up with this any longer (Hugh Bronson, 12.02.2020)

We do not need egocentric "luminous figures" like Lindner or Habeck. We are successful team players in the fight for a good future for our country (AfD, 06.02.2020)

The yellow ones buckled within 24 hours - We will not (AfD, 06.02.2020)

The “we” in these cases clearly shows the identification of the authors with the party as such. By the usage of the pronoun in direct competition with the others, the party tries to show in which way they are better. The party is indicating that “We, the party” are bringing along change, that “we” are the good ones in comparison to leading politicians of other parties (i.e. Lindner and Habeck) and that “we” will not give in to political pressures. By emphasising the strengths of their party, they highlight the (perceived) weaknesses of the others. They are damaging, egocentric and seemingly useless: nothing more than “luminous figures” as opposed to effective people taking charge, as well as people that give up easily.

Other times, the “we” is used to enforce the positive identification of the AfD with a larger group to emphasise that image. Such as here:

We are the voice of millions of voters (Jörg Meuthen, 07.02.2020)

We are on the side of the farmers! (Tino Chrupalla, 17.01.2020)

In some cases, the positive pronoun “we” is combined with a direct address to their followers, as we can see in the following examples. Such a direct address might aid their followers in developing a sense of togetherness and unity with the party, as well as open a direct channel of communication to their followers.

We will not disappoint you (AfD Berlin, 12.02.2020)

We are looking forward to your visit (Stephan Brandner, 25.01.2020)

Such an address can often be found without the inclusion of the “we”. Interestingly, there seem to be more direct tweets towards critics than towards followers. These critics are not necessarily actors of public office, but rather private individuals. Keeping this in mind, some of

the replies do not seem to try to bridge ideological gaps nor to open a communicative channel. Rather they seem to be of insulting and mocking nature, as can be observed in the following examples:

I don't think you crawl enough, deeper! My God, how much can you humiliate yourself?
(Joana Cotar, 12.02.2020)

But I don't want to overwhelm you with too much self-reflection (Martin Reichardt, 12.02.2020)

You don't find that the least bit critical? (AfD NRW, 06.02.2020)

In contrast to the pronouns “we” and “us”, the usage of the pronoun “they” indicates a tool of distancing. The images painted by these words create a negative image of the others that fits into the analysis of the Negative Other-Presentation in the chapter above. It highlights their (perceived) shortcomings in a direct way. Some examples can be seen below:

Do they not see how they divide and sow hatred? (Tino Chrupalla, 06.02.2020)

Because they don't have the courage to govern... (Beatrix von Storch, 06.02.2020)

The use of personal pronouns, both that indicate a collective group as well as a group of outsiders, can be a powerful tool in creating polarization between “us” and “them”. In these cases, such pronouns aid the employed frames to achieve the strategies of Negative Other-Presentation and Positive Self-Presentation.

8. Discussion of the Results

In the analysis, we have seen how framing strategies are used in various ways to present the *other* in a negative, and the *self* in a positive way. These strategies ranged from depicting the *other*, for example, as violent, hostile, and useless, to portraying the *self* as victimised by others and being the saving grace of the country. Many of the strategies aimed at highlighting the differences between the two groups and differentiate the AfD from the rest.

It has become apparent that parts of the communication of the AfD is rooted in the differentiation between *Us* and *Them* and are highlighted in different strategies. Some emphasise the harmful and, partly, violent ways of the *other*, and some showcased how the party regards itself as in the role of the saviour of the country. Other strategies highlight how the *other* is actively working against the *self*, in this case, the AfD and their supporters. Through this, strategies may overlap and build upon one another. In some tweets, therefore, various strategies were employed at once. The strongest example here is the frame which portrays the AfD as victimised by the mainstream parties and by society. Using multiple framing strategies in one snippet of communication can aide to strengthen the message that is conveyed. In short: the others are bad, we are good. Such a direct comparison between *them* and *us* can be observed in multiple tweets. In this way, Goffman's concepts of framing and self-presentation can be combined. By contrasting a positive self-presentation with a negative framing of others, both strategies can appear stronger.

As we have seen during the analysis above, the party has been successful in inventing certain words which describe and frame their objective. One of the strongest and most frequent ones is the *Altpartei*, but also words such as *Maasmännchen*, *Gendergaga*, and *Spezialdemokraten* have been thoroughly used by the party and have been examined above. This is a similar aspect the party shares with anti-establishment parties as understood by Schedler (1996). The party seemingly invents mocking and insulting names for the *other*. In addition to this, we can also see parallels to the concept in their self-presentation as victims and saviour simultaneously as well as depicting the other political parties as harmful towards society.

This makes the linguistic aspects of their communication significant. The framing strategies employed by the party are emphasised and spread through the clear differentiation between *us* and *them*, between the AfD and the *others*.

One further interesting aspect found in the analysis was depicted through the illustration of the word clouds and is that the most used word in nearly all the categories is the party's own name. Reason for this, especially with regard to the list of the most frequent hashtags, is that the members of the party put the hashtag *#afd* behind many of their tweets. This would help to spread their postings in the *Twitterverse* – as the online universe of the social media platform

Twitter can be called – which is most likely the aim of the party members. The only category in which this was not the case is in The others are obsolete. Here, the dominant name is the CDU, the addressee of most of the labelling as being obsolete by the AfD.

8.1 How can Tweets Frame the Narrative?

Framing measures can be found in every piece of communication and the tweets of the AfD are no different. Many of their framing strategies create an *other* that is regarded as harmful to the people of Germany. This can become problematic, because it frames people as problems and thus places groups of people under general suspicion. The man from Chad charged with assault represents then everyone from Chad – or even from the whole continent of Africa – and the Green politician with the outdated sewage plant stands for every Green politician.

Furthermore, many tweets suggest a certain version of occurrences and, in most cases, a guilty party is clearly identified. The firing of Maaßen is seen as the manipulation of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the planned protective measures for the Reichstag are consequences of migration and the state extorts influence on the media, while the media, in turn, seemingly controls the state. Such a form of a political communication shapes and frames the narrative, while ignoring various aspects, such as the controversies surrounding Maaßen or the fact that the planning of the protective measures of the parliament building date back years before the migration-crisis appeared in public debate.

By making up catchwords and phrases, the party can frame their message to the point and spread that narrative far. For example, the frame *Altparteien* has entered general debates as a seemingly accepted term. This indicates, as Wehling (2019) has described, that discussions will now take place within that frame. By using the term, for example, newspaper articles accept its meaning as a given, even if the content of the article negates the implication of the frame. In that sense, the made-up names for the *other* can be very effective, as they are often easily memorable and can spread quickly.

Tweets can easily reach thousands of people – and with them, these frames are being read by followers and opponents alike. Each tweet offers their own little version of reality and it is important that we know this. As the linguist Eric Wallis says: “only when I become aware of which framings I am shaped by, can I recognize the difference” (cited in Fokken, 2019).

8.2 Limitations and Possibilities of Further Research

The thesis has only looked at a small extract of the political communication of the AfD. The period of time in which the tweets were extracted is confined, as is the list of accounts which were considered within the analysis. For further analysis, a greater sample case and an extended period of data collection would, therefore, be advisable. In addition, there are some further aspects of study, which are of interest, but would have exceeded the scope of the thesis.

For example, only words have been included in the analysis. However, the online world has turned exceedingly non-verbal as the usage of emoticons, gifs and pictures has become daily in our communication (Gülşen, 2016). While gifs might not be the most relevant medium within the online political communication, pictures with, for example, quotes or slogans are. The picture format can highlight points of the communication which are of special importance to the politicians and which he or she wants to expressively share with his or her followers. Even emoticons, which convey moods or emotions in one small picture, have arrived within the political communication. Looking at the word clouds of the AfD's most frequent words, we can see that some of which were not words at all, but rather such emoticons. A large part of our communication is considered to be non-verbal in the non-digital world (Remland, 2016). It would make only sense, that non-verbal cues are, therefore, of some importance in the online world as well.

Connected to this, are linguistic cues that have, in this thesis, only been slightly touched upon, for example, the underlying use of sarcasm or irony. These offer the possibility for the reader to read between the lines and come to new conclusions, which might build upon pre-existing frameworks of interpretations. Such linguistic cues have not been thoroughly analysed in this paper, as mostly overtly frames have been considered, but they might, nonetheless, make for an interesting field of further study.

The word cloud offers another interesting angle of research. Within the 150 to 250 most used words, one can also find the (account) names of some of the leading members of the party. As suggested in Chapter 6, this alludes to a network between the high-ranking members of the party. Conducting a network analysis to identify the nuclei of the network as well as the identification of how far-reaching it is with its followers could be of further interest.

9. Conclusion

Twitter is a micro-blogging, social media platform that has gained in importance in the political communication of political actors worldwide. The platform provides an interactive channel of communication without any medial intermediaries, which makes it possible for politicians to connect directly with their electorate and followers as well as with their critics (Andranik Tumasjan & et. al, 2010). Germany is no exception in this case. There are, however, differences in the use of the social media platform between parties and single political actors. The German chancellor, for example, does not have her own Twitter profile.

The German right-wing party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD), on the other hand, employs various Twitter accounts on all levels of government; local, state, federal and EU level. In addition to this, many of their politicians regularly update their own profile as well. A study has shown that 47 per cent of discussions online in Germany have a thematical connection to the party (Altland et al., 2019), This, in addition to their categorisation as a right-wing radical party (Rosenfelder & Joel, 2017), makes them an interesting subject of study.

To analyse their political communication on Twitter, Goffman's concepts of framing and self-presentation are employed. Frames are interpretative frameworks which are activated by our brains to make sense of situations and events. Furthermore, as Goffman says, these frames can be manipulated (Goffman, 1974,p. 22) and through the selection of only some aspects of reality, certain strategies can be highlighted (Entman, 1993). The concept of self-presentation looks at how an actor portrays himself to others in a social setting (Goffman, 1956).

For the analysis, 12 strategies of framing and self-presentation were developed on the basis of grounded theory, and are based on 1785 tweets which were collected over a period of four weeks between January and February 2020. The tweets are assigned to 1536 coded segments, meaning that they are attributed to one or more framing strategies. Not all tweets incorporated such strategies.

The 12 strategies are structured into a binary conceptualization, differentiating between the Negative Other-Presentation and the Positive Self-Presentation. Nine of the strategies frame the *other* as negative and three present the *self* in a positive light. In some cases, the strategies seemingly overlapped, which can emphasise and strengthen the framing strategies to make the self seem more positive and the other more negative.

Four main results have been discovered:

1. The AfD's communication identifies their own group and the group of the *other*, and highlights the (perceived) differences between them. The own group is presented as positive, while the others are portrayed as harmful.

2. Framing strategies can overlap in a single tweet. Either one strategy is the main one with another strategy in a supporting role, or two strategies complement each other. The latter can be especially observed when the negative framing of others is used to highlight the positive presentation of the self
3. Language is important for the portrayal of the framing strategies. Either through the usage of personal pronouns to underline and distinguish group affiliation or through the invention of mocking or insulting names describing the *other*. Such names were used to strengthen and substantiate the framing strategies.
4. The tweets present one version of reality or one version of the narrative that fits best to the objective the party wants to portray. Oftentimes, one example of the *other* represents the whole group he or she is associated with.

These results show how framing strategies are used daily in political communication. This can aid political scientists in their investigations in how the AfD communicates and what its strategies for political communication are. In turn, it is important for other parties to be familiar with the framing strategies of the AfD, to develop their own appropriate strategies to not communicate in the frames set by the AfD. This thesis hopes to add to the understanding of how frames and framing strategies are employed in daily political communication.

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11. Annex

List of Twitter accounts with links to their profiles:

Name	Twitter Handle	Link to Profile
Jörg Meuthen	Joerg_Meuthen	https://twitter.com/joerg_meuthen?lang=en
Tino Chrupalla	Tino_Chrupalla	https://twitter.com/tino_chrupalla?lang=en
Alice Weidel	Alice_Weidel	https://twitter.com/alice_weidel?lang=en
Stephan Brandner	StBrandner	https://twitter.com/StBrandner?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauth%5Eauthor
Beatrix von Storch	Beatrix_vStorch	https://twitter.com/beatrix_vstorch?lang=en
Christian Lüth	Christianlueth	https://twitter.com/christianlueth?lang=en
Gottfried Curio	GottfriedCurio	https://twitter.com/gottfriedcurio?lang=en
Hugh Bronson	HughBronson_AfD	https://twitter.com/hughbronson_afd?lang=en
Martin Reichhardt	M_Reichardt_AfD	https://twitter.com/m_reichardt_afd?lang=en
Götz Frömming	GtzFrmming	https://twitter.com/gtzfrmring?lang=en
Leif Erik Holm	Leif_Erik_Holm	https://twitter.com/leif_erik_holm?lang=en
Bjoern Höcke	BjoernHoecke	https://twitter.com/bjoernhoecke?lang=en
Joana Cotar	JoanaCotar	https://twitter.com/JoanaCotar?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauth%5Eauthor
Alternative für Deutschland	AfD	https://twitter.com/afd?lang=en
AfD-Fraktion im Deutschen Bundestag	AfDimBundestag	https://twitter.com/afdimbundestag?lang=en
AfD im EU-Parlament	AfDimEUParl	https://twitter.com/afdimeuparl?lang=en
AfD-Fraktion NRW	AfD_FraktionNRW	https://twitter.com/afd_fraktionnrw?lang=en
AfD Berlin	AfDBerlin	https://twitter.com/afdberlin?lang=en
AfD Hamburg	AfD_Hamburg	https://twitter.com/afd_hamburg?lang=en
AfD-Fraktion MV	AfDFraktion_MV	https://twitter.com/afdfraktion_mv?lang=en
AfD Nordrhein-Westfalen	AlternativeNRW	https://twitter.com/alternativenrw?lang=en
AfD Bayern	AfD_Bayern	https://twitter.com/afd_bayern?lang=en
AfD-Fraktion Berlin	AfDFraktionAGH	https://twitter.com/afdfraktionagh?lang=en
AfD-Fraktion Sachsen	AfD_SLT	https://twitter.com/afd_slit?lang=en
AfD Thüringen	AfD_Thueringen	https://twitter.com/AfD_Thueringen?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauth%5Eauthor
AfD Rheinland-Pfalz	RLP_AfD	https://twitter.com/rlp_afd?lang=en
AfD-Fraktion Rheinland-Pfalz	AfDFraktionRLP	https://twitter.com/afdfraktionrlp?lang=en
AfD Niedersachsen	AfDNds	https://twitter.com/afdnds?lang=en
AfD-Fraktion Niedersachsen	AfD_FraktionNds	https://twitter.com/afd_fraktionnds?lang=en
AfD-Fraktion Hamburg	AfD_Fraktion_HH	https://twitter.com/afd_fraktion_hh?lang=en

It is important to note that the Twitter account AfD Kompakt seems to have been deleted since the period of data collection and the twitter handle has been replaced with a fake account. Due to this reason, the collected tweets by this account are listed below separately:

Date	Tweet	Retweets	Likes	Followers
13.02.2020 18:36:37	#BB @BirgitBessin, Sozialpolit. Sprecherin der #AfD im #ltbb: „Bei der Unterstützung von #Familien in Notsituationen müssen alle Parteien an einem Strang ziehen. Dieses wichtige Anliegen darf nicht durch parteipolitisches Geplänkel beschädigt werden.“ https://t.co/lC2sxqODqe https://t.co/OKhgtWHmLA	9	46	26307
13.02.2020 18:33:13	Dr. @KrahMax, Außenhandelspolit. Sprecher der @AfDimEUParl: „Ein Freihandelsabkommen mit #Vietnam hätte Modellcharakter für die Entwicklungspolitik: Es ist #Handel, der #Wohlstand schafft, und nicht das Forcieren linksideologischer Projekte und NGOs“. https://t.co/D9ouZ6M7J2 https://t.co/B4o9zoq6py	8	43	26307
13.02.2020 18:28:19	.@R_Hartwig_AfD, Parlament. Geschäftsführer der #AfD im #Bundestag, zu Berichten, wonach der VS außerparlamentarisch mithört: „Wir können und dürfen nicht zusehen, wenn der #Verfassungsschutz selbst die Axt an die Grundlagen unserer #Demokratie legt.“ https://t.co/M9zY8KFztg https://t.co/OyS4T6FckX	18	63	26307
13.02.2020 18:21:22	#Sachsen @Joerg_UrbanAfD, Vorsitzender der #AfD im #saxlt, äußert sich zur Grundsatzklärung der @AfD_SLT zur Demokratie: „Die Demokratie zählt zu den größten Errungenschaften der europäischen Geschichte. Sie ist keine Selbstverständlichkeit [...]“ https://t.co/AaoliTMqna https://t.co/2KQWQgUj7S	9	34	26307
13.02.2020 18:14:30	Dr. Alexander #Gauland, Ehrenvorsitzender der #AfD: „Es ist überfällig, dass Hochschulen, Wissenschaftler und akademische Lehrkräfte sich der linken Intoleranz widersetzen und die #Meinungsfreiheit verteidigen.“ #Diskurs https://t.co/BSA13d6LGn https://t.co/wWijviRFLk	23	103	26307
13.02.2020 18:11:03	.@AndreasKalbitz, Mitglied im #AfD-Bundesvorstand: „Angela Merkels primitiv entgleisender Ostbeauftragter Marco #Wanderwitz sollte unverzüglich zurücktreten.“ https://t.co/U26v68eBbb https://t.co/qjK3UCa9Ou	12	78	26307

12.02.2020 15:35:19	#Hamburg „Skrupellose und gewaltbereite Linksextremisten treten unsere demokratischen Grundrechte mit Füßen. Viele reden vom Klimanotstand, dabei befindet sich Hamburg längst im Demokratie-Notstand.“ #Demokratie #Antifa https://t.co/DWlada2ukl https://t.co/SxcskBkFi	77	406	26307
12.02.2020 15:32:09	#Bayern @KEbnerSteiner, Vorsitzende der #AfD im #Landtag: „Wir haben in zwei Schreiben an Landtagspräsidentin Ilse Aigner unseren Protest über die Wortwahl von Frau @KathaSchulze zum Ausdruck gebracht. Heute gab es dann die Rüge für sie.“ https://t.co/YhVDibSD0q https://t.co/IG9UpwDuGG	6	56	26307
12.02.2020 15:25:12	Die Götterdämmerung hat Einzug gehalten im Konrad-Adenauer-Haus und wartet auf ihre Vollendung. Wenn #Merkel nicht selbst die Reißleine zieht, wird es ihr ergehen wie ihrem Ziehvater und #CDU-Vorgänger im Kanzleramt. https://t.co/pfafcXqNfz https://t.co/pOoL3EcYqB	10	52	26307
12.02.2020 15:21:12	Dr. Alexander #Gauland, Ehrenvorsitzender der #AfD: „Freie und geheime Wahlen sind den Linken eben doch ein Ärgernis. Nun sollen die Stimmen lieber dokumentiert werden.“ #Thuringen #Demokratie https://t.co/lASLknEitn https://t.co/02cxERaLRa	21	82	26307
10.02.2020 21:45:07	#MV @Leif_Erik_Holm, #AfD-Landesvorsitzender: „Ich fürchte, es gilt auch in #MecklenburgVorpommern: Wer #CDU wählt, kann schnell mit der #SED 2.0 aufwachen.“ #AKKRücktritt #ThuringenWahl #Demokratieverständnis https://t.co/GpS7yN7vPq https://t.co/aiSoYeDwnp	9	56	26307
10.02.2020 21:37:46	#NRW @Wagner_AfD_MdL, Vorsitzender der #AfD im #It nrw: Mit „Armin #Laschet [wird] nun jemand genannt, der bereits in NRW bewiesen hat, dass eine schwarz-gelbe Koalition binnen kürzester Zeit ihre Mehrheit verliert, wenn sie linksgrüne Politik macht.“ https://t.co/743Az2NSq1 https://t.co/mUP9daHvZo	10	43	26307
10.02.2020 21:33:20	.@Joerg_Meuthen, #AfD-Bundessprecher: „Wenn die #Union lieber Politiker der mehrfach umbenannten #SED in Staatsämter hieven will als mit uns auch nur zu reden, verabschiedet sie sich aus dem bürgerlichen Lager.“ #Thuringen https://t.co/xHHRW0lhSB https://t.co/7JbUGQy0Eh	103	527	26307
10.02.2020 21:30:26	.@Leif_Erik_Holm, Stellvertr. Vorsitzender der #AfD im #Bundestag: „Herr #Hirte war einigen schon lange ein Dorn im Auge. Immer wieder hatte er die Bürger im #Osten gegen die versuchte	41	178	26307

	Stigmatisierung mit der #Nazikeule in Schutz genommen." #Thueringen https://t.co/lKvHozhRNb https://t.co/VW5Nc3tw8e			
09.02.2020 17:11:17	#BaWü Dr. Rainer #Balzer, Kulturpolit. Sprecher der #AfD im #ltbw: „Statt Unsummen in ein einziges Prestigeprojekt zu stecken, sollte z. B. darüber nachgedacht werden, wie die Kultur im ganzen Land gefördert werden könne." #Staatsoper #Stuttgart https://t.co/XU2dHyH1ON https://t.co/JJZAJ7vmKN	22	104	26307
09.02.2020 17:04:45	#Hessen Die #AfD-Fraktion im #hlt hat ein Video zur fehlerhaften Mandatsberechnung bei der #Landtagswahl erstellt. Es fehlt ein Mandat, weshalb eine Beschwerde beim Staatsgerichtshof anhängig ist. #Demokratie https://t.co/WdTjU1s5SP https://t.co/WTP0mbkarp https://t.co/5f0TV3pQx3	41	176	26307
09.02.2020 16:56:11	#Sachsen @Joerg_UrbanAfD, Vorsitzender der #AfD im #saxl: „Statt die Chance für eine bürgerliche Regierung zu nutzen, fällt #Kretschmer seinen Thüringer Parteikollegen in den Rücken und fordert eine Zusammenarbeit mit den #SED-Nachfolgern." https://t.co/oNsefEbVIO https://t.co/J4pfbJjQ2f	15	48	26307
09.02.2020 16:52:35	Dr. Alexander #Gauland, Ehrenvorsitzender der #AfD: „Ich kann die Verantwortlichen von #CDU und #FDP nur davor warnen, nun statt #Neuwahlen den Kandidaten der umbenannten #SED ins Amt zu hieven." #Thueringen https://t.co/hxxenmtPm2 https://t.co/a84z9t1WMN	28	124	26307
09.02.2020 16:49:55	#NRW Andreas #Keith, Agrarpolit. Sprecher der #AfD im #ltnrw: „Wenn immer weiter ausufernde #EU-Regularien #Landwirte in ihrer Existenz bedrohen, muss die Landespolitik entschlossen einschreiten und sich vor ihre #Bauern stellen". https://t.co/eoljlmZWpu https://t.co/jGHTVAWoZD	7	26	26307
07.02.2020 12:19:57	.@Beatrix_vStorch, Stellver. #AfD-Bundessprecherin: „Mit Feigheit und Führungsschwäche sind bürgerliche Mehrheiten jenseits von #r2g auf jeden Fall nicht machbar. Bürgerliche Wähler sind deshalb bei der #AfD besser aufgehoben als bei der #FDP." #AfDwirkt https://t.co/hhh0kvf5r7 https://t.co/GJxN4yL3we	13	48	25800
07.02.2020 12:06:10	.@Tino_Chrypalla, #AfD-Bundessprecher: „#Merkel, #Lindner und das rot-rot-grüne Lager stürzen aus parteipolitischen Interessen mit unverhohlenen Drohungen einen demokratisch gewählten Ministerpräsidenten, ohne ihm auch nur	16	57	25800

	eine einzige Chance zu geben". https://t.co/uzov9beX7r https://t.co/QkL4sCaWqM			
06.02.2020 17:07:29	.@AndreasKalbitz, Mitglied im #AfD-Bundessvorstand: „Nicht die Wahl von Thomas #Kemmerich, sondern das antidemokratische Verhalten von #Merkel und ihren untertänigen Chorknaben ist eine Schande für unsere #Demokratie.“ #ThueringenWahl https://t.co/H4fGWAYHAI https://t.co/Slao3eZ2WN	68	360	25800
06.02.2020 17:04:19	.@Beatrix_vStorch, Stellvertr. #AfD-Bundessprecherin: „Die Solidarität mit dem abgewählten #SED-Ministerpräsidenten ist nicht wirklich erstaunlich. Honeckers Rache kann Wahlen nicht akzeptieren, die nicht mit ihrem Herrschaftsverständnis vereinbar sind.“ https://t.co/XiF2nH7njN https://t.co/SircHSubas	66	316	25800
04.02.2020 16:02:15	#Hamburg Dr. Alexander #Wolf, Vorsitzender der #AfD in der #hhbue: „Der Staat hat grundsätzlich keinen Sanierungsauftrag für private und von Insolvenz bedrohte Zeitungsverlage.“ #SPD #Morgenpost https://t.co/Dlr6QJsOpK https://t.co/L4odYlXzxx	12	78	25800
03.02.2020 21:36:35	.@Beatrix_vStorch, Stellvertr. #AfD-Bundessprecherin: „Merkels populistischer Ausstieg aus der #Atomkraft war ein großer Fehler. Unter den unaufhörlich steigenden Strompreisen leiden Verbraucher ebenso wie #Industrie und Gewerbe.“ https://t.co/0Wfjd4g4yO https://t.co/7O1L9cEmeA	42	156	25800
03.02.2020 21:33:45	Dr. Alexander #Gauland, Ehrenvorsitzender der #AfD: „Wie hoch oder niedrig die #Lebensmittelpreise im #Supermarkt sind, geht Frau #Merkel einen feuchten Kehricht an.“ https://t.co/ZoKgJT3cPU https://t.co/dvLgY57mNE	82	360	25800
03.02.2020 21:30:51	#BaWü Klaus #Dürr, Digitalpolit. Sprecher der #AfD im #ltbw: Es „werden statt neuer Ministerien vielmehr Experten und Fachleute benötigt, die das vorhandene aber noch nicht abgerufene Geld zur Beseitigung der digitalen Armut [...] einsetzen könnten.“ https://t.co/vn6nX0UjDH https://t.co/p9U9Ga5sxC	3	20	25800
03.02.2020 21:24:54	#Sachsen Thomas #Thumm, Sprecher für den ländlichen Raum der #AfD im #saxlt: „#Günther ist ein typisches Beispiel für grüne #Doppelmoral: Öffentlich Wasser predigen und heimlich Wein trinken.“ #Umweltminister #Kläranlage #Umrüstungspflicht	5	31	25800

	https://t.co/z6CZpUON8D https://t.co/KzwaBDp2LP			
03.02.2020 21:18:24	<p>#Hamburg Dr. Alexander #Wolf, Vorsitzender der #AfD in der #hhbue: „Gesicht zeigen ist eine Grundvoraussetzung bei der Kommunikation. Die #Vollverschleierung ist damit eine Totalverweigerung der sozialen Kommunikation und dadurch eine Provokation“.</p> <p>https://t.co/GHY9NZ0p6h https://t.co/cselQ2mg8c</p>	24	91	25800
03.02.2020 21:14:38	<p>.@StBrandner, Stellvertr. #AfD-Bundessprecher, sieht in den Ergebnissen einer #INSA-Umfrage den Niedergang der deutschen Sprache dokumentiert und bekräftigt die Forderung der AfD, die deutsche Sprache als #Landessprache im #Grundgesetz festzuschreiben.</p> <p>https://t.co/aBacqMJPo5 https://t.co/Gdj1RgvHo1</p>	16	79	25800
31.01.2020 20:19:44	<p>+++ Stellenangebot +++ Die Bundesgeschäftsstelle der Alternative für Deutschland (#AfD) sucht zum nächstmöglichen Zeitpunkt am Standort #Berlin einen "Referent #Recht" (m/w):</p> <p>https://t.co/ZYKxJ3TVtS https://t.co/txM8fbZin3</p>	4	17	25599
31.01.2020 20:18:37	<p>+++ Stellenangebot +++ Die Bundesgeschäftsstelle der Alternative für Deutschland (#AfD) sucht zum nächstmöglichen Zeitpunkt am Standort #Berlin einen "Referent #IT- und Netzwerksicherheit" (m/w):</p> <p>https://t.co/n9hbgqpSlc https://t.co/joD5xkUy5U</p>	3	19	25599
31.01.2020 20:12:01	<p>.@Beatrix_vStorch, Stellver. #AfD-Bundessprecherin: „Die AfD setzt sich für ein zügiges Abkommen über einen zollfreien Handel zwischen Deutschland und Großbritannien ein. Dem steht nichts im Wege, allein die EU-Kommission, die ihre Machtspielchen treibt“</p> <p>https://t.co/leJOCGoRCX https://t.co/ltlThrw3hi</p>	17	74	25599
30.01.2020 10:24:55	<p>#NDS @Dana_Guth_AfD, Vorsitzende der #AfD im #ltnds, zur Beförderung von @sigmargabriel in den Vorstand der Deutschen Bank: „Der Niedergang der einstigen Volkspartei wird auch in der Prinzipienlosigkeit ihrer Führungsfiguren deutlich.“ #SPD</p> <p>https://t.co/BFeFecVhKo https://t.co/1Ezj7B7GI3</p>	17	61	25599
30.01.2020 10:17:29	<p>#Hamburg Detlef Ehlebracht, Verkehrspol. Sprecher der #AfD in der #hhbue, hat die Forderung der @AfD_Fraktion_HH bekräftigt, die baustellenbedingten Staus auf Hamburgs Zufahrtsstraßen durch einen</p>	5	18	25599

	Mehrschichtbetrieb der Sanierungsarbeiten zu minimieren. https://t.co/JBHBsbSkZX https://t.co/hYxquJzR7g			
30.01.2020 09:38:52	+++ Stellenangebot +++ Die Bundesgeschäftsstelle der Alternative für Deutschland (#AfD) sucht zum nächstmöglichen Zeitpunkt am Standort #Berlin einen "Redakteur Medienauswertung" (m/w): https://t.co/w3oe7Nc5sP https://t.co/crBgiPsmMd	9	20	25599
30.01.2020 09:36:19	+++ Stellenangebot +++ Die Bundesgeschäftsstelle der Alternative für Deutschland (#AfD) sucht zum nächstmöglichen Zeitpunkt am Standort #Berlin einen "Redakteur Social Media" (m/w): https://t.co/qr3vgQlaV0 https://t.co/262VblpUmw	5	15	25599
30.01.2020 09:31:52	#NRW @Wagner_AfD_MdL, Vorsitzender der #AfD im #ltnrw, stellt zum Urteil gegen die #Landesregierung klar: „Die Bürger haben ein Recht zu erfahren, wo es in NRW besonders gefährlich ist“. #Sicherheit https://t.co/mKzc4Y6VjU https://t.co/Wf7BBhsSXs	7	33	25599
28.01.2020 22:32:59	#MV @WeberProf, Rechtspolit. Sprecher der #AfD im #ltnmv, fordert Frau Klara #Fries auf, ihr #Bundesverdienstkreuz zurück zu geben, wenn sie mit den damit verbundenen Werten offenbar nicht im Einklang steht. Anderenfalls muss es ihr aberkannt werden. https://t.co/tt8bt38K2L https://t.co/WU3gjAD6st	7	43	25599
28.01.2020 22:26:14	#Sachsen Torsten #Gahler, Medienpolit. Sprecher der #AfD im #saxl: „Nach den linken Gewaltexzessen am Wochenende zeigt sich einmal mehr: Die #Hass-Plattform #indymedia muss komplett stillgelegt werden.“ #Antifa https://t.co/5HPhYYuAys https://t.co/7fPFf6leJ5	15	44	25599
28.01.2020 22:21:53	#RLP @JoachimPaul_AfD, Bildungspolit. Sprecher der #AfD im #ltnrlp, erläutert den #AfD-Antrag „Bildungswende 2021“, der einen Einschulungskorridor vorsieht, so dass Eltern selbst über Einschulung oder Rückstellung ihres Kindes entscheiden können. https://t.co/BST7hK78CJ https://t.co/adsRK7Q6Xr	11	68	25599
28.01.2020 22:12:39	Dr. Alexander #Gauland, Ehrenvorsitzender der #AfD: „Das System der Negativpersonalauslese, das sich in der #Merkel-Ära bei den Unionsparteien immer weiter verfestigen konnte, hat die Christdemokratie in Deutschland nachhaltig verändert.“ #Splitterpartei https://t.co/aOWvuzgqFO https://t.co/gHr20SUc7f	1	46	25599

28.01.2020 22:00:58	#Hamburg Dr. Alexander Wolf, Vorsitzender der #AfD in der #hhbue: „Wir fordern [...] bei der Verteilung von #Asyl bewerbern und Migranten eine Reform des Königsteiner Schlüssels. Hamburg muss endlich entlastet werden.“ #Integration https://t.co/ilpvOeX3Gx https://t.co/W6lWrD4TYM	11	37	25599
28.01.2020 21:53:11	#Hamburg Dirk #Nockemann, Vorsitzender der #AfD in der #hhbue: „#Grüne und Innere Sicherheit passen einfach nicht zusammen. Wer grün wählt, der riskiert die #Sicherheit und Ordnung in unserer #Hansestadt.“ #G20 #Vermummungsverbot https://t.co/QbEJbLU5s2 https://t.co/8S6crO24ay	23	93	25599
28.01.2020 21:45:51	#LSA @UlrichSiegmond, Gesundheitspolit. Sprecher der #AfD im #ltlsa, drückt seine Sympathie für die streikenden #Ameos-Mitarbeiter aus und prangert die Heuchelei der #SPD an, welche die Finanzmisere der Krankenhäuser wesentlich mitverantwortet hat. https://t.co/cWtmtB7sAm https://t.co/i4prJyOi3L	11	45	25599
28.01.2020 21:37:24	#Hessen @PapstDippelAfD, Frauenpol. Sprecherin der #AfD im #hlt: „Wenn selbst die Landesverwaltung keine Quote anwendet, sondern mit einer #Bestenauslese arbeitet, sollte von der Wirtschaft nichts Anderes verlangt werden.“ #Frauenquote #SPD https://t.co/G3MQiWMHRu https://t.co/Yb5kDMwIR0	5	34	25599
27.01.2020 07:04:30	#Hamburg Dr. Alexander #Gauland, Ehrenvorsitzender der #AfD, sprach vor 550 Gästen im Festsaal des Hamburger Rathauses, welcher bis zum Bersten gefüllt war. Trotz 80 linksdrehender Chaoten vor dem #Rathaus ein voller Erfolg! @AfD_Hamburg #hhbue2020 https://t.co/2hK3Lks5Gd	56	253	25599