

# Ideological alternative? Analyzing *Alternative für Deutschland* candidates' ideal points via black box scaling

Party Politics

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DOI: 10.1177/1354068815625230

ppq.sagepub.com

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## Abstract

This study applies black box scaling to the German Longitudinal Election Study candidate survey 2013 to shed light on an emerging right-wing party in Germany, the *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD). The scaling procedure extracts two meaningful and robust ideological dimensions described as socialism versus liberalism and libertarian versus authoritarian. Placing the ideal point of candidates from all parties into this two-dimensional space shows that AfD candidates are significantly more market liberal than Christian Democratic Union candidates but not more authoritarian. On these grounds, the AfD can hardly be regarded as a right-wing extremist party. Yet exploring ideological heterogeneity within parties indicates that East German AfD candidates are generally more authoritarian than their West German colleagues, highlighting a potential source of the party's recent shift from primarily Eurosceptic toward more nationalist conservative positions.

## Keywords

AfD, black box scaling, candidate survey, ideology, intra-party heterogeneity

## Introduction

With its anti-European and anti-immigration rhetoric, the *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) has become the most successful emerging party in Germany. Barely 2.5 years after its foundation, the AfD received nearly 5% of the votes in the Federal Election 2013, entered five state parliaments and gained several seats in the European Parliament. Whereas right-wing populist parties are a well-studied phenomenon in several (West-)European countries (see Mudde, 2007, 2013), this type of party has effectively been irrelevant in the Germany party system (Decker, 2004: 160). The rapid development of the AfD fueled expectations that the German party system is undergoing structural changes (Poguntke, 2014) and that the AfD has the potential of becoming a permanent extension of the German party system at the right-hand side of the ideological spectrum. Yet there is little systematic research on how the AfD

fits into the German party system and its underlying ideological space.

Existing studies either explore the attitudes and motives of AfD voters (Berbair et al., 2015; Schmitt-Beck, 2014) or extract policy positions from the AfD's party manifesto (Arzheimer, 2015; Franzmann, 2014). Party manifestos are certainly valuable documents to study the ideological positions of political parties. Party candidates, however, play a crucial role in conveying manifestos to the electorate. In the course of this transfer, they have leeway to frame positions

Paper submitted 29 May 2015; accepted for publication 22 November 2015

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in a certain way and to stress those positions that they personally value the most and to downplay those positions they do not support as fiercely. The ideological orientation of party candidates should provide valuable insight on the ideological position of their political party. Thus, the first research question at the center of this study concerns the positioning of AfD candidates in the ideological space underlying the German party system.

Focusing on candidates also provides an opportunity to take a closer look at the potential causes of ideological intraparty heterogeneity. Party manifestos tend to mask ideological heterogeneity within parties, as these documents are designed with the purpose to pinpoint the party's common goals in a way that is easily consumable by voters and especially by the media. Political dispute and positional ambiguity are certainly features of a vivid intraparty democracy. If, however, a party is unable to negotiate such conflicts in the long run, a party organization puts itself at risk of splitting up.

The AfD experienced a party split in mid-2015, when the Eurosceptic and economically ordo-liberal AfD founder Bernd Lucke resigned as party leader and founded a new party, the "Allianz für Fortschritt und Aufbruch" (ALFA), which has yet not been able to live up to electoral popularity of the AfD. Frauke Petry, spokesperson for the AfD Saxony and known for her nationalist, anti-immigration, and anti-abortion positions, became the AfD's new federal party leader. At first glance, the party split may be interpreted as a personal dispute between ambitious party animals. Yet it is becoming clear that the new party leadership denotes a fundamental change in the positioning of the AfD, shifting from ordo-liberal economic views toward nationalist conservative views. After the split, and in the wake of the current migration crisis, the remaining AfD managed to constantly stabilize its vote share in opinion polls well above the 5% threshold.<sup>1</sup>

In this study, we argue that this recent party infighting and the eventual split of the AfD is rooted in a deeper ideological divide between the mostly West German ordo-liberals and the East German national conservatives within the AfD, which was already apparent in the 2013 Federal Election. Notwithstanding that some of the established German parties (e.g. Left Party) may also suffer from ideological East–West differences, the exploration of ideological differences between East and West German AfD candidates is placed at the center of the second research question.

To address these questions, the empirical analysis utilizes data from the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) candidate campaign survey. The survey was conducted among candidates for the German Bundestag during the German Federal Elections 2013 and includes multiple issue items which can be used to extract latent ideological dimensions. Specifically, we use the black box scaling method (Poole, 1998), which generalizes the Aldrich–

McKelvey scaling procedure (Aldrich and McKelvey, 1977) to multiple dimensions and missing data (Poole et al., 2015). Despite this method having been designed to extract ideal points from multiple issue survey data, this article marks, to our knowledge, the first time it is applied to German candidate survey data (for other applications of black box scaling see, e.g. Saiegh, 2015).

## Theoretical framework

### Literature review

Despite a vibrant public debate about the AfD, there are only a few scientific studies on the AfD available so far. The first strand of contributions focuses on the "political demand side" and explores who votes for the AfD and for what reasons. In a quantitative analysis of the voting advice application *Bundestwahlkompass*, Berbuir et al. (2015) show that the sympathizers of the AfD are predominantly male, belong to the age-groups 25–35 years or 45–54 years, are well educated, financially well situated, and also interested in politics. Politically, they position themselves at the center of the ideological spectrum and tend to have voted for the Christian Democratic Union (CDU)/Christian Social Union (CSU) and Free Democratic Party (FDP) in the past. This finding is corroborated by a post-election survey, which additionally shows that even former voters of left parties (Left party, Social Democratic Party (SPD)) and former non-voters are attracted to the AfD (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, 2013). Moreover, AfD sympathizers report being dissatisfied with democracy in Germany (Berbuir et al., 2015) and the European Monetary Union.

In an analysis of AfD's voters in the German Federal Election 2013, Schmitt-Beck (2014) finds that AfD voters appear to favor a more conservative–authoritarian vision of society, opposing immigration, gender equality, and rights for homosexuals. Listing the economic and financial crisis as the most important political issue and fear of this crisis are strong predictors for the intention to vote for the AfD and the actual voting decision. Additionally, a negative attitude toward supporting states suffering from the crisis and a positive attitude toward the assimilation of immigrants also serve as predictors for this intention to vote for the AfD.

For the 2014 election of the European Parliament, Wagner et al. (2015) offer further empirical insights regarding AfD voters. Compared to voters of other parties, AfD voters evaluate Germany's European Union (EU) membership negatively, consider the influence of the EU on Germany as too large, are afraid that Germany has to pay for other EU member states and are afraid that immigration to Germany will increase. In total, these studies support the conclusion that the AfD tends to be attractive to voters with national conservative and more authoritarian views.

A second strand of literature focuses on the “political supply-side,” comparing the policy positions of the AfD with other parties. Based on a qualitative content analysis of the AfD’s 2013 election manifesto, Franzmann (2014) concludes that the party program has a national conservative to national liberal character, with a strong emphasis on *ordo-liberal* economic and financial policy and traditional societal values (e.g. family). In comparison with other major German parties, the AfD manages to distinctively position itself in the two-dimensional ideological space. On the economic dimension, the AfD is placed to the right of the CDU and FDP. On the libertarian–authoritarian dimension, their score is slightly higher than the CDU’s (Franzmann, 2014: 120). Because of its antiestablishment attitude and critique toward the German government in combination with their programmatic focus, Franzmann (2014) sees similarities between the AfD and the appearance of other right-wing populist parties in Europe.

Arzheimer (2015) estimates the ideological position of German parties in the 2014 European Parliament using the *Wordfish* text scaling method (Slapin and Proksch, 2008) on electoral manifestos. According to this analysis, the AfD is located at the very right pole of the left–right scale near the CSU and the National Democrats (a radical right party). The qualitative inspection of the AfD manifesto reveals “soft” Euroscepticism and support for stricter immigration laws but no evidence for populism and extremism (Arzheimer, 2015). The analysis of AfD’s Web site and Facebook fan page also indicates that the party is clearly right wing but not populist or extremist. Comments on the Facebook page, however, reveal resentment against elites, immigrants, and homosexuals as well as nationalism.

Regarding the AfD’s candidates’ position on the causes of the EU economic crisis and political counterstrategies in the 2013 German Federal Election, Schneider and Tepe (2015) find that AfD candidates attribute the crisis primarily to the failure of national governments and the EU. Compared to the other major parties, AfD candidates strongly support a national crisis strategy consisting of the bankruptcy of EU member states and the return to national currencies. These findings are corroborated by Pieper et al. (2015) who utilize a quantitative and qualitative analysis of manifestos, press releases, and public speeches to qualify the AfD’s Eurosceptic positions.

### *Positioning AfD candidates in a two-dimensional ideological space*

Notwithstanding national particularities and regional deviations, political scientists generally agree on the existence of a two-dimensional ideological space in Western democracies consisting of a socialism versus *laissez-faire*/liberalism dimension and a libertarian versus authoritarian dimension (e.g. Klingemann, 1979; see also Kitschelt, 1994, chapter 1).

The economic socialism/liberalism dimension is presumed to be particularly relevant in political party competition (e.g. Klingemann et al., 2006: 5) as it concerns how the economy and the distribution of scarce resources, probably the most important aspects of modern societies, should be organized (Heath et al., 1994; Kitschelt, 1994: 9). Attributing a strong role to the market and a weak role to the state is labeled as a (market) liberal position. The core value underlying this view is liberty. On the other side of the scale, it is believed that the state should have full control over production resources and is in charge of equal redistribution of goods and services. This position can be labeled socialism with equality as its underlying core value.

In order to formulate a hypothesis about the location of AfD candidates on the economic socialism/liberalism dimension, it is helpful to consider the circumstances of its founding (Franzmann, 2014: 122). The AfD was founded as reaction toward the way that established conservative parties dealt with the EURO crisis. The AfD regards the failure of national governments to keep up budgetary discipline as a major cause of the EURO and fiscal crisis. Still, no other non-extremist political party suggests the same radical solutions as the AfD, which include the dissolution of the Eurozone, to solve the European debt crisis (Anders, 2014: 69f.). Combined with a reorientation toward the concept of a national economy, the AfD stands for an *ordo-liberal* approach to the economy (Franzmann, 2014). Under these premises, candidates from the AfD should be even more skeptical toward fiscal or monetary market interventions than candidates from the CDU. With a pronounced pro-market orientation, the AfD enters into direct competition with the FDP, which traditionally stands for liberal economic policy (Niedermayer, 2015: 193 ff.). In this particular case, it remains an open question whether AfD or FDP candidates report a stronger market-liberal orientation. Therefore, the first hypothesis reads as follows:

**H1a:** AfD candidates are more liberal on the socialism–liberalism dimension than CDU candidates.

The second dimension of the ideological space tends to capture diverse societal issues, such as culture, crime prevention, education, women’s rights, and migration (Franzmann and Kaiser, 2006: 165). This dimension is commonly labeled as the libertarian versus authoritarian dimension. It orthogonally crosscuts the economic socialism/liberalism dimension and deals primarily with the issue of to what extent rules which apply to the communal life are allowed to interfere with individual liberties (Heath et al., 1994: 115 f.). One pole of this dimension puts a high value on individualism and therefore leaves decisions on lifestyles, sexual orientation, and so on to the individual. This pole is labeled as libertarian (Kitschelt, 1994: 9 f.). The other side of the scale emphasizes traditional conservative societal values, such as family, home country, law-and-order, obedience,

and tradition. In this view, an individual's way of life should be predetermined by the values of the majority. This pole can be called authoritarian.

Two policy fields might be of particular relevance to deriving an expectation on the position of AfD candidates on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension. First, there has been growing dissatisfaction among traditional CDU voters with the replacement of the traditional conservative position when it comes to societal issues such as prenatal diagnostics or gender mainstreaming. In these policy fields, the AfD considers itself as the party that protects the core conservative values of family (Niedermayer, 2015: 192 ff.). The second policy field concerns the role of migration. In the 2013 German federal election campaign, the conservative and liberal party emphasized the positive labor market effect of immigration (Schmitt-Beck, 2014: 106), while the AfD used a particularly negative image of migration over the course of their electoral campaign. Using survey data from electorates, Schmitt-Beck (2014) shows that AfD voters who made their decision close to the Election Day strongly oppose a multicultural society, while those AfD voters who were early deciders choose the party because of their position on the EURO crisis.

Both policy fields illustrate why one can assume that the ideological orientation of AfD candidates is more authoritarian than the orientation of an average CDU candidate. With a pronounced authoritarian orientation (in particular toward the migration topic), the AfD competes with the CSU, the Bavarian sister party of the CDU. In contrast to the CDU, the CSU stands for stricter conservative societal values, holds onto traditional gender roles, and supports harsher law-and-order policies (Kießling, 2007: 230 f.). It remains an open question whether AfD or CSU candidates report a stronger authoritarian orientation. According to these considerations, the second hypothesis states the following:

**H1b:** AfD candidates are more authoritarian on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension than CDU candidates.

### *Positional differences between Eastern and Western AfD candidates*

Even before the party split in mid-2015, there has been growing evidence that the AfD suffers from an intense ideological conflict between two factions of the party (Niedermayer, 2015: 197 ff.), labeled as market liberals and nationalist conservatives. These two factions can be geographically approximated by an East/West divide. The West German branch, especially under the former party leader Bernd Lucke, stood for a strict focus on ordoliberal and anti-EU topics. The Eastern branch, led by the new federal party leader Frauke Petry, in contrast, insists on centering the AfD on an authoritarian position toward

topics such as anti-immigration, same-sex marriage, abortion, and national identity.

The difficulties in defining a relationship between the AfD and the right-wing anti-Islam Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident (PEGIDA) movement presents another example of ideological differences between AfD leaders from West and East Germany. While West German AfD leaders were reluctant to acknowledge PEGIDA as legitimate protesters, East German AfD officials considered the protest as a confirmation of their anti-Islamic and national conservative positions. In an attempt to prevent the nationalist conservative faction from taking over the leadership of the AfD, Bernd Lucke launched an intraparty initiative (Weckruf, 2015) trying to gather the ordoliberal AfD faction. This maneuver, however, only accelerated the polarization of party members and led to his resignation at the AfD party congress in Essen in July 2015.

This study argues that the intraparty conflict originated from substantially different ideological positions on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension among those who joined the AfD in Eastern and Western Germany. What is more, we assume that this divide was already apparent in the context of the 2013 Federal Election. The critique toward the EU, as well as the general orientation toward market liberalism (Niedermayer, 2015: 193), certainly constitutes the common ideological basis for the AfD and its candidates. The position on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension, however, is presumed to differ between West German AfD candidates, holding libertarian societal values and East German AfD candidates taking authoritarian views on nationality and immigration policies.<sup>2</sup> These considerations lead to the following conditional hypothesis.

**H2:** East German AfD candidates are more authoritarian on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension than West-German AfD candidates.

## **Data and methods**

### *Data set*

The empirical analysis utilizes data from the 2013 candidate study<sup>3</sup>, conducted by the GLES led by Prof. Dr Bernhard Weßels. The data were collected in the time period between October 2013 and January 2014, after the Bundestag Election of 2013. In this survey, all candidates representing parties in the former Bundestag, as well as candidates from the Pirate Party and the AfD ( $n = 2.776$ ), were sent a questionnaire (Rattinger et al., 2014: 4 f.). In addition, candidates were also offered the option to fill out the survey online. In total, 1137 candidates participated in the survey, which corresponds to a response rate of about 41%.; The survey contains detailed item batteries on various topics such as type of candidacy,

policy positions as well as the candidate's personal and sociodemographic background. Since the Pirate party—despite a good prognosis (Debus and Faas, 2013: 189)—lost their electoral relevance in the last legislative period, we excluded their candidates from the following analyses.

### Operationalization of dependent variables

Following the basic space theory (Ordeshook, 1976; for a summary see Armstrong et al., 2014: 8 ff.), ideology is understood as the position of a candidate in a low-dimensional policy space (Converse, 1964). The dimensions of this space are assumed to structure the opinions of political actors and citizens on multiple issues. Even though political actors “may have preferences across a dizzying array of policy issues—abortion, tax rates, gun control, foreign policy—these attitudes appear to be organized by positions along a small number of latent dimensions” (Armstrong et al., 2014: 8). According to this conceptualization ideology refers to the position of a political actor on each of these latent dimensions.

Although the basic space theory dates back almost 40 years, scaling procedures to estimate the positions of political actors on the respective dimensions, also referred to as *ideal point*, were developed in the last 20 years (for an overview see Armstrong et al., 2014; Poole, 2005). In recent years, several scholars have developed innovative measures to estimate the comparable positions of voters, parties, and politicians based on different data sources such as roll call data, expert surveys or party manifestos (Lo et al., 2014; Poole and Rosenthal, 1997; Saiegh, 2015; Slapin and Proksch, 2008). All of these techniques share a common finding: it is usually sufficient to locate political actors in a two-dimensional space (Poole and Rosenthal, 1997). The first dimension often denotes economic left–right differences, while the second dimension usually locates political actors according to societal issues.

With the black box scaling technique, Poole (1998) developed a method that enables scholars to recover “a basic space from a set of issue scales” (Armstrong et al., 2014, chapter 3; Poole, 1998) from survey data. Black box scaling allows researchers to obtain the ideal points of survey respondents based on their answers to issue scales, which are commonly measured on Likert scales. The method can be compared to factor analysis, yet it has several statistical advantages compared to factor analysis as “the scaling procedure [Blackbox scaling] . . . analyzes the data matrix directly without any intervening transformations of the original data” (see also Armstrong et al., 2014: 65f.; Poole, 1998: 954). Black box scaling has been recently implemented in the statistical software *R* (Poole et al., 2015), which will be applied in the subsequent empirical analysis.

### Operationalization of independent variables

Party affiliation is measured via a categorical variable covering seven parties (CDU, CSU, SPD, Green Party, Left Party, FDP, and AfD). For the regression analysis, this variable is decomposed into dummy variables with the CDU serving as reference category since this party made up the largest fraction in the previous legislative period. To measure East/West differences, a simple dummy variable is used with respondents running for a list or district seat in West Germany as the reference category.

The selection of control variables draws on previous research by Norris and Lovenduski (1995: 210f.) who point out that “the attitudes and values of politicians will probably reflect their formative experience in early childhood, formal education, the workplace and family.” Kitschelt (1994, chapter 1) more specifically suggests that education and occupation should affect an individual's positioning on the socialism/liberalism dimension, while gender, age, and life cycle is expected to play a more important role for the positioning on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension. Candidates with academic training should be positioned to the right side of the socialism/liberalism dimension, while at the same time positioned more to libertarian end of the libertarian–authoritarian dimension. Under the presumption of a gendered world female candidates might be expected to be more pro-welfare state and therefore be nearer to the socialist end of the first dimension. Age might be expected to have a stronger effect the libertarian–authoritarian dimension, while a migration background and an urban residence might correspond with libertarian world views.

The final regression models include the following set of control variables (see Appendix Table 1): age (in years), gender (0 = *male*, 1 = *female*), vocational training (academic, vocational, none/still studying or in training; reference category: vocational training), migration background (reference category: no), and self-described place of residence (rural vs. urban; reference category: rural). Basic descriptive statistics for all variables can be found in Appendix Table 2.<sup>4</sup>

## Empirical analysis

### Result of the scaling procedure

The GLES candidate survey includes a battery of 12 issue items displayed in Table 1. Using black box scaling, we extracted three dimensions. We specified that ideal points are computed only for candidates who answered at least 10 of the 12 items, which makes a total of 945 candidates.<sup>5</sup>

Table 1 provides information on the overall and item-specific goodness of fit of the black box scaling procedure. It displays, in the last row, that the position of candidates on the first dimension explains more than 64% of variation in the answers to the 12 issue scales. A second dimension adds

**Table 1.** Issue-specific weight terms ( $W$ ),  $R^2$  values, and goodness of fit for three dimensions.

| Item  | Dim. 1 |        | Dim. 2 |        | Dim. 3 |        | Dif. in $R^2$ |         |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|---------|
|   | $R^2$  | $W$    | $R^2$  | $W$    | $R^2$  | $W$    | D2 – D1       | D3 – D2 |
| Immigrants should be obligated to assimilate to German culture                      | 0.437  | -2.531 | 0.644  | -2.536 | 0.652  | 0.596  | 0.207         | 0.008   |
| Government should not intervene economy   | 0.532  | -2.983 | 0.623  | 1.812  | 0.692  | 1.814  | 0.091         | 0.069   |
| For environmental protection, extensive measures are needed                         | 0.503  | 2.453  | 0.535  | -0.903 | 0.544  | -0.519 | 0.032         | 0.009   |
| Same-sex marriage should be forbidden by law  | 0.242  | -1.680 | 0.544  | -2.733 | 0.568  | 0.886  | 0.302         | 0.024   |
| Women should be privileged in application and promotion processes                   | 0.549  | 3.003  | 0.568  | -0.823 | 0.815  | 3.410  | 0.019         | 0.247   |
| Delinquents should be punished harder than to date                                  | 0.313  | -2.134 | 0.602  | -2.958 | 0.601  | -0.092 | 0.289         | -0.001  |
| The provision of stable social security should be most important goal of government | 0.474  | 2.471  | 0.559  | -1.525 | 0.630  | -1.682 | 0.085         | 0.071   |
| Government should create measure to decrease income disparities                     | 0.663  | 3.535  | 0.758  | -1.960 | 0.801  | -1.565 | 0.095         | 0.043   |
| Immigrants are good for German economy  | 0.198  | 1.251  | 0.443  | 2.018  | 0.454  | 0.475  | 0.245         | 0.011   |
| Women should decide on abortion on their own  | 0.228  | 1.730  | 0.417  | 2.304  | 0.433  | -0.834 | 0.189         | 0.016   |
| Energy supply should be secured with nuclear power                                  | 0.577  | -3.035 | 0.578  | -0.044 | 0.612  | 1.173  | 0.001         | 0.034   |
| There should be a female quota in supervisory board of large companies              | 0.793  | 4.715  | 0.801  | -0.674 | 0.899  | 2.830  | 0.008         | 0.098   |
| Goodness of fit percent of variation explained                                      | 65.42  |        | 7.82   |        | 4.23   |        |               |         |

Note: 5-point answer scales, own translation. Observations: 945 candidates. Dim.: dimension; Dif.: difference.

another 7.82% of explanation and the third dimension 4.23%. As Armstrong et al. (2014: 70) note, the increase in the goodness of fit does not necessarily imply a meaningful interpretation of the respective dimension. The additional dimensions might just fit “noise in the data” (Armstrong et al., 2014: 70) but do not provide any additional value to the understanding of the ideological position of candidates on latent dimensions. Therefore, we focus on the issue-specific estimates also reported in Table 1, particularly the issue-specific weight term  $W$  and  $R^2$  value of each dimension.

The weight term  $W$  is comparable to the factor loadings in a factor analysis (Armstrong et al., 2014: 70) and the  $R^2$  values provide information on how much variation in the items is explained by the respective dimensions. As noted above, the increase in  $R^2$  values between the dimensions is of relevance, as these indicate which items are important for the specific dimension. Higher values indicate that the variation in these items is explained well by the model. As a consequence, an increase in  $R^2$  values from one dimension to the next implies that this issue is of great importance for the interpretation of this dimension. In analogy to factor analysis, an increase in  $R^2$  values between two dimensions implies that the respective item loads strongly on the new dimension.

The overall goodness of fit values indicate that many issues are already well explained by the first dimension. Most of these issues explained by the first dimension are related to the economy and thus indicate that the first dimension describes the classical socialism–liberalism divide between the parties on economic issues. Environmental protection is also well explained by candidates’

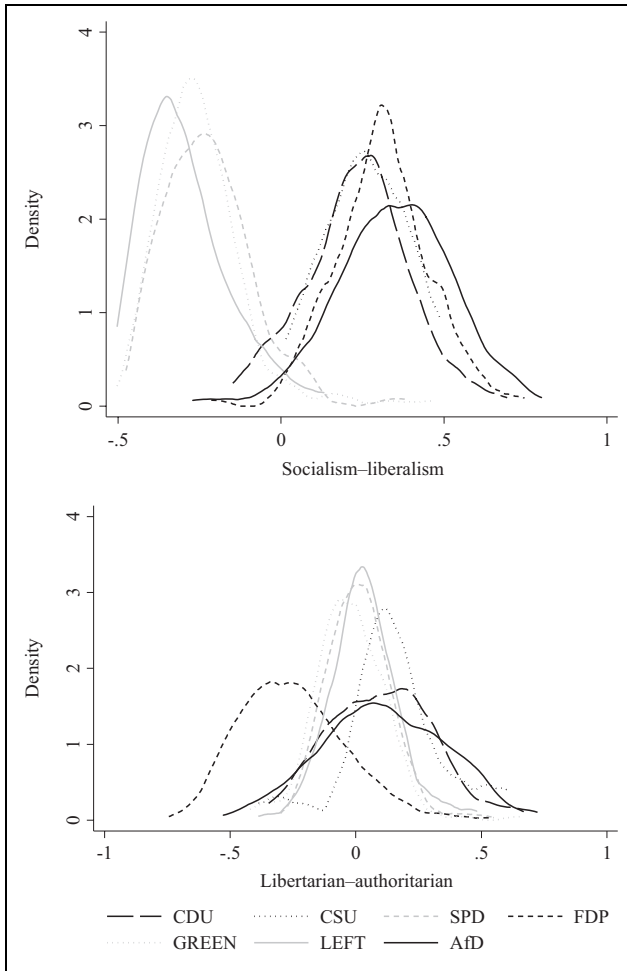
position on this dimension which might be explained by the fact that environmental protection often seems to be in conflict with economic growth.

The second dimension increases the  $R^2$  in a substantive way on five issue items. These issues are all related to societal issues such as immigration politics, (criminal) sentencing, and gender equality. It is interesting that these items also include the question whether “immigrants are good for the German economy” since one could have expected this issue to load on the first dimension. The relevance of this issue for the second dimension underlines our assumption that the second dimension identifies the libertarian versus authoritarian dimension. Thus, the second dimension corresponds nicely to the results of many other studies that identify these dimensions as most relevant (e.g. Poole and Rosenthal, 1997).

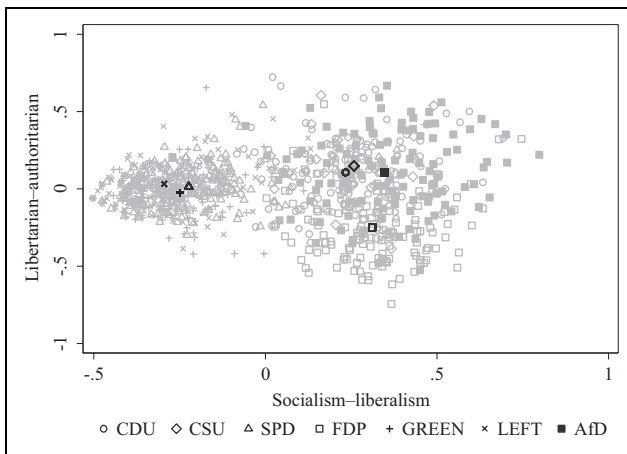
The third dimension improves the explanation of variation in solely one item, regarding the privileges of women in application processes. The respective item is already well explained by the first dimension as indicated by the comparably high  $R^2$  and  $W$  values for this dimension. Thus, the third dimension does not allow for a more substantive interpretation of ideological positions. Consequently, our analysis focuses on the explanation of candidates on the first and second dimension, which we denote as “socialism versus liberalism” (dimension 1) and “libertarian versus authoritarian” (dimension 2).<sup>6</sup>

### Descriptive analysis

Figure 1 presents the party-specific density plots for each of the two dimensions. Figure 2 plots candidates’ ideal point



**Figure 1.** Party-specific distribution of ideal points.  
 Note: Party-specific kernel density plots. Observations: 945 candidates.



**Figure 2.** Party-specific ideal points in a two-dimensional political space.  
 Note: Candidate values are printed in lighter gray. Party-specific mean ideal points are in printed in boldface. Observations: 945 candidates.

on the socialism–liberalism dimension against their ideal point on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension. Candidate values in Figure 2 are printed in lighter gray and the party-specific mean ideal points are printed in boldface. Moving from left to right, the Left Party is positioned at the left end of the socialism–liberalism dimension, followed by the Green Party and the SPD. Then there is a gap (see Figure 1 bimodal distribution), followed by a second cluster of parties consisting of the CDU, CSU, FDP, and AfD. Moving from right to left within this cluster, the AfD is positioned at the right end of the socialism–liberalism dimension, followed by the FDP, the CSU and the CDU. Focusing on the party-specific average ideal points on the socialism–liberalism dimension, the average AfD candidate takes a more liberal position than the CDU candidate and also slightly more liberal position than the average FDP candidate.

The ideal points on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension follow a unimodal distribution (see Figure 1), with SPD candidates being closest to the mean position on this dimension. Moving from bottom to the top on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension, candidates from the FDP are followed by candidates from the Green Party, the SPD, the Left Party, the AfD, the CDU, and the CSU. This ranking, however, underscores two remarkable aspects. First, the position of FDP candidates marks an outlier position on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension as these candidates take particularly strong libertarian ideal points. Second, candidates from the CDU and AfD take almost identical positions on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension. Candidates from the CSU score the highest on libertarian–authoritarian dimension, even though compared to the CDU and AfD, the CSU position on the second dimension cannot be regarded as an outlier.

In total, the graphical analysis (see Figures 1 and 2) reveals two clusters of parties, namely, a left cluster consisting of candidates from the Left Party, SPD, and Green Party and a conservative cluster including candidates from the CDU, CSU, and the AfD. In this dichotomy, it is the FDP that appears to be an outlier to the conservative party cluster as it scores too low on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension.

Another interesting aspect of Figure 2 concerns the spread of ideal points around the party-specific mean ideal point. Compared to the conservative party cluster, the individual ideal points of candidates from the left party cluster lie rather close to the party-specific mean ideal point. Candidates from the cluster of conservative parties tend to show a larger spread around the mean ideal point of these parties. Thus, in terms of ideological heterogeneity, candidates from the Left Party, the Green Party, and the SPD tend to share more ideological beliefs than candidates from the CDU, CSU, AfD, and FDP. The heterogeneity of ideological positions within political parties and the determinants of individual ideal points will be explored in the next section.

**Table 2.** Determinants of socialism–liberalism and libertarian–authoritarian scores.

|                                | Socialism–liberalism |                 |                 | Libertarian–authoritarian |                 |                 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                | Model 1              | Model 2         | Model 3         | Model 4                   | Model 5         | Model 6         |
| CSU                            | 0.03 (0.03)          | 0.00 (0.03)     | 0.00 (0.03)     | 0.04 (0.05)               | 0.05 (0.05)     | 0.03 (0.05)     |
| SPD                            | −0.45*** (0.02)      | −0.44*** (0.02) | −0.45*** (0.02) | −0.09*** (0.02)           | −0.09*** (0.02) | −0.11*** (0.02) |
| FDP                            | 0.08*** (0.02)       | 0.06*** (0.02)  | 0.06*** (0.02)  | −0.35*** (0.03)           | −0.34*** (0.03) | −0.36*** (0.03) |
| GREEN                          | −0.48*** (0.02)      | −0.47*** (0.02) | −0.47*** (0.02) | −0.13*** (0.02)           | −0.11*** (0.02) | −0.13*** (0.02) |
| LEFT                           | −0.52*** (0.02)      | −0.52*** (0.02) | −0.52*** (0.02) | −0.08*** (0.02)           | −0.09*** (0.02) | −0.11*** (0.02) |
| AfD                            | 0.12*** (0.02)       | 0.12*** (0.02)  | 0.11*** (0.02)  | 0.00 (0.03)               | 0.00 (0.03)     | −0.03 (0.03)    |
| East                           |                      | 0.00 (0.01)     | −0.03 (0.03)    |                           | −0.02 (0.02)    | −0.14*** (0.04) |
| Age                            |                      | −0.00* (0.00)   | −0.00* (0.00)   |                           | 0.00*** (0.00)  | 0.00*** (0.00)  |
| University degree              |                      | 0.00 (0.01)     | 0.00 (0.01)     |                           | −0.06*** (0.01) | −0.05*** (0.01) |
| In edu./voc. train./ no train. |                      | −0.01 (0.02)    | −0.01 (0.02)    |                           | −0.04 (0.03)    | −0.04 (0.03)    |
| Female                         |                      | −0.08*** (0.01) | −0.08*** (0.01) |                           | 0.00 (0.01)     | 0.00 (0.01)     |
| Migration background           |                      | −0.05*** (0.01) | −0.05*** (0.01) |                           | −0.03* (0.02)   | −0.03* (0.02)   |
| Urban residence                |                      | −0.01 (0.01)    | −0.01 (0.01)    |                           | −0.05*** (0.01) | −0.05*** (0.01) |
| East # SPD                     |                      |                 | 0.06 (0.05)     |                           |                 | 0.12** (0.05)   |
| East # FDP                     |                      |                 | 0.01 (0.04)     |                           |                 | 0.14** (0.06)   |
| East # GREEN                   |                      |                 | 0.01 (0.04)     |                           |                 | 0.11** (0.05)   |
| East # LEFT                    |                      |                 | 0.04 (0.04)     |                           |                 | 0.14*** (0.05)  |
| East # AfD                     |                      |                 | 0.03 (0.06)     |                           |                 | 0.22*** (0.08)  |
| Observations                   | 945                  | 905             | 905             | 945                       | 905             | 905             |
| R <sup>2</sup>                 | 0.768                | 0.789           | 0.789           | 0.288                     | 0.317           | 0.327           |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>        | 0.767                | 0.786           | 0.785           | 0.283                     | 0.307           | 0.313           |

Note: CSU: Christian Social Union; FDP: Free Democratic Party; SPD: Social Democratic Party; AfD: *Alternative für Deutschland*. Adjusted standard errors are given in brackets, weighted data; reference category party: CDU; reference category education: vocational training; intercept included but not reported. \* $p < 0.10$ . \*\* $p < 0.05$ . \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

### Regression analysis

Table 2 presents six ordinary least squares regression models using candidate weights and heteroscedasticity-consistent (robust) standard errors. For each of the two dependent variables (socialism–liberalism score and libertarian–authoritarian score), we estimate three models. Models 1 and 4 are the baseline specifications containing only the candidates' party affiliation as an independent variable. Models 2 and 5 include the full set of sociodemographic control variables. Models 3 and 6 additionally include a series of multiplicative interaction terms between party affiliation and candidature in East versus West Germany.<sup>7</sup>

The adjusted  $R^2$  values indicate a very good fit for models 1 to 3 and a moderate fit for models 4 to 6. Comparing the baseline models (models 1 and 3), with those including the additional sociodemographic control variables (models 2 and 4), shows that the party affiliation explains the largest proportion of variance on both dependent variables. The inclusion of sociodemographic control variables leads only to a slight increase in the adjusted  $R^2$ .

The descriptive findings from Figures 1 and 2 are largely confirmed by the multivariate analysis. Compared to CDU candidates, AfD candidates score significantly higher on the socialism–liberalism dimension, which confirms H1a.

Contrary to H1b, however, there are no significant differences between CDU and AfD candidates on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension. This may be surprising since the AfD appeared to present itself not only as ordo-liberal and Eurosceptic but also as a party that strongly supports traditional societal values.

In addition, there are some remarkable findings concerning the impact of sociodemographic features on the ideal points taken by candidates. Higher age corresponds with lower scores on the socialism–liberalism dimension and higher scores on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension. Furthermore, we find that females score significantly lower on the socialism–liberalism dimension than males. A less liberal orientation is also associated with candidates having a migration background. Both, migration background and urban residence are negatively associated authoritarian positions. These patterns largely confirm research that used general population surveys (e.g. Heath et al., 1994: 126 f.). Yet it is still remarkable to find these robust associations on a sample of candidates after controlling for party affiliation.

The next step of the empirical analysis is to explore ideological differences between AfD candidates in East and West Germany as proposed in H2. First, a series of  $t$ -tests comparing the average score on the first and second

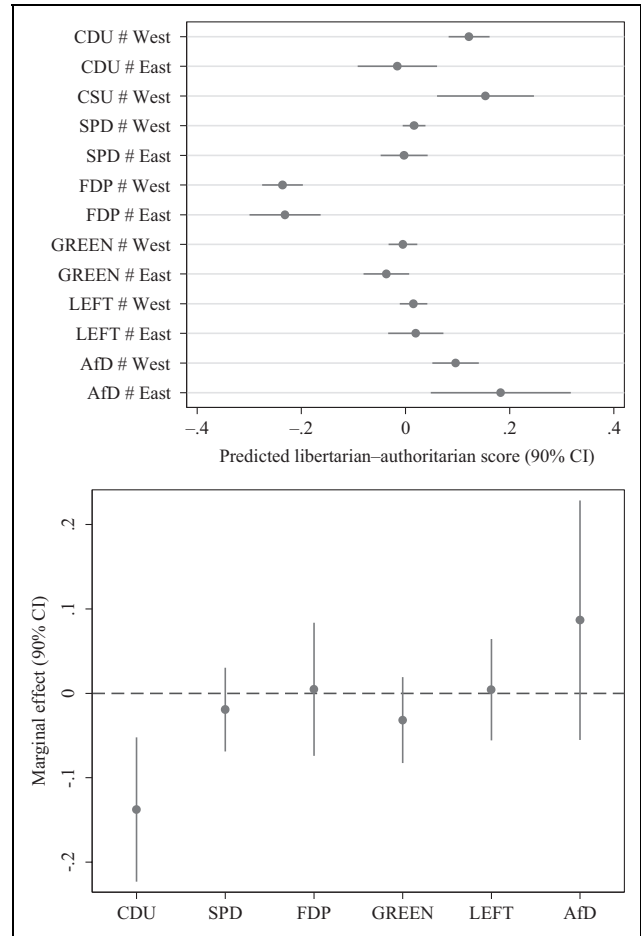


dimension for East and West German candidates on separate party samples reveals that there are no East/West differences on the socialism–liberalism dimension. For CDU and AfD candidates, however, we find such differences on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension. East German CDU candidates score lower ( $-0.118$ ,  $p$  value  $0.015$ ) on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension than their West German party colleagues, while East German AfD candidates score higher ( $0.113$ ,  $p$  value  $0.089$ ) than their West German party colleagues.

Second, an  $F$ -test is used to explore whether the inclusion of interaction terms in models 3 and 6 improves the statistical model. The  $F$ -test comparing models 2 and 3 reveals that the inclusion of the set of interaction terms does not improve the overall model ( $F = 0.41$ ;  $p = 0.842$ ). None of the five interaction terms reaches conventional levels of statistical significance. Again, this supports the expectation that there are no ideological East–West differences on the socialism–liberalism dimension since this dimension represents the most essential common ideological ground for members of the same party. The  $F$ -test comparing models 5 and 6, in which the libertarian–authoritarian scale serves as the dependent variable, reveals a significant model improvement ( $F = 2.72$ ;  $p = 0.019$ ). All five interaction terms reach conventional levels of statistical significance.

In order to explore these conditional relationships between party affiliation and East–West candidacy in further depth, Figure 3 presents the predicted values and marginal effects (see, e.g. Kam and Franzese, 2007) based on model 6. The upper panel of Figure 3, representing the effect of party affiliation on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension conditional on East–West candidature, shows that there are no substantive ideological differences among candidates from East, respectively, West Germany within the SPD, Green Party, the Left Party, and the FDP. The predicted libertarian–authoritarian score for West German AfD candidates is equally as high as the predicted libertarian–authoritarian score for West German CDU candidates. These West German CDU candidates tend to be more authoritarian than their party colleagues from East Germany. East German AfD candidates score slightly higher on the libertarian–authoritarian than CDU candidates. Comparing East and West German AfD candidates, ideological differences show in the opposite direction, as AfD candidates in East Germany score substantively higher on the libertarian–authoritarian scale than their party colleagues from West Germany. The lower panel of Figure 3, representing the marginal conditional effect, confirms that West German CDU candidates are significantly more authoritarian than their party colleagues from East Germany. The difference between East and West German AfD candidates slightly misses conventional levels of significance.

There may be two supplementary explanations why East German CDU candidates are less authoritarian than their party colleagues from West Germany. One reason may be

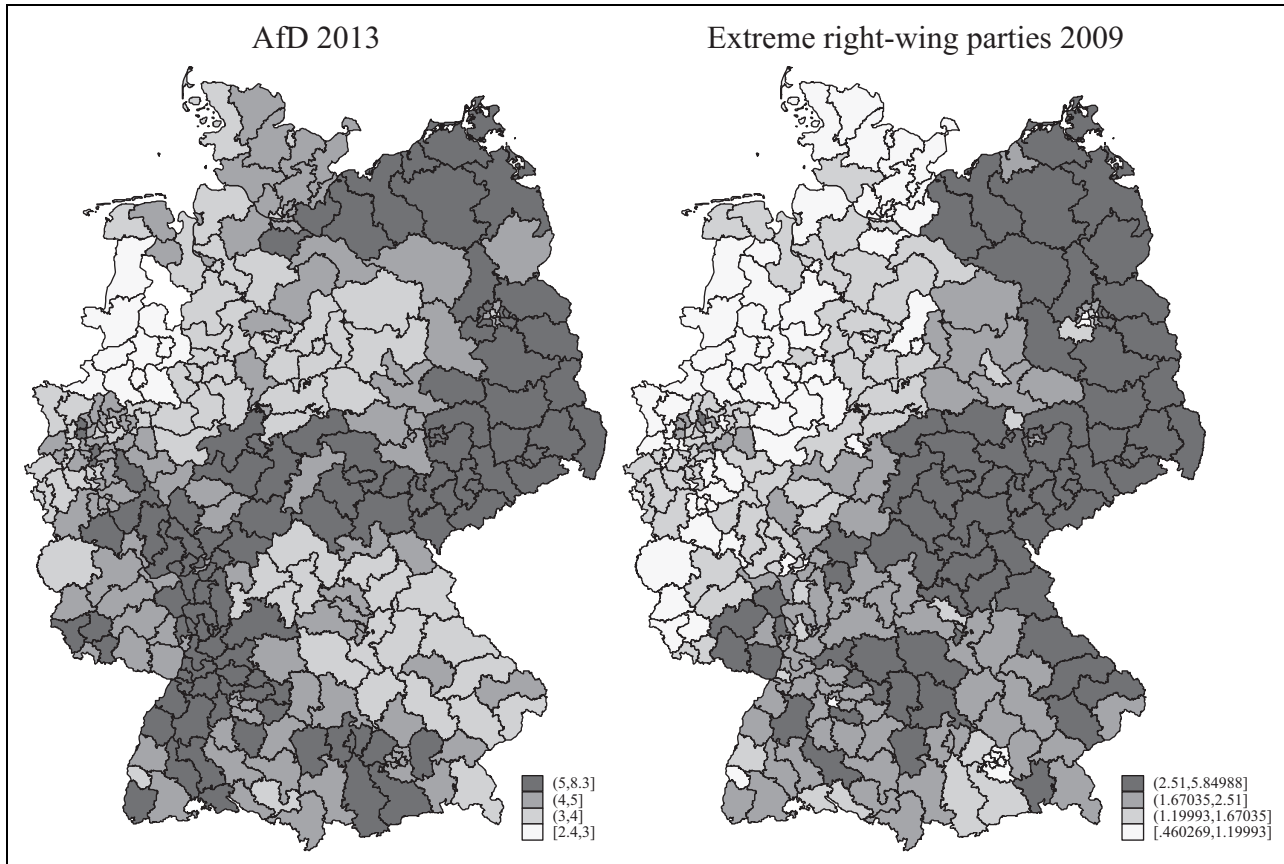


**Figure 3.** Effect of party affiliation on libertarian–authoritarian score conditioned by East versus West candidacy.

Note: Based on model 6 from Table 3. Observations: 905 candidates.

seen in the historical origin of the East German CDU (esp. *Demokratischer Aufbruch*), which contains some elements of religiously inspired fundamental opposition toward a socialist centralized state. These experiences may still result in a more humanistic worldview in its candidates. The second argument draws on the specifics of the East German party system, in which compared to the West German party system, the Left party is a major party and right-wing extremist parties tend to find loyal voters (also see Immerzeel et al., 2015). In this East German context of party competition, it might be particularly important for CDU candidates to delimit its ideal point on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension from right-wing extremists.

To further improve our understanding of ideological East–West differences within the AfD, particularly on the role of anti-migration positions, the analytical perspective is switched back to the political demand side. Figure 4 presents the share of the second vote across the 299 German electoral districts for extreme right-wing parties in the 2009 Federal Election and for the AfD in 2013 in four quantiles. The darker the filling in a constituency, the



**Figure 4.** AfD and extreme right-wing parties share of the vote in the 2013 and 2009 Federal Election.

Note: Extreme right-wing parties = cumulated share of the votes of four right-wing extremist parties (NPD, REP, Pro Deutschland, Die Rechte).

Source: Federal elections administrator (*Bundeswahlleiter*). AfD: *Alternative für Deutschland*; NPD: *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*; REP: the Republicans.

higher the vote share. Apparently, the AfD has been most successful in electoral districts where extreme right-wing parties were relatively successful in the past.

These are in most cases electoral districts in Eastern Germany but also electoral districts in Rhineland-Palatinate, Baden-Wuerttemberg, and even in Bavaria, where the AfD has a dominant competitor in the CSU. These auxiliary descriptive findings foster the interpretation that AfD candidates in East Germany adapt to authoritarian local clusters of voters that demand authoritarian positions. It seems that already in the Federal Election 2013, the AfD in East Germany was attractive to political entrepreneurs with national conservative or even right-wing extremist positions.

## Discussion and conclusions

This study applied black box scaling (Poole, 1998; Poole et al., 2015) to GLES candidate survey data collected over the course of the 2013 German Federal Election. Black box scaling provides a statistical technique to recover such a basic policy space from a multiple issue items measured on a Likert scale. We use this method to explore an

emerging right-wing party in Germany, the AfD. Specifically, we pose two research questions, namely, how AfD candidates position themselves in the ideological space underlying the German party system and whether the splitting of the AfD can be traced back to ideological East/West differences.

First, the black box scaling of candidates' responses to a 12-item battery on multiple policy issues reveals a meaningful and robust two-dimensional policy space (also see Technical Appendix), with one dimension capturing the conflict between socialism and market liberalism and another dimension capturing the conflict between a libertarian and authoritarian value orientation. On the socialism-liberalism dimension, the average AfD candidate was more liberal than the average CDU candidate and even slightly more liberal than the average FDP candidate. Concerning the libertarian-authoritarian scale, AfD candidates were positioned close to the CDU and scored slightly lower than the average CSU candidate. Multivariate regression results corroborate that AfD candidates took more liberal positions than CDU candidates (H1a). In contrast to H1b, however, AfD candidates were not significantly more authoritarian than CDU candidates. This positioning of

AfD candidates in the German party system indicates that at least in 2013, AfD candidates were not offering an extreme ideological position. To this end, the party's "unique selling proposition" in the 2013 German Federal Election has been its anti-EU position.

Second, scaling ideal points from candidate survey data provides the opportunity to take a closer look at ideological heterogeneity within parties (H2). We argue that the conflict between the ordo-liberal Eurosceptics and the nationalist conservative faction within the AfD can be geographically approximated by an East/West divide among AfD candidates. To test this argument, we explored the impact of party affiliation on candidate's ideal point on the two dimensions, conditional on whether they were candidates in East or West Germany. As expected, no such conditionality can be found on the socialism–liberalism dimension since this dimension captures the most essential common ideological ground ("super-issue"). Concerning the libertarian–authoritarian scale, however, we find signs of a conditional relationship. Specifically, AfD candidates from East Germany were more authoritarian than their party colleagues from West Germany.

The ideological differences between West German ordo-liberal Eurosceptics and East German nationalist conservatives, which eventually lead to the party splitting and the reassignment of the AfD founder Bernd Lucke in mid-2015 had already been sown in the 2013 Federal Election. The rapid electoral successes of the AfD in subsequent elections at the state and European level only accelerated this early intraparty conflict. After its foundation, the AfD primarily attracted CDU and FDP partisans who were frustrated by the way in which their parties dealt with EU financial crisis. Today, the course of the AfD is dominated by the nationalist conservative faction. Under the leadership of Frauke Petry, the AfD seeks to mobilize voters at the right margin of the ideological spectrum, many of which felt not represented by radical right-wing parties. In electoral terms, this positioning opens up a new voting bloc. Bernd Lucke's new party ALFA, on the other hand, continues to focus on economically ordo-liberal positions and thereby puts itself into direct competition with a recovering FDP. Going back to Schmitt-Beck's (2014) study of AfD voters in the 2013 Federal Election, the shift toward a more pronounced nationalist conservative profile seems to be more in line with the AfD electorate's authoritarian policy preferences. With its current ideological orientation and an ongoing immigration crisis, the AfD is likely to become a relevant extension of the German party system. Yet the fate of the AfD will depend on whether the party leadership is capable of containing extremist currents in the party organization.

The development of conflicting factions is certainly an inevitable aspect of an emerging party, in particular in parties tending to the termini of the ideological spectrum. In the European context, several populist right-wing parties

suffered from related intraparty divisions on the two ideological dimensions (Mudde, 2007: 265 ff.; Norris, 2005: 217 f.). For example, the *UK Independence Party*, which started as a party putting forward the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU, suffered from internal quarrels between its nationalist party leader Nigel Farage and the economically liberal MP Douglas Carswell and lately began to emphasize more authoritarian positions (Abedi and Lundberg, 2009: 81 ff.; Clark, 2012: 110 ff.; Dennison and Goodwin, 2015). The *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (FPÖ) and the *Front National* in France – two relatively established parties – also had to cope with party splits (Mudde, 2007: 273). The FPÖ's current party leader Heinz-Christian Strache, for example, also marginalized the ordo-liberal faction within his party in order to strengthen the nationalist faction. On these grounds, one might argue that in the European context, the AfD is not exceptional in its ideological division on the two ideological dimensions. The uniqueness of the AfD is its geographical division, which can only be explained through Germany's political division and reunification. This observation may provide an interesting avenue for further comparative research into the ideological divisions of right-wing Eurosceptic parties in Western and Eastern Europe.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Notes

1. See: <http://www.wahlrecht.de/umfragen/dimap.htm>
2. Niedermayer (2015: 197) reports cases in which former members of right extremist parties and organizations joined the Eastern *Alternative für Deutschland*.
3. The data can be referenced on the GESIS data archive (ZA 5716).
4. In the course of the robustness analysis, models 2 and 3 and models 5 and 6 from Table 2 have been reestimated including a set of dummies accounting for the type of candidacy (list (ref.) vs. district, list, and district). Taking into account the type of candidacy does not alter any of our substantive findings.
5. The results are robust to other (e.g. less or more restrictive) specifications.
6. Exploring the robustness of the two dimensions obtained via black box scaling, we ran a principal component analysis and built additive scales (see Evans et al., 1996; Heath et al., 1994). These scales correlate highly to the results by black box scaling and thus support our substantive interpretation of the dimensions. The results of the robustness analysis are reported and discussed in more detail in the Technical Appendix.

7. The predicted and marginal effect plots were created using the *coefplot* routine for Stata (Jann, 2014).

### Supplemental material

The online [appendices/data supplements/etc] are available at <http://ppq.sagepub.com/supplemental>.

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