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THESIS

**THE GERMAN SOLDIER AND RIGHT-WING NATIONALISM
IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: THE IMPACT OF THE
ALTERNATIVE FÜR DEUTSCHLAND ON GERMAN
CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS**

by

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June 2020

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DEUTSCHLAND ON GERMAN CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

Since the end of World War II, Germany has integrated into Western political, economic, and security institutions, which has fueled its prosperity today. The national government has emphasized cooperation in lieu of competition in governance, economics, and military. However, as a wave of right-wing populist movements cascade across Europe, new political forces threaten to forget the lessons learned following the destruction from two world wars. Instead of embracing the freedom and security Germany has enjoyed since the fall of the Third Reich, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) resurrects values, prejudices, and language that have been deeply buried by Germany society. Fueled by nativist attitudes toward new immigrants—coupled with years of protracted foreign wars and a cultural divide between a militarily skeptical civilian population and the armed forces who swear an oath to protect the population—the AfD is pulling tricks from pre-1949 German governments and rallying support for their cause. Understanding the lessons from Prussian militarism and Nazi perversion, the Federal Republic of Germany was able to successfully integrate its military into civil society for the first time in its country's history. However, the AfD aims to reshape the Bundeswehr with policies that reject its founding principles and that can have a ripple effect throughout Germany, Europe, and the transatlantic security alliance.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A.	MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION.....	1
B.	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION.....	3
C.	LITERATURE REVIEW	4
1.	Objective Control.....	5
2.	Subjective Control	7
D.	POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES	10
E.	RESEARCH DESIGN.....	12
F.	THESIS OVERVIEW	13
II.	AFD’S BACKGROUND AND POSITIONS.....	15
A.	BACK TO THE FUTURE? THE ORIGINS OF THE AFD	16
B.	EVOLUTION THROUGH 2017	19
1.	Refugees and Transition to <i>Voelkisch</i> Nationalism.....	19
2.	The Young Eat the Old.....	21
C.	COMPOSITION AND SUCCESS.....	24
1.	Who Is a Member of the AfD?	24
2.	Electoral Successes—Effects, Opinions, Media, and Traditional Parties Decline	25
D.	GROWING VIOLENCE AND POLITICAL TURMOIL.....	29
1.	Rise in Violence	29
2.	Political Turmoil	32
E.	CONCLUSION	34
III.	<i>INNERE FÜHRUNG</i> AND AFD MILITARY REVISIONISM.....	35
A.	WHAT IS THE CITIZEN IN UNIFORM AND WHAT IS <i>INNERE FÜHRUNG</i> ? COMMAND, OBEDIENCE, MORALE, AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE GERMAN MILITARY.....	35
1.	Origins: Out with the Old and In with the New.....	35
2.	Criticism.....	39
3.	Today—Still a Success.....	41
B.	AFD, THE BUNDESTAG, AND THE BUNDESWEHR— PEOPLE, GOVERNMENT, AND MILITARY	42
1.	AfD in the Government	42
2.	AfD Military Policies	44
C.	CONCLUSION	49

IV.	THE SOLDIER, STATE, AND SOCIETY IN THE FRG: ANTIMILITARISM AND THE BUNDESWEHR.....	51
A.	POST-WWII AND COLD WAR ANTI-MILITARISM.....	51
1.	Destroyed By War—Hour Zero	51
2.	Never Again, Never Alone: Building a Government and Military	52
B.	POST-COLD WAR RESTRAINT ON MILITARY	53
1.	1990s: Courts, Morality and Kosovo.....	54
2.	Afghanistan.....	55
3.	Libya.....	59
C.	GERMAN CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS	60
1.	Conscription: Its Effects and Abolishment.....	61
2.	Civilians’ and Military Members’ Perception of Each Other	63
3.	Veterans Returning from Foreign Campaigns—Past and the Present	65
4.	Extremism and the Bundeswehr—A Historical Trend and Oversight	67
D.	CONCLUSION	71
V.	ANALYSIS, TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY, AND CONCLUSION.....	73
A.	THE AFD’S IMPACT ON GERMANY’S CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS: GOVERNMENT, PEOPLE, AND MILITARY	73
B.	IMPACT ON EUROPEAN AND TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY	75
C.	CONCLUSION	78
	LIST OF REFERENCES	79
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	95

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	CDU/CSU and SPD Vote Share in Federal Elections, 1976–2017	29
Figure 2.	Thuringia State Election Comparisons, 2014 and 2019.....	33
Figure 3.	Growing Dissatisfaction with the ISAF Mission	57
Figure 4.	Soldiers’ Feelings about Their Appreciation from Society	64
Figure 5.	Bundeswehr Poll on Minister of Defense	70
Figure 6.	Opinion on U.S. Using Military Force to Defend Allies	76
Figure 7.	EU Members Opinion on Siding with U.S. or Russia	77

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AfD	Alternative for Germany
ALFA	Alliance for Progress and Renewal
CDU	Christian Democratic Union
CDU/CSU	Coalition of CDU and CSU
CSU	Christian Social Union
FDP	Free Democratic Party
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
HQ SHAPE	Headquarters, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
ISAF	International Security Force Assistance
KSK	Kommando Spezialkräfte
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSKG	National Socialist Combat Group Great Germany
NSU	National Socialist Underground
PDS	Party of Democratic Socialism
SED	Socialist Unity Party of Germany
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

Does the soldier in Germany still adhere to pluralistic constitutional principles of the primacy of policy and democratic civilian control, as has been the case since the foundation of the Bundeswehr in 1955?¹ German politics today are in turmoil, and this upheaval has intruded into the ranks of the military.² The nationalist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party became the largest opposition party in the Bundestag in 2017³ as a part of a greater European trend toward renationalization since the 2008 Great Recession.⁴ Though the AfD arose at first amid West German professors and notables of the upper-middle class with objections to various European bailouts amid the euro crisis, it then gained an aggressive mass following in the former East Germany, where anti-immigrant sentiment and AfD's outsider image resonated.⁵ Since first joining local and state governments and then the federal parliament after 2016, the AfD has emphasized the importance of the security sector (i.e., police, intelligence and the military) as a major plank of its opposition platform to the government of Angela Merkel.⁶

¹ Donald Abenheim and Carolyn Halladay, "Stability in Flux. Policy, Strategy, and Institutions in Germany," in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations*, eds. Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei, 304–17 (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 308–311.

² Rachel A. Epstein and Donald Abenheim, "Understanding the 'Alternative for Germany': Origins, Aims and Consequences," *Political Violence at a Glance*, November 16, 2016, <http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2016/11/22/understanding-the-alternative-for-germany-origins-aims-and-consequences/>.

³ "Bundestag Election 2017: Germany," Federal Returning Office, accessed January 14, 2019, <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/bundestagswahlen/2017/ergebnisse/bund-99.html>.

⁴ Yann Algan et al., "The European Trust Crisis and the Rise of Populism," *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* 2017, no. 2 (2017): 309–400, <https://doi.org/10.1353/eca.2017.0015>.

⁵ Jeffrey Gedmin, "Right-Wing Populism in Germany: Muslims and Minorities after the 2015 Refugee Crisis," (working paper, Brookings Institute, July 24, 2019), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/right-wing-populism-in-germany-muslims-and-minorities-after-the-2015-refugee-crisis/>.

⁶ Alternative für Deutschland, *Manifesto for Germany: The Political Programme of the Alternative for Germany* (Stuttgart: Alternative für Deutschland, 2016), 23–31.

This process went in mid-2019 into overdrive with the publication of the AfD manifesto *Streitkraft Bundeswehr*,⁷ which sought to politicize the state of the armed forces for partisan gain versus an apolitical constitutional imperative. With certain former military officers heavily represented among the AfD's leadership, the party is positioning itself to be the political representative of the military and internal security services.⁸ Moreover, AfD officials have taken to social media to voice their discontent with the governing coalition's defense and domestic security policies and have incited dissident general officers to publicly express their opinions contrary to the policy of the Merkel cabinet.⁹

Germany is a democratic country with a professional military that has 60 years of making soldiers adhere to constitutional principles with profound success.¹⁰ The result has been a stable foundation for the security of the continent. However, with the AfD's rise in popularity and its explicit aim to orchestrate military support for domestic and political purposes, against the backdrop of a citizenry that is skeptical of the military, could the AfD reshape Germany's civil-military relationship and disrupt the transatlantic security order that Europe has enjoyed since World War II?

⁷ Arbeitskreis Verteidigung der AfD-Bundestagsfraktion [Working Group Defense of the Alternative for Germany Group in the German Bundestag], *Streitkraft Bundeswehr: Der Weg zur Verteidigungsfähigkeit Deutschlands* [*Armed Forces Bundeswehr: The Way to the Defense Capability of Germany*], trans. Google Translator (Berlin: Alternative for Germany, 2019), <https://www.afdbundestag.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/156/2019/06/Endfassung-SK-Bundeswehr-26.06.pdf>.

⁸ Florian Kain and Christian Scheucher, "Will the AfD Become the New Soldiers Party?" *Bild*, April 2, 2019, <https://www.bild.de/politik/2019/politik/afd-ex-minister-jung-warnt-vor-anziehungskraft-auf-soldaten-59947714.bild.html>.

⁹ Uwe Junge, "One is struggling for the concept of 'insurrection'!..." Twitter, July 17, 2019, https://twitter.com/Uwe_Junge_MdL/status/1151420778707136512.

¹⁰ Donald Abenheim, *Soldier and Politics Transformed German-American Reflections on Civil Military Relations in a New Strategic Environment* (Berlin: Carola Hartmann Miles-Verlag, 2007); Donald Abenheim and Carolyn Halladay, *Soldiers, War, Knowledge and Citizenship German-American Essays on Civil-Military Relations* (Germany: Carola Hartmann Miles-Verlag, 2017).

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

From its origin in 1949, Germany's security policy has been anchored in such multilateral institutions as the United Nations, the Treaty of Brussels of what became the European Union and, as of 1955, in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).¹¹ However, with the AfD advocating that Germany's central European geographic location and economic power entitles it to a leadership role among European NATO partners.¹² This position is in sharp contrast with the customary security multilateralism since its anchoring in the transatlantic alliance in the 1950s. Taking into account global power shifts, the AfD has gone as far as demanding that Germany receive a permanent seat on the UN Security Council—a position hardly unique to this party.¹³ Proposed political reforms that provide greater unilateral power for Germany shifts its interests to national goals and away from multilateral organizations.

Today's transatlantic security relationship is the product of two world wars, which Germany attempted to establish dominance by force led by soldiers at the helm—as one of the pillars of the Nazi state.¹⁴ Since Germany's unification in 1871, European powers saw Germany as too large, wealthy, powerful, and geographically positioned to be balanced by the rest of the continent.¹⁵ Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger characterized pre-Cold War Germany as “Too big for Europe, too small for the world.”¹⁶ However, Germans helped redefine their characterization by voting for centrist to center-right political parties.¹⁷ Major political parties as the Christian Democrats and

¹¹ Thomas Bagger, “The World According to Germany: Reassessing 1989,” *Washington Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (2008): 53–63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2018.1558609>

¹² Working Group Defense of the AfD, *Armed Forces Bundeswehr*.

¹³ AfD, Manifesto for Germany, 29.

¹⁴ Robert Kagan, “The New German Question: What Happens When Europe Comes Apart?” *Foreign Affairs* 98, no. 3 (May/June, 2019), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/germany/2019-04-02/new-german-question>.

¹⁵ Kagan, “The New German Question.”

¹⁶ Mike Bird, “Germany Is Screwing All Of Europe Because It’s Too Big,” *Business Insider*, December 4, 2014, <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/germany-stimulus-bundesbank-eurozone-economic-2014-12>.

¹⁷ Manfred G. Schmidt, “Germany: The Grand Coalition State,” *Comparative European Politics*, ed. Josep Maria Colomer, (London: Routledge, 2008), 59–60.

Christian Social Union as well as the Free Democrats and the Social Democrats adopted a “Never again alone” political position via integration in the western powers.¹⁸

West Germany’s military rearmament traded national defense on the old hegemonic model for alliance partnership with NATO membership in 1955.¹⁹ Moreover, the *Innere Führung*—citizen in uniform spirit was adopted to integrate the armed forces into a pluralist society and guard against the formation of a militarist caste.²⁰ The post-World War II military is an army in a democracy integrated into international security and defense organizations and a radically different institution of power from previous German governments.²¹ However, the nationalist AfD aims to orchestrate a resurgence in military capability with echoes of the period prior to 1955, and this party seeks to use the Bundeswehr for domestic political gain, to reestablish the privileged role of the soldier in German society as in the epoch prior to 1945. The stability of the NATO alliance, which assumes a solidly democratic German civil-military relationship, stands to lose one of its more solid bases amid this renationalization and its impact on military professionalism. This issue lies at the center of this inquiry.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines the historic and developing analysis of objective and subjective civilian control of the military from the 1950s to the current ongoing debate assessing the blurring of soldiers’ political role in counterinsurgency warfare. The literature makes clear that effectiveness and control are counterweights in a nation’s civil-military relationship. Disciples of Samuel Huntington emphasize military effectiveness by providing the military autonomy to achieve its objectives. In Huntington’s view, maximizing soldier’s professionalism can secure civilian control and keep the military

¹⁸ Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 25.

¹⁹ Schmidt, “Germany: The Grand Coalition State,” 84.

²⁰ Donald Abenheim, *Reforging the Iron Cross the Search for the Tradition in the West German Armed Forces*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2014), 45–46.

²¹ Abenheim and Halladay, “Stability in Flux,” 305.

removed from politics.²² The Janowitz school differs, arguing that intrusive government monitoring is needed to educate and integrate the military into the security decision making process.²³

Both objective and subjective schools are important to assess whether effectiveness and control are in balance with one another. However, the post-Cold War world has seen limited warfare becoming more normative as globalization erodes borders. Modern theorists are identifying that previously well-defined civilian and military lines are becoming blurred and creating more occasions for the military to enter the political spectrum.

1. Objective Control

Objective civilian control allows the military internal autonomy, renders it politically sterile and neutral, and maximizes its professionalism.²⁴ Objective control is important to civil-military relations as it provides a framework relationship that governments can adopt with their militaries to protect the country from external threats. In the 1950s, objective civilian control of the military was advocated by Huntington who argued it militarized the military and made that armed forces a more effective means to achieve government policy.²⁵ Because the U.S. military is comprised of professional officers with expertise in the management of violence, responsibility for the security of society, and corporate character that bonds them into its own self-governed organization;²⁶ objective control minimizes the military power in society by neutralizing the military from politics.²⁷ Huntington's favor of separating the military and relying on its corporatism to maintain political neutrality was written when the United States was

²² Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: the Theory and Politics Civil-Military Relations*, (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), 83.

²³ Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*, (New York, NY: Free Press, 1971), 343, 439.

²⁴ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 83–84.

²⁵ Huntington, 83.

²⁶ Huntington, 15–16.

²⁷ Huntington, 84.

freshly out of World War II and newly engaged in a global power struggle with the Soviet Union. The government and military had similar priorities—existential external threats—that merged their interests and facilitated cooperation rather than contention.

Though many of Huntington's positions still hold today, he does not illustrate the conditions needed to reorient the military's corporatism into the political arena. For example, Amos Perlmutter concurs with Huntington that corporatism is a component of military professionalism, but he argues that corporate orientations are not always positive contributors to political objectivity.²⁸ Specifically, Perlmutter holds that integrity of military corporatism is subject to stress from civilian reform in military affairs, defeat in war, and a rise in radical left or right movements.²⁹

Building from Perlmutter's conditions that can reorient military corporatism into politics, Peter Feaver adds that as long as military and civilian preferences converge, the government will non-intrusively monitor the military.³⁰ A non-intrusive government provides the military greater internal autonomy, which is a component of objective civilian control. However, friction develops when government and military interests diverge and can reorient military corporatism into politics. Feaver highlights that friction can be introduced and measured to the degree that the military is willing to voice public opposition to civilian policy.³¹

Feaver's agency theory highlights that the military is under civilian control, but its corporate character can be reoriented toward politics when a divergence in policy arises with the government.³² As an example, he cites the popular Gulf War general, Colin Powell, who in 1992 made public his opposition to homosexuals serving in the military,

²⁸ Amos Perlmutter, *The Military and Politics in Modern Times: on Professionals, Praetorians, and Revolutionary Soldiers*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978), 34.

²⁹ Perlmutter, *The Military and Politics in Modern Times*, 35.

³⁰ Peter Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 118-120.

³¹ Peter Feaver, "Civil-Military Relations," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1999): 220, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.211>.

³² Peter Feaver, "Crisis as Shirking: An Agency Theory Explanation of the Souring of American Civil-Military Relations," *Armed Forces & Society* 24, no. 3 (1998): 417-418, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327x9802400305>.

which contrasted with the incoming president's campaign agenda.³³ As Perlmutter argues, civilian reforms in military affairs stress the integrity of military corporatism; thus, General Powell entering the political debate induced friction with diverging interests between the military and government. The result was a military and civilian compromise with the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.³⁴ General Powell influenced politics as the military gained little from the intended policy but could reinforce its autonomy and expertise in determining what was "prejudicial to good order and discipline and small-unit cohesion."³⁵ The civil-military relations balance is disturbed when intrusive government policies diverge from the armed forces professional interests. Objective control civilian control separates the military from politics when the government stays out of the internal armed forces affairs.

2. Subjective Control

Morris Janowitz takes a sociological approach to civil-military relations advocating subjective civilian measures for the legislature and executive to judge the military's readiness and effectiveness.³⁶ He opposes the Huntington camp's position of objective civilian control, with limited intrusive government policy providing the military autonomy to maximize expertise. Janowitz contends that political education to develop commitment and understanding of the democratic system is required as professional soldiers cannot be divorced from society.³⁷ Subjective civilian control with intrusive government involvement aims at shaping the military as it is seen as a component in national security decision-making.³⁸ The corporateness that Huntington believes keeps the military politically neutral is problematized by Janowitz's observation that military

³³ John H. Cushman Jr., "The Transition: Gay Rights; Top Military Officers Object To Lifting Homosexual Ban," *New York Times*, November 14, 1992, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/11/14/us/the-transition-gay-rights-top-military-officers-object-to-lifting-homosexual-ban.html>.

³⁴ Joseph E. Broadus and William B. Rubenstein, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," *ABA Journal* 79, no. 10 (October 1993): 54-55, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27835023>.

³⁵ Feaver, "Crisis as Shirking," 418.

³⁶ Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*, 420.

³⁷ Janowitz, 439.

³⁸ Janowitz, 343.

officers are plagued with internal differences with no unified perspectives and makes the armed forces ideal to have a role in security policymaking.³⁹ Janowitz's argument for government oversight of the armed force's readiness, political education, and integration into policy-making places greater intrusive and subjective civilian controls over the military.

Huntington argues against subjective control as it diminishes military power and prioritizes the maximization of civilian power, which he sees as obsolete with the development of professional soldiers.⁴⁰ He argues that subjective military control aims to make the military a mirror of the state and achieves its ends by civilianizing the armed forces.⁴¹ Huntington holds that civilian control actually decreases with the military more involved in class, institutional, and constitutional politics.⁴² With modern societies division of labor creating a distinct class of experts in the management of violence, subjective civilian control of the military is fundamentally out of place.⁴³

However, James Burk assesses both Huntington and Janowitz as only addressing part of democratic civil-military relations. In Burk's view, Huntington focuses on protecting democracy without addressing the sustainment of democratic values, while Janowitz emphasizes the sustainment of democratic values at the risk of protecting the democratic state.⁴⁴ Huntington places priority on military effectiveness. In contrast, Janowitz's greater concern is maintaining civilian control.

Moreover, Huntington and Janowitz's work are currently applied by modern theorists who are identifying trends of political and military spheres blurring together. The Israeli scholar Rebecca Schiff argues that separation theory is the current status quo

³⁹ Janowitz, 343.

⁴⁰ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 80–84.

⁴¹ Huntington, 83.

⁴² Huntington, 83.

⁴³ Huntington, 80–84.

⁴⁴ Burk, "Theories of Democratic Civil-Military Relations," *Armed Forces & Society* 29, no. 1 (October 2002): 12-15, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327x0202900102>.

in civil-military relations scholarship⁴⁵ and puts forth her concordance theory which aims converge agreement amongst the political leadership, citizens, and military as a mechanism to avoid domestic military intervention and is derived more from the experience of Israel than, say, a European nation state in history.⁴⁶ She extends concordance theory with targeted partnership to provide political decision-making flexibility by allowing military officers to coordinate with policy makers but constrained by: (1) limited time; (2) specific objective, and (3) not necessarily reflective of the country's civil-military framework as is the case in Israel with its own particular record of war and the state.⁴⁷

With a view to the United States in the recent past, one can suggest that bogged down in Iraq fighting a counter-insurgency in 2007, General David Petraeus was able to create an atmosphere of targeted partnership with the Joint Strategic Assessment Team.⁴⁸ General Petraeus was able engage in a formal dialogue with civilian leadership on the best military strategy to defeat the insurgency. Petraeus's dialogue blurred the military's traditional division from politics as a means to wage a successful counterinsurgency campaign.

Hew Strachan embraces Janowitz in his analysis of British limited warfare as it was the British army's professionalism that impelled them into politics,⁴⁹ and it's the strength of the governments framework it operates it which restrains it from greater political intervention.⁵⁰ His assessment of the British Army's evolution, he found that it was the collaborative nature of civilians and military that helped integrate the armed forces into political affairs and made provided more influence to their professional

⁴⁵ Rebecca L. Schiff, "Concordance Theory, Targeted Partnership, and Counterinsurgency Strategy," *Armed Forces & Society* 38, no. 2 (2011): 319, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327x11415491>.

⁴⁶ Rebecca L. Schiff, *The Military and Domestic Politics: a Concordance Theory of Civil-Military Relations*, (London: Routledge, 2009), 13.

⁴⁷ Schiff, "Concordance Theory," 326.

⁴⁸ Schiff, 329.

⁴⁹ Hew Strachan, *The Politics of the British Army*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 18.

⁵⁰ Strachan, *The Politics of the British Army*, 266.

expertise as civilian decision makers faced with defense matters tended to trust the experts opinions—the military.⁵¹

Douglas Porch aligns with Strachan's view that counterinsurgent soldiers are highly political as they militarily operate in the government's sphere of nation building.⁵² Because counterinsurgent warfare involves attrition, high human costs, and greater moral scrutiny, more political intrusion is inevitable in the operational and tactical levels of war.⁵³ Additionally, Porch connects the battlefield abroad to the homeland with the observation that politicians must be prepared to reintegrate counterinsurgent soldiers that operated in the political sphere constrained by government intrusion.⁵⁴

The principles that Huntington established more than a half century ago are being stretched in the modern battlefield as soldiers are needing to engage in the political sphere to achieve their military objectives. The literature shows that subjective control of the military voluntarily incorporates the armed forces into the political spectrum with intrusive measures to maintain control. Objective control aims at maximizing capability and is vulnerable to the military entering the political debate when it serves their professional interests.

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The purpose of the thesis is to assess what changes, if any, the AfD's populist rise and militaristic policies may have on German civil-military relations and affect transatlantic security. To assess any changes, German political, military, and cultural history must be laid out from the FRG's founding in 1949 to the present.

First, the AfD's emphasis on the armed forces as a pillar in German society must be analyzed in relation to the Bundeswehr's and FRG's founders. The FRG and Bundeswehr were both structured as an antithesis and response to the rise of National

⁵¹ Strachan, 267.

⁵² Douglas Porch, *Counterinsurgency Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 333.

⁵³ Porch, *Counterinsurgency*, 334.

⁵⁴ Porch, 334.

Socialism and reorienting the military to become an instrument of a criminal regime. If the AfD's policies, though militaristic in nature, are compatible with the principles of the Bundeswehr's and FRG founders, then it could be assessed that the country's integration between government, military, and citizens may be unaffected. However, if the AfD's policies are assessed as being in contradiction to 1950s German policies, and more in line with previous regimes such as the Third Reich or Prussian militarism, then a conclusion can be drawn that if the AfD's political success continues to grow, it can reshape how the country's government, military, and citizens interact.

Second, following years of protracted war deployed outside of the German borders, a new generation of German soldiers may be socially disconnected from a civilian population who traditionally harbors skepticism towards the armed forces. To assess if the AfD have any means to shape or capitalize from a large number of combat veterans who must reintegrate into the civilian population, AfD policies and leadership must be analyzed. If the AfD representation in government and policies are in contrast to traditional parties with greater representation and emphasis on a younger, deployed military culture, then the party could alter Bundeswehr heritage to reflect new voices. Any changes could be in stark contrast with the founders of the FRG and Bundeswehr's principles.

Finally, the Bundeswehr's capability within the transatlantic security alliance will be assessed from its original purposes in relation to the AfD's policies. The Bundeswehr was created as a military incorporated into a multinational alliance as a response to the threat of Communism. However, as a current reunified Germany does not face the same security concerns as it did from the 1950s to the 1980s, nor does it currently have the same positive relationship with American leadership, an opportunity arises to reorganize its military structure. Assessing both the aims of the AfD wanting to create a general staff in relation to Bundeswehr's role with European and transatlantic security partner will demonstrate if its policies are consistent or in contradiction to the FRG's and German armed forces role for over the past half century.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis assesses Germany's politics, military, and citizenry in relation to each other and the rise of the AfD. Though many Western democracies are currently experiencing a trend with right-wing populists' movements, Germany and the AfD were selected as the country exercises a key leadership role in the European Union and has been a pillar of Western security since the end of World War II.

The majority of this thesis focuses on the AfD's effects on the German government, armed forces, and citizens since 2013 but does chronologize key political, military, civilian events and ideas from the 20th century. Other major time periods discussed is the end of World War II and subsequent 10 years with the formation of the FRG and post-Cold War international security events.

Secondary sources consisting primarily of academic books, peer reviewed journal articles, and think tank reports comprise much of the research presented. In addition, primary sources such as election results and opinion polls are integrated throughout. Because this topic a combination of current affairs and recent history, online newspaper articles have been integrated as source evidence for meaningful events. Material was primarily drawn from English language texts and supplemented by German language sources that were translated by Internet-based software.

The term *voelkisch* nationalism is used to describe the AfD's style of nationalism. *voelkisch* nationalism can be described as extreme nationalism or even racism.⁵⁵ The early 20th century *Voelkisch* movement had anti-Semitism as a pillar of its ideology and was a motivating principle for numerous *Voelkisch* movements whose members became the early core of the Nazi party.⁵⁶ In assessing the AfD's brand of nationalism in its relation to immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East, *voelkisch* nationalism best describes the party's ideology.

⁵⁵ "'Nazi Word' Revived by German AfD Chief," *BBC News*, September 12, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37337927>.

⁵⁶ William Brustein, *The Logic of Evil: the Social Origins of the Nazi Party, 1925–1933*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 31, 58.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis is organized into five chapters; the competing models of objective versus subjective controls governments exercise over its armed forces, the rise and evolution of the AfD and its effects on German politics and population, the focus on military reforms by the AfD to restructure the country's civil-military relationship, the history of militarily skeptic German population and its relationship with the armed forces; the final chapter contains analysis and assessments of the AfD's policies on Germany's politics, people, and military that can have a negative impact on transatlantic security with a conclusion that the AfD reject Germany's post-WWII values.

Chapter II establishes the AfD's roots in Euroskepticism following the 2008 global financial crisis. The chapter then illustrates the party's embracement of *voelkisch* nationalism as a result of the growing number of migrants entering Germany and new leaders replacing the founders and rebranding the party's ideology. The chapter then details the characteristics of an average party member and provide quantifiable data to show its growth in success along with traditional political parties decline. The chapter will end illustrating the recent trend in violence amongst immigrants along with political scandals that have been linked to the AfD or sympathetic right-wing nationalists.

Chapter III shifts focus to the Bundeswehr foundation and the AfD's aims and relationship with Germany's military. First, the Bundeswehr's founding as an army in a parliamentary democracy and the restraints its founders put in place to avoid the disasters of previous absolutist regimes. It will demonstrate the heritage and principles of *Innere Führung* which has served as the foundation for Germany's civil-military relations since the Bundeswehr's founding. Second, it will show the divide between the AfD and traditional political parties and how its military policies are in contradiction to *Innere Führung* and the armed forces relationship to the government that it has experienced for over 60 years.

Chapter IV chronologically focuses on the German population embracement of Western institutions and skepticism towards military conflict since the founding of the FRG. Following the Cold War, the people and its government tackled new challenges

that tested its post-WWII culture. The chapter details the divergence of shared values between a new generation of combat experienced German soldiers and a militarily skeptic civilian population who is no longer tethered to the country's security through mandatory service.

Finally, Chapter V analyzes the AfD's political rise and military policies in context of 70 years of post-WWII German culture. The chapter attempts to draw conclusions that the AfD policies are a rejection of the principles and foundations of the FRG, Bundeswehr, transatlantic multilateralism, and the tenets that have sustained security on German soil since 1945.

II. AFD'S BACKGROUND AND POSITIONS

The AfD's political roots lie in its focus on a revival of nationalism as well as a purported defense of the German "national interest" overall, and, specifically, in the impact of the common currency on this "national interest." As became manifest after the 2008 world economic crisis, circa 2012–2013 the AfD was a Eurosceptic party that rejected further political integration with neighboring countries in the wake of the sovereign debt crisis, especially visible in the Greek bailout. However, since its inception in 2012–13, the AfD has expanded its agenda to encompass a variety of social, economic, and security policies—making the AfD a party with mostly contrarian positions on all major political topics in Germany today. Some of these nationalist or extreme right-wing positions are very much at odds with the post-war consensus in the Federal Republic—and arguably, the AfD's evolution and ability to offer nationalistic solutions to the public's concerns resulted, in the national election of 2017, in the party being seated in the Bundestag and in all 16 state legislatures.

The AfD's rise as a right-wing political force emphasizing the German nation and rejecting decades of multilateral European integration has unfolded while the classic FRG national parties on the left and right have lost voters to the AfD, the sum of which has robbed the center of its once iron clad grip on the parliament. In this aspect, the German party landscape in 2020 again has nationalist and more or less Marxist parties, which during the best years of the FRG were not operative at all. Germany's normally placid domestic politics is a thing of the past.

This chapter examines the rise of the AfD in four parts. First, it highlights the AfD's origins as a nationalist and populist anti-European Union political party. Second, it demonstrates how its platform evolved to embrace anti-immigration policies as its cornerstone, especially after the refugee crisis of 2015. Third, it profiles the AfD demographic composition and factors contributing to its electoral rise. Finally, the chapter provides examples of the destabilizing effects the AfD has pressed on what is normally a stable German political scene since its national breakthrough in 2017. This chapter illustrates that the AfD's attacks on minority rights, independent political

institutions, and embracement of racists and xenophobic positions are a threat to Germany's liberal democracy.⁵⁷ Noteworthy in this process is the trajectory from being more or less a party of well-heeled skeptics of the Merkel government to a party with more or less open ties to neo Nazi thugs and the brown mob, which have long been a lesser or greater feature of German political culture since the rise of the NSDAP in the 1920s.

A. BACK TO THE FUTURE? THE ORIGINS OF THE AFD

Though the AfD has evolved in the past decade or so with anti-Bonn and Berlin republic policies as pillars of its platform, its original leaders were members of the educated middle class and managerial elites who nurtured a kind of DM conservatism that then swerved widely to the right as events unfolded. Indeed, the AfD's founding members are products of the West German educated class who grew disenfranchised with Angela Merkel's grand coalition regime, in the post Helmut Kohl Christian Democratic Union (CDU). The issue that most immediately inflamed this process was Germany's financial contributions to the EU in the wake of the euro crisis of 2008—especially to Greece, Spain and Italy. In 2012, these newly dissident but also longtime CDU members Konrad Adam, Alexander Gauland, and Bernd Lucke, created a political organization called *Wahlalternative 2013*; they formally founded the AfD in February 2013 with the plan to run in that year's election.⁵⁸ Both Gauland and Adam were not fringe members of society but were well-known conservative journalists, and Lucke worked as an economist.⁵⁹ These men were more of the school of the 1980s Bonn Republic, which had also enclosed a more deeply conservative and quasi nationalistic strain in the old CDU. They became disaffected in the process after 2005 of grand coalition governments in which Merkel drifted to the left to mollify the SPD.

⁵⁷ Jakob Guhl, Julia Ebner, and Jan Rau, *The Online Ecosystem of the German Far-Right*, (London, UK: Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2020), <https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ISD-The-Online-Ecosystem-of-the-German-Far-Right-English-Draft-11.pdf>.

⁵⁸ Kai Arzheimer, "The AfD: Finally a Successful Right-Wing Populist Eurosceptic Party for Germany?" *West European Politics* 38, no. 3 (January 2015): 540–541, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2015.1004230>.

⁵⁹ Arzheimer, "The AfD," 540.

The AfD primarily focused on economic issues in the lead up to the 2013 federal election. As a professor of economics⁶⁰ and the party's chief economic expert, Lucke represented the German economists who felt it has not been in the country's interest to give up the *deutschmark* and adopt a common European currency under the Kohl government at the time of unification.⁶¹ Lucke had significant influence in the *Wahlalternative* manifesto's goals to reembrace individual nationalistic values such as readopting national currencies, voter referendums on new intranational regulations, and stopping Germany from financially bailing out other European countries.⁶² At the time, Germans largely viewed the AfD's opposition platform as a single-issue party that opposed the government policies and responses to the Euro crisis.⁶³ Before the AfD, only the *Die Linke* (Left Party, that is, the heir to the Socialist Unity Party of Germany [SED] and the Party of Democratic Socialism [PDS]) clearly opposed the government's bailout policy—the opposition Social Democrats and the Green Party both supported rescue packages—opening a gap in the political discourse that the AfD stepped up to fill, from the nationalist right.⁶⁴ By focusing solely on economics and having a fierce anti-European Union agenda in the lead up to the 2013 federal election, the AfD was able to garner enough publicity and support to affect national politics.

The 2013 federal election allowed the AfD to rise as a new nationalist party in Germany, which told all that it was just a true conservative party. Even though the party only formed earlier in that year, the AfD was able to achieve 4.7 percent of the total second ballot votes in the 2013 federal election.⁶⁵ That is, it nearly broke through the 5% barrier. This total was insufficient to garner the party any seats in the Bundestag, but it

⁶⁰ Arzheimer, "The AfD," 540.

⁶¹ Gedmin, "Right-Wing Populism in Germany."

⁶² Arzheimer, "The AfD," 541.

⁶³ Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck, "The 'Alternative Für Deutschland in the Electorate': Between Single-Issue and Right-Wing Populist Party," *German Politics* 26, no. 1 (June 2016): 125, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2016.1184650>.

⁶⁴ Schmitt-Beck, "Single-Issue and Right-Wing Populist," 126.

⁶⁵ The Federal Returning Officer, "Bundestag Election 2013: Germany," accessed January 14, 2020, <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/bundestagswahlen/2013/ergebnisse/bund-99.html>.

had outsized ramifications in German politics since it heralded the return of a nationalist party to German national life mostly unseen since the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) in the period 1964–1969. For one thing, the AfD’s anti-European Union platform helped squeeze the perennial junior member of the coalition government, the market-liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP), out of the new government altogether. Their share of the electorate slipped from 14.6 percent in 2009 to 4.8 percent in 2013—below the 5-percent threshold to be seated in any parliament in Germany.⁶⁶ The eclipse of the FDP in the world since Dietrich Genscher and other Bonn Republic stalwarts has unsettled German politics overall, as the liberals have played a key role in the formation of governments since the 1950s and were also a means to absorb Nazis in the Bonn Republic and transform them into citizens of the Basic Law.

As a result, the center-right CDU had to reach across the political spectrum to the liberal SPD to form a grand coalition government.⁶⁷ This “grand coalition” necessarily tended toward the political center and compromise to the left, which, in turn, propelled voters on the conservative or nationalist wing of the major parties to the platforms of the more extreme parties of the right and the left.

The AfD built from its 2013 success and went on to wins in supranational and local elections the following year. In 2014, the AfD garnered 7.1 percent of the national vote and received seven of Germany’s 96 seats in the European Parliament.⁶⁸ Additionally, in September 2014, the AfD won between 9.7 percent and 12.2 percent in the Saxon, Brandenburgian, and Thuringian state elections, which provided it greater influence with local governments.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ The Federal Returning Officer, “Bundestag Election 2013: Germany.”

⁶⁷ Jan-Jonathan Bock, “State Failure, Polarisation, and Minority Engagement in Germany’s Refugee Crisis,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 31, no. 4 (May 2018): 378, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-018-9288-8>.

⁶⁸ Schmitt-Beck, “Single-Issue and Right-Wing Populist,” 124.

⁶⁹ Schmitt-Beck, 124.

B. EVOLUTION THROUGH 2017

In response to the 2015 refugee crisis, the AfD exploited a political opportunity and shifted its focus from economic Euroscepticism to xenophobia. The political transition created changes in leadership and spun off competing right-wing parties.

1. Refugees and Transition to *Voelkisch* Nationalism

The AfD started as Eurosceptics but evolved into a political party embracing integral nationalism, xenophobia and mob rule. Arab, Afghan and African refugees fled political oppression and such war-torn countries as Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan and flocked to Europe in 2015 in the late summer events that transfixed the spectacle of hundreds of thousands of refugees stretched out along the axis from the Aegean to the Munich train station.⁷⁰ Enabled by the government's decision to allow the refugees to enter Germany en masse, the summer of 2015 showed Germany's *Willkommenskultur* [culture of welcome] as a kind of atonement for the inhumanity of the past, but it also augured a kind of domestic political upheaval that certain figures in government and society poorly understood.⁷¹ A majority of the country supported the federal government's open-border policy toward refugees in the first months of the refugee crisis.⁷² In total, Germany's Federal Office of Migration and Refugees reported the country's migration balance increased by 1.14 million people and marked the highest increase of foreigners ever recorded in the country's history, excluding the refugees who came to the western zones of occupation in the years 1946–1949, which was significantly higher in number, nor the displaced persons and otherwise ethnic relocations in wartime.⁷³ With the major conservative party, the CDU-Christian Social Union (CSU)

⁷⁰ Stefan Stürmer et al., "Muslim Immigration, Critical Events, and the Seeds of Majority Members' Support for Radical Responses: An Interactionist Perspective," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* no. 45 (2019) 134–135, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167218780989>.

⁷¹ Gedmin, "Right-Wing Populism in Germany."

⁷² Stürmer et al., Muslim Immigration, Critical Events, and the Seeds, 135.

⁷³ Statistisches Bundesamt [Federal Office of Statistics], Nettozuwanderung von Ausländerinnen und Ausländern im Jahr 2015 bei 1,1 Millionen [Net Immigration of Foreigners in 2015 at 1.1 Million], trans. Google Translator (Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt [Federal Office of Statistics], 2016), https://www.destatis.de/DE/PresseService/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2016/03/PD16_105_12421pdf.pdf?__blob=publicationFile.

alliance, leading the government with the major socialist party, the SPD as the junior member, critics could purport that none of Germany's largest parties seemed to speak for those citizens who were not in favor of the government's migration policy.

The AfD's position against the CDU and SPD government's immigration policy provided it a political opportunity when the public's mood shifted drastically to a negative view of migrants following Islamist extremist terrorist attacks in Paris and mass sexual assaults on New Year's Eve 2015–2016 in Cologne by North Africans.⁷⁴ The AfD already had a *voelkisch* nationalist policy, and 81 percent of AfD supporters strongly supported a cap on refugees as well as a reform of the Basic Law against political asylum overall.⁷⁵ The AfD's political future now lay not in Euroscepticism, but anti-immigration policies amid the deterioration of civic peace that became obvious in the period 2015–16.

The AfD's shift from a single-issue focus to a broad platform with *voelkisch* nationalist policies at the core of its agenda is illustrated through its 2016 *Manifesto for Germany: The Political Programme of the Alternative for Germany*. The AfD's manifesto targets refugees' Islamic religion and demands the closure of Islamic Qur'an schools as it perceives them to be breeding grounds for unconstitutional indoctrination.⁷⁶ Additionally, citing reports from the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution that show associations and activities directed against the constitutional state, the manifesto calls for the banning of "legalistic" Islam and Salafism as they are unconstitutional and a threat to internal security.⁷⁷ By targeting refugees' religion as a feature that separates it from the German public, the AfD carved out a political cleavage

⁷⁴ Frank Decker, "The 'Alternative for Germany': Factors Behind Its Emergence and Profile of a New Right-Wing Populist Party," *German Politics and Society* 34, no. 2 (2016): 10, <https://doi.org/10.3167/gps.2016.340201>.

⁷⁵ Gedmin, "Right-Wing Populism in Germany."

⁷⁶ AfD, *Manifesto for Germany*, 54.

⁷⁷ AfD, 48.

that disassociated it from the government's pro migration policies. Specifically, the AfD exclaims, "Islam doesn't belong in Germany."⁷⁸

The AfD also tapped into repressed German nationalism of its pre 1945 version (i.e., the *voelkisch*, racist model) to fuel its political rise. First, the AfD wants German to be declared as the country's official language in the constitution as it sees it as a reflection of the country's culture, history, values, and identity.⁷⁹ The emphasis on the German language as the foundation of the German people rejects European integration but also heavily reflects the AfD's repudiation of the influx of refugees who do not share its language, history or identity. Second, the AfD rejects multiculturalism and strictly defines the roots of the German national character as found in Christian tradition, the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment, and Roman law.⁸⁰ The emphasis on features that distinctly separate Germans from refugees borrows from the old textbook of the *Deutsches Volk* circa either 1813 or 1936. Both language and a selective reading of history are core elements the AfD emphasized to gain support from voters who opposed the CDU led government's refugee policies.

The combination of nationalism and xenophobia creates is tantamount to nativism or integral nationalism.⁸¹ Nativism as a *voelkisch* concept advocates for a homogenous culture because persons not within the native culture create a risk to the nation state.⁸² AfD ideology puts the German nation interests ahead of all others—and, thus, puts it at odds with over a half century of German national policies.

2. The Young Eat the Old

Even as the AfD was gaining political momentum with voters, the party still fractured into various splinter groups and factions as has generally happened on the German radical right. Founding member Bernd Lucke was forced out as the party's

⁷⁸ AfD, 48.

⁷⁹ AfD, 46.

⁸⁰ AfD, 46.

⁸¹ Arzheimer, "The AfD," 537.

⁸² Arzheimer, "The AfD," 537.

leader in 2015 as more extreme elements came to the fore.⁸³ Lucke formed the Alliance for Progress and Renewal (ALFA) party, his departure shifted the balance of power in the party toward the right-wing populist wing.⁸⁴

Dr. Frauke Petry succeeded Lucke and aimed to widen the representation of the party's platform and shift from economic to social issues as she manifested the political power in the federal state of Saxony with its own particular record.⁸⁵ Petry is very much a product of the German professional establishment as she is a chemist and entrepreneur.⁸⁶ Petry was instrumental in shifting the AfD's platform from economic to immigration and anti-refugee issues at just the right time in 2015 before public sentiment turned against government policies.⁸⁷ However, similar to Lucke, Petry then also fell victim to the extreme right wing of the AfD (the so called *der Flügel*) and defected in September 2017 to form the Blue Party.⁸⁸

At the center of the right-wing shift and oustings of Lucke and Petry was Björn Höcke—a political figure who makes little attempt to camouflage his obvious ties to the brown underworld that has waxed and waned in the FRG since 1949. Höcke's family heritage derives from the old FRG and previously East Prussia—now Russian or Lithuanian territory—which shapes his revanchist ideology for a lost homeland and the Prussian, authoritarian, and militaristic dogma, which is just a kind of caricature of Nazism.⁸⁹ As the chairman of Thuringia's AfD, Höcke associates with members from the extreme New Right and NPD, who, for a brief time in the 1960s, influenced politics with their *voelkisch* nationalist politics against migrant workers.⁹⁰ Höcke's extreme political

⁸³ Gedmin, "Right-Wing Populism in Germany."

⁸⁴ Decker, "Alternative for Germany," 9–11.

⁸⁵ Gedmin, "Right-Wing Populism in Germany."

⁸⁶ Arzheimer, "The AfD," 541.

⁸⁷ Gedmin, "Right-Wing Populism in Germany."

⁸⁸ Gedmin.

⁸⁹ Thomas Klikauer, "Germany's AfD – Members, Leaders and Ideologies," *Asian Journal of German and European Studies* 4, no. 4 (July 2019): 2-4, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40856-019-0041-5>.

⁹⁰ Henry Ashby Turner Jr., *Germany from Partition to Reunification*, (New Haven: Yale University, 1992), 145–146.

associations have not limited his role within the AfD as he exercises significant influence over the so called der Flügel, “The Wing,” the extreme right contingent of the party, which, by 2020, has become a target of internal security observation in the wake of increased political violence.⁹¹ Approximately 40 percent of AfD members identify themselves with “The Wing” and Höcke as its leader.⁹² The Wing’s *voelkisch* agenda came under investigation from Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz [Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution] in 2020 because political parties advocating for tenets of Nazism like ethnic Volk, racism, and antisemitism are subject to secret service investigations.⁹³ This event followed in the wake of the political murder of a CDU regional political figure, Walter Luebcke, in June 2019.

However, Höcke’s expulsion was abandoned following Lucke’s ousting as party leader in July 2015.⁹⁴ When Petry was removed via intrigue as party chair in 2016, she cited other AfD members’ extreme views on Muslims as the reason for her move.⁹⁵

Höcke’s right-wing affiliations were on full display when he marched at neo-Nazi rallies in Chemnitz in 2018 next to Lutz Bachman,⁹⁶ leader of the Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West (PEGIDA), who oppose the dilution of German identity with an influx of Muslim immigrants.⁹⁷ Höcke also publishes opinion pieces in neo-Nazi publications under the pen name Landolf Ladig.⁹⁸ He recently exercised his de

⁹¹ Lisa Hänel, “AfD’s Björn Höcke: Firebrand of the German Far Right,” *Deutsche Welle*, February 7, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/afds-bj%C3%B6rn-h%C3%B6cke-firebrand-of-the-german-far-right/a-52297134>.

⁹² Hänel, “AfD’s Björn Höcke: Firebrand of the German Far Right.”

⁹³ Thomas Klikauer and Kathleen Webb Tunney, “Germany’s Secret Service Investigates the Alternative for Germany,” *German Politics and Society* 37, no. 2 (Summer 2019): 76–78, <https://doi.org/10.3167/gps.2019.370204>.

⁹⁴ Decker, “Alternative for Germany,” 1–12.

⁹⁵ Rebecca Staudenmaier, “Ex-AfD Chief Frauke Petry Unveils New Conservative ‘Blue Party’,” *Deutsche Welle*, October 13, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/ex-afd-chief-frauke-petry-unveils-new-conservative-blue-party/a-40938707>.

⁹⁶ Klikauer, “Germany’s AfD,” 2–4.

⁹⁷ Ben Knight, “German Issues in a Nutshell: PEGIDA,” *Deutsche Welle*, June 6, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/german-issues-in-a-nutshell-pegida/a-39124630>.

⁹⁸ Klikauer, “Germany’s AfD,” 2–4.

facto leadership role in July 2019. Nine of the 12 leadership board members in the West German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, including the moderate chairman Helmut Seifen resigned following the growing influence by “The Wing” faction of the AfD.⁹⁹ “The Wing’s” growing influence under the AfD under Höcke’s guidance has completely transformed the AfD from western academic Eurosceptics to xenophobic right wingers and what are for all intents and purposes a camouflaged group of neo Nazis even though many AfD voters surely reject neo Nazism.

C. COMPOSITION AND SUCCESS

The average AfD members’ gender, age, education, income, and sources of information are contributing factors to its divergence from mainstream political parties and shift toward the radical right that has been manifest since 2017.

1. Who Is a Member of the AfD?

The composition of AfD membership provides context to the break from traditional mainstream political organizations and factors pulling the party into a more nationalist and right-wing direction. In general, men and younger voters are overrepresented in the party along with those in the lower brackets of education and income.¹⁰⁰ Following decades of economic, social, and political integration through the European Union, the above demographics can be described as those whose social class have been stagnant or retracted in the face of the dislocations, first, of unity in the five new states that were the former DDR and those who have been unhinged by globalization and the common European area of Schengen. Traditional media outlets through television, radio, and newspaper offer little or no primary news sources for AfD members as 77 percent of them receive their news from the internet.¹⁰¹ Internet reliance on nationalist, alt-right, and demagogic media in its variety helps explain why 60 percent of AfD members consider the German public media as untrustworthy. The AfD voter makes

⁹⁹ “Germany: Conflict in AfD Pulling Party to the Right,” *Deutsche Welle*, July 7, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-conflict-in-afd-pulling-party-to-the-right/a-49501455>.

¹⁰⁰ Decker, “Alternative for Germany,” 11.

¹⁰¹ Klikauer, “Germany’s AfD,” 2.

generous use of such websites as Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp that help create echo chambers that reinforce users' established worldviews and recycle a form of nationalist, *voelkisch* or moderately camouflaged Nazi propaganda that, formerly, operated on the fringe of the old FRG and only had a minimal impact.¹⁰²

The personal attributes of the average AfD member contribute to the party's anti-immigration and pro German sentiments. Not surprisingly, 87 percent of members believe migrants commit more crimes than Germans while another 64 percent of members believe that foreigners are a source of drugs and crime.¹⁰³ As an effect of Germany's recent immigration policies, a most striking statistic is that because of Muslims in the country, 96 percent of AfD members feel foreign in Germany.¹⁰⁴ In addition, 38 percent of AfD members admit to believing that "the international Jew has too much influence."¹⁰⁵ New prejudices coexist dreadfully easily with old ones in the AfD.

2. Electoral Successes—Effects, Opinions, Media, and Traditional Parties Decline

The September 2017 national election marked a turning point for the AfD in its political rise when it exceeded the five-percent threshold to be seated in the German Bundestag. In the election, the AfD received 12.6 percent of the second ballot votes and 94 seats in parliament,¹⁰⁶ owing in no small part to slogans like "Der Islam gehört nicht zu Deutschland" (Islam doesn't belong in Germany).¹⁰⁷ Though the FDP returned to the Bundestag in this election, winning 10.7 percent of the second ballot votes and 80 seats, it could not form a coalition government with the CDU, which had lost 55 seats (while sister party, the CSU, lost 10 seats).¹⁰⁸ The SPD also lost 40 seats,¹⁰⁹ but it retained

¹⁰² Klikauer, 2.

¹⁰³ Klikauer, 2.

¹⁰⁴ Klikauer, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Klikauer, 2.

¹⁰⁶ The Federal Returning Officer, "Bundestag Election 2017: Germany."

¹⁰⁷ Gedmin, "Right-Wing Populism in Germany."

¹⁰⁸ The Federal Returning Officer, "Bundestag Election 2017: Germany."

¹⁰⁹ "Bundestag Election 2017: Germany."

enough seats to re-form a grand coalition government with the CDU and CSU.¹¹⁰ In fact, the formation of a new Merkel government took months in a fashion unprecedented in the record of the FRG and recalled unpleasant events in the Weimar Republic, where a variety of parties struggled to build governing coalitions that could endure.

Analysis of the 2017 Bundestag election shows that the migration crisis was an important factor for German voters as well as the general collapse of norms that pivoted on the Brexit vote in June 2016 and the Trump presidency in November 2016. The Center for Insights in Survey Research from the International Republican Institute poll taken on the eve of the 2017 Bundestag election showed that 54 percent of Germans believed the country was moving in the wrong direction.¹¹¹ Notably, domestic issues were foremost on the minds of voters with the poll showing that the top concerns were poverty and social inequality at 18 percent, German refugee policy at 16 percent, then terrorism at 8 percent, and pensions and unemployment at 7 percent.¹¹² An influx of refugees into the German state stresses the country's capacity to maintain services for the population.

When asked about which issues threatened Germany's way of life, the polls skewed even more nationalist and *voelkisch*. Terrorism, extremism, and political violence soared to 40 percent; loss of culture, values, and the way of life we grew up with polled at 19 percent; and migration and demographic change garnered 15 percent of the poll.¹¹³ When asked about Europe as a whole, terrorism, refugee policy, immigration control, and rise of extremism combined to comprise 52 percent of respondents' views on the single biggest problem.¹¹⁴ Across the board, Germans were having buyers' remorse for the current government's refugee policy. The AfD was the only national party with a

¹¹⁰ Ben Knight and Timothy Jones, "Germany's Coalition Agreement: What's in It?" *Deutsche Welle*, March 12, 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-coalition-agreement-whats-in-it/a-42242741>.

¹¹¹ "Public Opinion in Germany August 10–28, 2017," Center for Insights in Survey Research, 2017 *Project from the International Republican Institute*, https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2017-9-14_germany_poll_presentation.pdf.

¹¹² Center for Insights, "Public Opinion in Germany."

¹¹³ Center for Insights.

¹¹⁴ Center for Insights.

message that resonated with a large portion of the German population's most important concern.

A 2017 study illustrates that anti-immigrant sentiment was the largest substantive effect AfD voters had and was twice the effect of any other variable.¹¹⁵ It showed that that AfD received support from previous non-voters and all other political parties who were upset with the current government's refugee policy.¹¹⁶ The major focus on a single issue drew support to the AfD across all demographics regardless of employment, education, gender, union membership or employment status.¹¹⁷ The AfD's 2017 political success owed very much to the government then in power—and its seeming unwillingness to entertain dissent or disagreement on the main issue.

Based on its policies aimed at the issues that were spiking with voters, the AfD received substantial assistance from media outlets. Such key AfD issues as immigration and Euroscepticism received much more reporting prior to the election than traditional issues like the economy and jobs.¹¹⁸ The AfD also achieved notoriety and follow-on publicity for salacious behavior in the lead up to the 2017 Bundestag election. Far-right online trolls aimed to intimidate opposition opinions in the digital domain by harassing politicians, activists, and female journalists into silence.¹¹⁹ For example, leading up to the 2017 Bundestag election Green Party and Bundestag member running for reelection, Özcan Mutlu, who is a German with Turkish descent, received death threats to “send him to the gas chamber.”¹²⁰ The AfD was promoted by the right-wing network, *Reconquista Germanica*, whose 8,000 members made a mission of attacking political opponents.¹²¹

¹¹⁵ Michael A. Hansen and Jonathan Olsen, “Flesh of the Same Flesh: A Study of Voters for the Alternative for Germany (AfD) in the 2017 Federal Election,” *German Politics* 28, no. 1 (August 2018), 15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2018.1509312>.

¹¹⁶ Hansen and Olsen, “Flesh of the Same Flesh,” 15.

¹¹⁷ Hansen and Olsen, 15.

¹¹⁸ Alexander Beyer and Steven Weldon, “Pointing Fingers at the Media?” *German Politics and Society* 36, no. 1 (2018): 120–121, <https://doi.org/10.3167/gps.2018.360106>.

¹¹⁹ Guhl, Ebner, and Rau, *The Online Ecosystem of the German Far-Right*.

¹²⁰ Frank Hofmann, “German Politicians Fend off Online Hate and Threats,” *Deutsche Welle*, July 27, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/german-politicians-fend-off-online-hate-and-threats/a-39864324-0>.

¹²¹ Guhl, Ebner, and Rau, *The Online Ecosystem of the German Far-Right*.

Reconquista Germanica post manipulated photos online of Angela Merkel, refugees, and the media, but have not targeted the AfD.¹²² The Office for the Protection of the Constitution considers *Reconquista Germanica* as supporting an intellectual breeding ground to encourage right-wing violent attacks.¹²³ The AfD and its supporters have inundated social media by creating the most positive or negative attention.¹²⁴ The AfD was Twitter's most talked about political party in Germany and created Facebook's most engagement.¹²⁵

Compounding the AfD's salience was the growing decay of the major parties' influence. As illustrated by Figure 1, the combined total votes for the CDU, CSU, and SPD in federal elections have been steadily declining from 91.2 percent in 1976 to 53.4 percent in 2017.

¹²² "March of the Trolls: Right-Wing Activists Take Aim at German Election," *Spiegel International*, September 13, 2017, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/trolls-in-germany-right-wing-extremists-stir-internet-hate-a-1166778.html>.

¹²³ Thomas Haldenwang, "Protection of the Constitution Warns of Increasingly Extremist AfD 'Wings,'" *Zeit Online*, October 18, 2019, <https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2019-10/thomas-haldenwang-afd-rechtsextremismus-bjoern-hoecke>.

¹²⁴ Stier et al., "Systematically Monitoring Social Media: The Case of the German Federal Election 2017," *SSOAR*, 2018, 18, <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/5zpm9>.

¹²⁵ Stier et al., "Systematically Monitoring Social Media," 19–20.

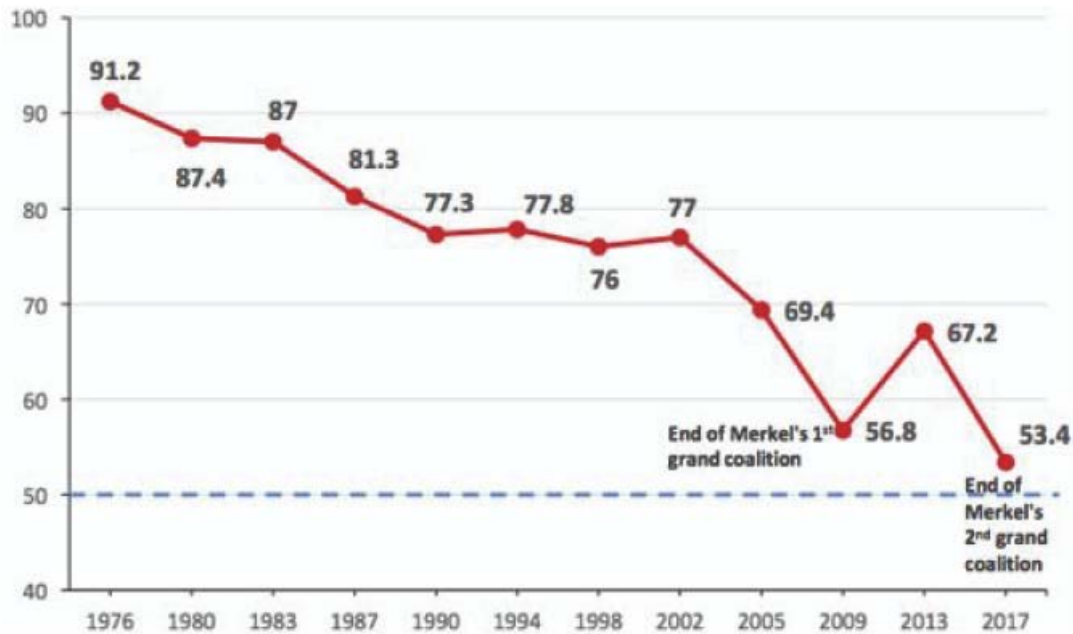


Figure 1. CDU/CSU and SPD Vote Share in Federal Elections, 1976–2017¹²⁶

D. GROWING VIOLENCE AND POLITICAL TURMOIL

Since the AfD entered the political mainstream, violence and conflict associated with right-wing extremism have surged in Germany, which has seen episodes of political violence, the worst of which was from 1929–1933 and led to the death of the First Republic.

1. Rise in Violence

In 2011, the events surrounding the so called National Socialist Underground (NSU) returned neo Nazi violence as a theme of national life, which, in decades prior, had come to the conclusion that such racist violence was a thing of the past. The epoch of neo Nazi mob violence in the streets of recently unified east Germany also receded into memory and one could describe the FRG as happily free of such miseries. The murder

¹²⁶ Source: Frank Decker and Philipp Adorf, “Coalition Politics in Crisis? The German Party System Before and After the 2017 Federal Election,” *German Politics and Society*, 36, no. 2 (2018): 22, <https://doi.org/10.3167/gps.2018.360202>.

of ten or more Turkish Germans by the NSU in years prior to 2011 and the dramatic trial of the sole remaining NSU perpetrator, Beate Tschäpe, symbolized a turning point.¹²⁷

Right-wing extremist crimes have been rising in Germany since 2016. In 2018, violent crimes committed by right-wing extremist increased by 3.2 percent.¹²⁸ Though not a large number on the surface, when compared to 8,113 hate crimes recorded by the police in 2018, increased from 3,598 in 2016, illustrates the country is experiencing an influx of violence directed at specific groups—even if they cannot be linked to right-wing extremism.¹²⁹ In the first half of 2019, German police registered 609 attacks on refugees.¹³⁰ According to the Interior Ministry, in the same period, German authorities registered more than 8,600 right-wing extremist crimes.¹³¹

On June 2, 2019, fatefully enough, Walter Lübcke, CDU member and head of Kassel's regional council in the federal state of Hesse was murdered by a gunshot wound to the head at close range.¹³² The accused, Stephan Ernsts, had associations with neo Nazi groups and racist violence.¹³³ Initially, Ernst admitted to murdering Lübcke for his pro-immigrant views before the former withdrew his confession.¹³⁴ Then CDU party leader and defense minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer stated that the AfD, in embracing hate and incitement, has overturned taboo language and foments such

¹²⁷ Ben Knight, "Neo-Nazi NSU Member Beate Zschäpe Found Guilty of Murder, Sentenced to Life in Prison," *Deutsche Welle*, July 11, 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/neo-nazi-nsu-member-beate-zsch%C3%A4pe-found-guilty-of-murder-sentenced-to-life-in-prison/a-44626859>.

¹²⁸ "Germany: Far-Right Offenses Rise in 2019," *Deutsche Welle*, August 14, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-far-right-offenses-rise-in-2019/a-50025070>.

¹²⁹ "Hate Crime Reporting, Germany," Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://hatecrime.osce.org/germany>.

¹³⁰ "Germany: Over 600 Attacks on Refugees in First Half of 2019," *Deutsche Welle*, September 5, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-over-600-attacks-on-refugees-in-first-half-of-2019/a-50296504>.

¹³¹ "Germany: Over 600 Attacks on Refugees in First Half of 2019."

¹³² "Federal Prosecutors Suspect 'Far-Right Motive' in Killing of German Politician Walter Lübcke," *Deutsche Welle*, June 17, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/federal-prosecutors-suspect-far-right-motive-in-killing-of-german-politician-walter-l%C3%BCbcke/a-49227718>.

¹³³ Peter Kuras, "Germany Has a Neo-Nazi Terrorism Epidemic," *Foreign Policy*, July 2, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/07/02/germany-has-a-neo-nazi-terror-epidemic/>.

¹³⁴ "New Twist in Case of Slain German Politician Walter Lübcke," *Deutsche Welle*, January 9, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/new-twist-in-case-of-slain-german-politician-walter-l%C3%BCbcke/a-51935858>.

violence.¹³⁵ Arguably, this desensitization of the language has been a stage in the escalation from brutal political polemics to violence culminating in political assassination as in former times.

Anti-Jewish, neo Nazi violence occurred in Halle on October 9, 2019, on the holiest of Jewish holidays, Yom Kippur, when Stephen Balliet attempted to enter a synagogue and livestream a mass execution.¹³⁶ After failing to enter the synagogue, Balliet turned his lethal attention to patrons of a nearby Turkish restaurant, whom he shot.¹³⁷ Balliet had served as a conscript in the Bundeswehr in 2010, and blamed his unemployment and living with his mother¹³⁸ on mass migration¹³⁹ and a Jewish conspiracy.¹⁴⁰ His “manifesto” was published online and fueled cynical jokes about if he had lived up to similar attacks in El Paso, Texas, and the Christchurch in New Zealand.¹⁴¹ Websites like 4chan and 8chan gossiped about Balliet’s attack, which are havens for disinformation campaigns, political harassment, and coordinated support for the AfD.¹⁴²

In Hanau, Germany February 19, 2020, nine people were killed at two hookah bars.¹⁴³ The murderer was identified as Tobias R. and is believed to have been

¹³⁵ “Far-Right AfD ‘Complicit’ in German pro-Migrant Politician’s Killing,” *Deutsche Welle*, June 19, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/far-right-afd-complicit-in-german-pro-migrant-politicians-killing/a-49271433>.

¹³⁶ Daniel Koehler, “The Halle, Germany, Synagogue Attack and the Evolution of the Far-Right Terror Threat,” *CTC Sentinel* 12, no. 11 (December 2019): 14, <https://ctc.usma.edu/el-paso-terrorist-attack-chain-reaction-global-right-wing-terror/>.

¹³⁷ Koehler, “The Halle, Germany, Synagogue Attack,” 14.

¹³⁸ “Attack of Halle: The Confused World of the Assassin,” *Spiegel Panorama*, October 14, 2019, <https://www.spiegel.de/panorama/justiz/halle-saale-stephan-balliet-bereitete-tat-seit-monaten-vor-a-1291500.html>.

¹³⁹ Guhl, Ebner, and Rau, *The Online Ecosystem of the German Far-Right*.

¹⁴⁰ Koehler, “The Halle, Germany, Synagogue Attack” 15.

¹⁴¹ Guhl, Ebner, and Rau, *The Online Ecosystem of the German Far-Right*.

¹⁴² Guhl, Ebner, and Rau.

¹⁴³ Luke Hurst, “Hanau Attacks: Alternative for Germany Slammed for ‘Legitimising Deadly Racism’,” *Euronews*, February 27, 2020, <https://www.euronews.com/2020/02/21/hanau-attacks-alternative-for-germany-party-slammed-for-legitimising-deadly-racism>.

radicalized online by far-right conspiracy theories.¹⁴⁴ The chair of the European Network Against Racism, Karen Taylor, believes that there is a “whole web of potential violent terrorists” and links it to a racist party in the Bundestag that engages with constitutionally illegal far-right groups.¹⁴⁵ The Director of the German Institute on Radicalization and De-radicalization Studies, Daniel Koehler, connects the recent far-right radical environment to the AfD normalizing racism and dehumanizing rhetoric.¹⁴⁶

2. Political Turmoil

As illustrated by Figure 2, in the eastern state of Thuringia, the AfD increased its total percentage votes by more than 12 percent while the CDU lost nearly 12 percent, SPD lost 4.2 percent and the FDP reached the 5-percent threshold to be awarded seats in the *Landstag*.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Kay-Alexander Scholz, “How the Internet Fosters Far-Right Radicalization,” *Deutsche Welle*, February 21, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/how-the-internet-fosters-far-right-radicalization/a-52471852>.

¹⁴⁵ Hurst, “Hanau Attacks.”

¹⁴⁶ Hurst, “Hanau Attacks,” In the past five years, far-right motivated terrorism has increased by 320 percent internationally and is attributed to the toxic far-right online ecosystem.

¹⁴⁷ “State Election 2019 in Thuringia - Final Result,” Thuringian State Office for Statistics, wahlen.thueringen.de, accessed March 15, 2020, <https://wahlen.thueringen.de/datenbank/wahl1/wahl.asp?wahlart=LW&wJahr=2019&zeigeErg=KARTESVG&wkKarte=K>.

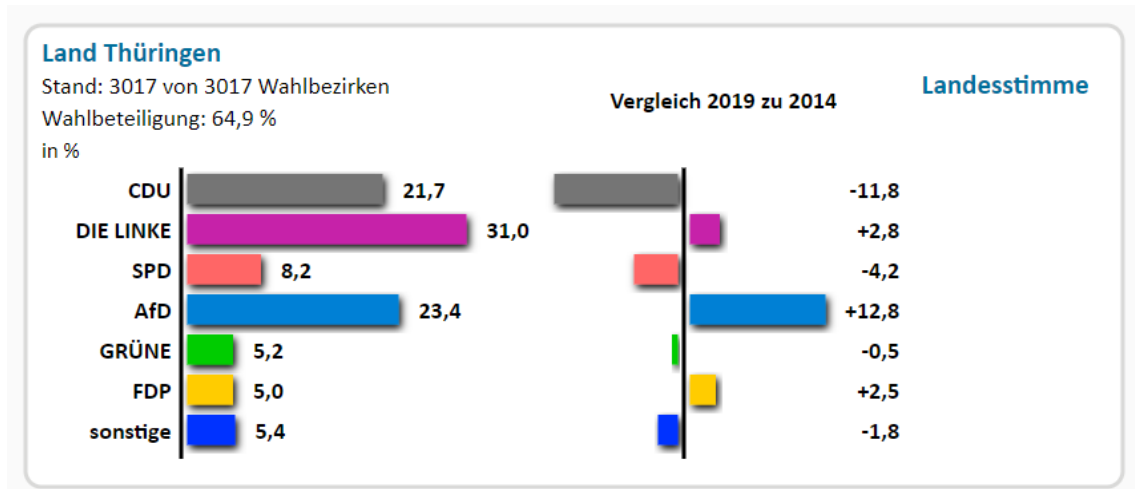


Figure 2. Thuringia State Election Comparisons, 2014 and 2019¹⁴⁸

The election results show a rejection of CDU-SPD coalition national government and people look towards smaller political parties with less diverse platforms as their answer. As a result of the divided elections, the following months were riddled with no coalition government as the Left Party, SPD, and Greens did not have sufficient seats to form a majority.¹⁴⁹

Thuringia exploded into national controversy in February 2020 as a third round of voting for state premier resulted in the FDP candidate, Thomas Kemmerich, receiving the necessary number of votes only with the support of the AfD.¹⁵⁰ Immediate outrage erupted as political parties previously refused any cooperation with the AfD. The uproar immediately led to Kemmerich resigning his newly elected office,¹⁵¹ followed at the

¹⁴⁸ Source: Thuringian State Office for Statistics, "State Election 2019 in Thuringia - Final Result."

¹⁴⁹ "German, European Stability Prospects Unclear after Thuringia Election," *Deutsche Welle*, October 28, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/german-european-stability-prospects-unclear-after-thuringia-election/a-51022595>.

¹⁵⁰ "Why Is Everyone in Germany Talking about Thuringia and AfD?" *Deutsche Welle*, February 6, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/why-is-everyone-in-germany-talking-about-thuringia-and-afd/a-52277013>.

¹⁵¹ Peter Kuras, "Behold Germany's Post-Merkel Future and Despair," *Foreign Policy*, February 7, 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/02/07/germany-post-merkel-future-afd-kemmerich-thuringia-election/>.

national level by the resignation of the expected successor to Merkel, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, for her perceived lack of authority over the party.¹⁵²

The Thuringian debacle highlights the historical sensitivities Germans have for the state. Following the short-lived election of Kemmerich with the AfD's support, the previous governor, Left Party member Bodo Ramelow tweeted quotes from Adolf Hitler, "We achieved the biggest success in Thuringia... There we are today really the decisive party. The parties in Thuringia that have governed so far, are unable to get a majority without our assistance."¹⁵³ Indeed, similar to the AfD fracturing the distribution of votes today, Wilhelm Frick and Fritz Sauckel were able to lead the Nazi's party as a splinter political group and participate in the state government following the 1929 election.¹⁵⁴ Ultimately, Bodo Ramelow won the premiership as the CDU abstained from voting.¹⁵⁵ For the moment, at least, partnering with the AfD represents a spectacle that mainstream Germany is unwilling to accept.

E. CONCLUSION

The AfD is not like normal German political parties. Its support comes from those disenfranchised with traditional parties to include large numbers of racists, xenophobes, anti-Semites, and ultranationalists. Though their original leaders were products of West Germany and European integration, the party has metamorphized into a rejection of all matters not associated with so called, German identity. Racist policies and rhetoric along with association with illegal right-wing groups has spurred violence in social media and death in German streets.

¹⁵² Katrin Bennhold, "Merkel's Chosen Successor Steps Aside. The Far Right Cries Victory," *New York Times*, February 10, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/10/world/europe/annegret-kramp-karrenbauer-resign.html>.

¹⁵³ Katrin Bennhold, "Germans Unnerved by Political Turmoil That Echoes Nazi Era," *New York Times*, February 7, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/world/europe/germany-thuringia-afd.html>.

¹⁵⁴ Donald R. Tracey, "The Development of the National Socialist Party in Thuringia, 1924-30," *Central European History Society* 8, no. 1 (March 1975): 23-31, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008938900017738>.

¹⁵⁵ "Left Party Politician Bodo Ramelow Wins Key German State Vote," *Deutsche Welle*, March 4, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/left-party-politician-bodo-ramelow-wins-key-german-state-vote/a-52635758>.

III. *INNERE FÜHRUNG* AND AfD MILITARY REVISIONISM

The term *Innere Führung*, which is wrongly translated as “leadership and civic education,” has been the trademark of the Bundeswehr since 1955. That is, a style of command that embraces the citizen in uniform versus the subject of the king or the *Volksgenosse* at arms in service of the Fuehrer. As such it has been also a trademark of civil military relations in the FRG which a fraction of the public remain skeptical about the heritage of the soldier and the role of the soldier in the state. The AfD has claimed that it is the party of German soldiers and that it embraces *Innere Führung*, but in reality, the AfD in civil military relations has an ambiguous role which defies easy generalization. When one examines the military policy of the AfD, it is hard to suggest that such policy embraces the record of German civil military relations since 1955. The danger exists that a nationalist party can revive aspects of formerly extinct militarism, a proposition that is examined in this chapter.

This chapter is organized into two major parts with subsections. First, it illustrates the origins, criticism, general current status of the Bundeswehr’s *Innere Führung* concept. Second, it examines the AfD’s military affiliation and policies towards the Bundeswehr in its attempt to become the soldier’s party.

A. WHAT IS THE CITIZEN IN UNIFORM AND WHAT IS *INNERE FÜHRUNG*? COMMAND, OBEDIENCE, MORALE, AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE GERMAN MILITARY

1. Origins: Out with the Old and In with the New

The government in Bonn in 1949 had to build a new state without the Prussian heritage of the soldier, the dynasty, the court and a people at arms. Rather, the government had to reconcile national defense with the higher imperative of human rights in the Basic Law.¹⁵⁶ The Adenauer government believed that for the first time in German history, the military had to be subordinate to civilian leadership which symbolized the Bonn government’s most dramatic break from the country’s Prussian-German military

¹⁵⁶ Turner Jr., *Germany from Partition to Reunification*, 125.

history.¹⁵⁷ As early as 1947, an ex-staff officer who in the 1950s was the public face of the ideal of the citizen in uniform, Wolf Graf von Baudissin, advocated for contextual meaning for future soldiers in a new German military that must be an organization that serves humanity.¹⁵⁸ When Adenauer called together a group of ex-soldiers in the Eifel Mountains to plan for an FRG role in a European Army, the October 1950 Himmerod Memorandum stated that the new force must not resemble the old *Wehrmacht*, as its soldiers needed to believe democracy was the only option for their way of life.¹⁵⁹

The answer to generations of undemocratic militarism was the creation in 1953 of the *Innere Führung* concept as Germany's civilian-military control mechanism and an anchor for Bundeswehr command and obedience.¹⁶⁰ When Germany created the Bundeswehr and adopted *Innere Führung*, the Bonn government wanted to prevent the reformation of a military caste that Gordon Craig characterized as a "state within the state."¹⁶¹ *Innere Führung*'s core ideal is that soldiers' are "citizens in uniform" with principles of command, leadership, and morale that integrates them into a plural democratic society, which serves as a guard against the recreation of separate military caste.¹⁶² Unlike previous Prussian and German militaries that exercised exclusive political and social ethos, Bundeswehr soldiers would be true citizens in uniform with the right to vote.¹⁶³ Integrating subjective government controls into the newly created

¹⁵⁷ Abenheim, *Reforging the Iron Cross*, 80.

¹⁵⁸ Enno Bernzen, Robert Sieger, and Dirk Peddinghaus, "Innere Führung – Leadership Culture in Camouflage," *Ethics and Armed Forces: Controversies in Military Ethics & Security Policy*, no. 1 (2016): 46, <http://www.ethikundmilitaer.de/en/full-issues/2016-innere-fuehrung/>.

¹⁵⁹ Steven Beardsley, "Citizens in Uniform: The Bundeswehr's Innere Führung and the Cold War Divide," Robert Bosch Foundation Alumni Association, (2019): 4, https://www.boschalumni.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Steven-Beardsley_Citizens-in-Uniform.-The-Bundeswehrs-Innere-Fuehrung-and-the-Cold-War-divide.pdf.

¹⁶⁰ Michael G. Lux, *Innere Fuehrung: A Superior Concept of Leadership?* (Berlin, Germany: Carola Hartmann Miles-Verlag, 2009), 150.

¹⁶¹ Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640–1945*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1964), 217.

¹⁶² Abenheim and Halladay, "Stability in Flux," 308–309.

¹⁶³ Abenheim, *Reforging the Iron Cross*, 98.

military was essential to the Bundestag that a parliamentary commissioner was assigned to oversee the army's inner structure.¹⁶⁴

Innere Führung is a distinctly German principle that is not comparable to other countries' approaches to integrate the military and civilian populations.¹⁶⁵ *Innere Führung*'s four goals—legitimacy, motivation, integration, and design of inner order have sustained the citizens in uniform concept.¹⁶⁶ Because of the war crimes committed by the *Wehrmacht*, *Innere Führung*'s leadership philosophy requires Bundeswehr soldiers to consider whether orders are legal, lawful, and compatible with their conscience.¹⁶⁷ Wolf Graf von Baudissin, World War II prison of war from the failed North African campaign and widely hailed as the father of *Innere Führung*, rejected the idea that soldiers were not responsible for the orders they carried out.¹⁶⁸ The 1957 *Handbuch Innere Führung* reinforced soldiers' moral responsibility as, "Humanity is not divisible. If it is now to be the preserve only of particular groups, it will be lost completely. The soldier who has no respect for his fellow human – and the enemy, too, is his fellow human – is not tolerable, neither as a superior nor as a fellow soldier nor as a fellow citizen."¹⁶⁹ Morality as was central tenant for Graf von Baudissin who wanted the citizens who joined the armed forces to be regarded as free men, good citizens and full soldiers.¹⁷⁰ Graf von Baudissin's principles were supported by other reformers who

¹⁶⁴ Abenheim, *Reforging the Iron Cross*, 124.

¹⁶⁵ Lux, *Innere Fuehrung*, 59.

¹⁶⁶ Lux, 82.

¹⁶⁷ Uwe Hartmann, "What's the Matter with Innere Führung?" *Ethics and Armed Forces: Controversies in Military Ethics & Security Policy*, no. 1 (2016): 23, <http://www.ethikundmilitaer.de/en/full-issues/2016-innere-fuehrung/>.

¹⁶⁸ Beardsley, "Citizens in Uniform," 4.

¹⁶⁹ Angelika Dörfler-Dierken, "Reflections on Ethical Standards for Military Personnel in European Armed Forces," *Ethics and Armed Forces: Controversies in Military Ethics & Security Policy*, no. 2 (2018), <http://www.ethikundmilitaer.de/en/full-issues/20182-european-army/doerfler-dierkens-reflections-on-ethical-standards-for-military-personnel-in-european-armed-forces/>.

¹⁷⁰ Detlef Aufderheide, "Ethics versus Efficiency – What Military Leadership Can Learn from Business," *Ethics and Armed Forces: Controversies in Military Ethics & Security Policy*, no. 1 (2016): 10, <http://www.ethikundmilitaer.de/en/full-issues/2016-innere-fuehrung/>.

desired soldiers in the new army to first be a human being; second, be a citizen; of Germany and third, be a soldier in the Bundeswehr.¹⁷¹

Graf von Baudissin believed that tradition was an integral part of the military.¹⁷² Today's Bundeswehr sees tradition as a means to communicate across different generations.¹⁷³ That communication is engrained German Armed Forces' pillars of tradition: Prussian reforms from 1807–1819, the 20 July 1944 assassination attempt on Hitler, and the *eigene Tradition* of the *Bundeswehr*.¹⁷⁴ Baudissin believed the civil-military relations reforms by Gerhard von Scharnhorst and other Prussian officers in the early 19th Century was a template for the creation of Bundeswehr's heritage.¹⁷⁵ Scharnhorst helped reforms turn subjects into citizens, created civic notions that all citizens are defenders of the state, reformed the degrading military justice system of its time.¹⁷⁶

The assassination attempt on Hitler was incorporated as soldiers who resisted the Nazi regime had to rely on their inner morality to guard against the outer leadership who ordered them to do injustices.¹⁷⁷ It was the conspirators of July 20, 1944, who assumed responsibility in a morally unclear situation and a model for Bundeswehr soldiers to emulate.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷¹ Abenheim, *Soldier and Politics*, 24.

¹⁷² Beardsley, "Citizens in Uniform," 28.

¹⁷³ "The Tradition of the Bundeswehr," *Bundeswehr*, accessed April 16, 2020, <https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/ueber-die-bundeswehr/selbstverstaendnis-bundeswehr/tradition-bundeswehr>.

¹⁷⁴ Abenheim and Halladay, *Soldiers, War, Knowledge and Citizenship*, 81.

¹⁷⁵ Beardsley, "Citizens in Uniform," 10.

¹⁷⁶ Michael Epkenhans, "Säulen Der Tradition: Preußische Reformer Und Bürgersoldaten Bleiben Traditionsstiftend [Pillars of Tradition: Prussian Reformers and Citizen Soldiers Remain Traditional]," trans. Google Translator, *If Spezial Zietschrift Für Innere Führung [If special Zietschrift For Inner Leadership]*, no. 2 (April 2018): 30, <https://www.bmvg.de/resource/blob/23698/efe0631df9942f5d6b8de9d1157e1fbb/20180416-if-spezial-data.pdf>.

¹⁷⁷ Hans-Peter Bartels, "For the Uniting Europe, I Picture More and More Islands of Functioning Cooperation," *Ethics and the Armed Forces: Controversies in Peace Ethics and Security Policy*, no. 2 (2018): 52, http://www.ethikundmilitaer.de/fileadmin/ethics_and_armed_forces/Ethics-and-Armed-Forces-2018-2.pdf.

¹⁷⁸ Dörfler-Dierken, "Reflections on Ethical Standards."

The Bundeswehr's *eigene Tradition* links the current armed forces to its founding as citizens in uniform in a democratic and constitutionally controlled alliance army.¹⁷⁹ The German Basic law is the source for the pillars of Bundeswehr tradition as it instills the rule of law, democracy, human dignity and the obligation to fight for freedom and peace.¹⁸⁰

2. Criticism

From its origins in the period 1950–1953, military conservatives and nationalists who saw no failing in the Wehrmacht in national socialism have attacked *Innere Führung*. The code of command has wrongly been criticized for its abstract features that struggle to create positive identity for Bundeswehr soldiers.¹⁸¹ An example of this criticism with relevance for the role of the AfD with the Bundeswehr in the year 2020, a half century ago, the Army Chief of Staff, Albert Schnez, wrote in the so called “Studie des Heeres” that *Innere Führung* as to focused on theory and counterproductive to military effectiveness.¹⁸² Critics regularly apply simplistic concepts of war with a primacy of tactics over any and all other issues in assessing *Innere Führung*'s effectiveness in combat.¹⁸³ *Innere Führung* has been compared to fabric softener and its unsuitability for survival in war.¹⁸⁴ In addition, for some soldiers, democratic values are too vague in the face of deployments and places many in search for soldierly identity.¹⁸⁵ This is an old canard that since the Afghan mission of the *Bundeswehr* in ISAF has been

¹⁷⁹ Federal Ministry of Defense, *Die Tradition der Bundeswehr: Richtlinien Zum Traditionsverständnis und zur Traditionspflege* [The Tradition of the Germany Army: Guidelines for Understanding Tradition and for Traditional Care], trans. Google Translator (Federal Ministry of Defense, 2018), <https://www.bmvg.De/Resource/Blob/23234/6a93123be919584d48e16c45a5d52c10/20180328-Die-Tradition-Der-Bundeswehr-Data.Pdf>.

¹⁸⁰ *Bundeswehr*, “The Tradition of the Bundeswehr.”

¹⁸¹ Beardsley, “Citizens in Uniform,” 28.

¹⁸² Bernzen, Sieger, and Peddinghaus, “Innere Führung,” 47.

¹⁸³ Hartmann, “What’s the Matter with *Innere Führung*?” 25.

¹⁸⁴ Bernzen, Sieger, and Peddinghaus, “Innere Führung,” 48.

¹⁸⁵ Beardsley, “Citizens in Uniform,” 28.

resurrected by a young cohort of officers who embrace the undying virtues of the warrior throughout all of time and so forth.

With an emphasis on COIN and on the ideological and colonial warfare brutalities of such theaters as Afghanistan and elsewhere, certain thoughtful but more or less militarist post-Cold War young officers have grown skeptical of the current application of *Innere Führung*.¹⁸⁶ Observers have characterized *Generation Deployment* as younger officers whose identity has been built from overseas deployment especially in the ISAF mission and a break from the Bundeswehr's Cold War origins.¹⁸⁷ For many who belong to *Generation Deployment*, the guiding culture of senior officers don't reflect the experiences 21st Century soldiers suggesting *Innere Führung* an irrelevant relic.¹⁸⁸ Younger veterans' associations such as *Bund Deutscher Einsatzveteranen* [Association of German Mission Veterans] and the Combat Veterans have sparked debate as they want an operational deployment to be criteria to label a former soldier as a veteran which the German Bundeswehr Association warns how a definition could divide the troops.¹⁸⁹ Senior leaders who tie *Innere Führung* to maturity and experience fail to adapt it to modern times with the divide between those soldiers who have deployed and those who have not.¹⁹⁰ After overseas deployments that have contributed to deaths and disabilities, soldiers return to be unrecognized by a disinterested public and illustrates that modern citizens in uniform can feel like strangers in society.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ Beardsley, 3.

¹⁸⁷ Beardsley, 18.

¹⁸⁸ Elmar Wiesendahl, "Bundeswehr Without Cohesion. Negative Developments in Innere Führung," *Ethics and Armed Forces: Controversies in Military Ethics & Security Policy*, no. 1 (2016): 43, <http://www.ethikundmilitaer.de/en/full-issues/2016-innere-fuehrung/>.

¹⁸⁹ Christian Weber, "Is Every Soldier a Veteran? A Critical Analysis of the 2018 German Veteran Definition" (working paper, Federal Academy of Security Policy, 2018), https://www.baks.bund.de/sites/baks010/files/working_paper_2018_32.pdf.

¹⁹⁰ Beardsley, "Citizens in Uniform," 28.

¹⁹¹ Wiesendahl, "Bundeswehr Without Cohesion," 44.

3. Today—Still a Success

Though today's debate is different from previous generations about the effectiveness and relevancy of *Innere Führung*, the 2008 Joint Service Regulation ZDv 10/1 still stipulates, "The core of *Innere Führung* is unchangeable."¹⁹² Like society, the Bundeswehr is a system of values that are subject to change and makes *Innere Führung* durable to complete the mission at hand.¹⁹³ It is understandable that *Innere Führung* is becoming less relevant with the younger generation as its justification for creation was built from the civil-military failures of the Weimer Republic and the Third Reich.¹⁹⁴ However, with young combat veterans returning from irregular warfare to a democracy whose citizens they may have little identity with, more and not less emphasis is need to adapt and modernize *Innere Führung*.¹⁹⁵

Innere Führung traditions have been reassessed with the 2006 Ministry of Defense White Paper that reinforced, "The cultivation of traditions in the Bundeswehr focuses on the Prussian army reforms, military resistance to the National Socialist regime, and the history of the Bundeswehr itself."¹⁹⁶ Because the Third Reich's military was guilty of war crimes that inflicts wounds to the Bundeswehr to this day, its history is incompatible as a basis for tradition for a modern democracy's military.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹² Armed Forces Staff Branch Fü S I 4, *Joint Service Regulation ZDv 10/1. Innere Führung (Leadership Development and Civic Education)* (Federal Minister of Defence, 2008), https://ils.unc.edu/courses/2013_spring/inls285_001/materials/ZDv_10-1_Englisch.pdf.

¹⁹³ Bernd Küstner and Kazuma Matoba, "Innere Führung and Global Integral Competence," *Ethics and Armed Forces: Controversies in Military Ethics & Security Policy*, no. 1 (2016): 28, <http://www.ethikundmilitaer.de/en/full-issues/2016-innere-fuehrung/>.

¹⁹⁴ Hartmann, "What's the Matter with Innere Führung?" 24.

¹⁹⁵ Donald Abenheim and Carolyn C. Halladay, "Professional Soldiers and Citizens in Uniform: Some Thoughts on Innere Führung from a Transatlantic Perspective," *Ethics and Armed Forces: Controversies in Military Ethics & Security Policy*, no. 1 (2016): 3, <http://www.ethikundmilitaer.de/en/full-issues/2016-innere-fuehrung/>.

¹⁹⁶ Dale R. Herspring, *Civil-Military Relations and Shared Responsibility A Four-Nation Study*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 124.

¹⁹⁷ Federal Ministry of Defence, *Guidelines on the Understanding and Cultivation of Tradition in the Bundeswehr* (Bonn, Germany: Federal Ministry of Defence, 1982), https://ils.unc.edu/courses/2013_spring/inls285_001/materials/ZDv_10-1_Englisch.pdf.

Despite new technologies and combat deployments, *Innere Führung*'s emphasis on moral and legal obligations make it remain valid today.¹⁹⁸ *Innere Führung* has been the trademark of the Bundeswehr's 60-year history and even helped it reunite the country both politically and militarily with the former Democratic Republic of Germany.¹⁹⁹ Though many young soldiers identifying with *Generation Deployment* doubt its *Innere Führung*'s relevancy, skepticism that is reinforced with current German and European social upheaval, it should continue as the armed forces professional code.²⁰⁰ *Innere Führung* is the foundation that ensures the Bundeswehr remains an army reflective of the Basic Law, German democracy and the transatlantic security community.²⁰¹

B. AFD, THE BUNDESTAG, AND THE BUNDESWEHR—PEOPLE, GOVERNMENT, AND MILITARY

1. AfD in the Government

The AfD break from traditional political parties as it advocates that because of the dwindling cultural remembrance of National Socialism, the country should broaden its historical lenses to encompass more positive aspects of the nation's history to establish greater cultural identity.²⁰² Historical events, such as the Holocaust, that create negative images of Germans, has created political turmoil by AfD Bundestag members. Expelled CDU-CSU member, and Bundestag representative for the AfD, Martin Hohmann,²⁰³ downplayed the importance of the Holocaust and made it a heated aspect in his 2017 Bundestag campaign.²⁰⁴ Alexander Gauland, the AfD party chairman, aimed to redefine

¹⁹⁸ Lux, *Innere Fuehrung*, 155.

¹⁹⁹ Hartmann, "What's the Matter with Innere Führung?" 22.

²⁰⁰ Abenheim and Halladay, "Professional Soldiers and Citizens in Uniform, 3.

²⁰¹ Abenheim and Halladay, "Stability in Flux," 305.

²⁰² AfD, Manifesto for Germany, 47.

²⁰³ "Martin Hohmann," Martin Hohmann, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://www.martinhohmann.de/>.

²⁰⁴ Von Heribert Prantl, "Germany is About to Graduate: Angela Merkel's Refugee Policy has Changed the Republic. Neo-Nazis are Preparing to Enter Parliament. What a Success of the AfD in the Federal Election Means for German politics," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, September 23, 2017, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/neonazis-im-parlament-deutschland-steht-vor-einer-reifepruefung-1.3678438>.

Germany's collective guilt under the Third Reich as he referred to the Nazis as, "bird shit in 1,000 years of successful German history."²⁰⁵ Björn Höcke, the AfD leader in Thuringia, wants a revision of the country's history to focus on German victims in World War II and even declared that the Holocaust memorial in Berlin is a "memorial of shame."²⁰⁶

AfD government leaders' reinterpretation of German history creates debate for the country to reintroduce previous generations' values. National Socialism perverted Prussian military virtues through the manipulation of patriotic symbols for political means with ceremonies like Hitler and Hindenburg's wreath laying at the Potsdam Church in 1933—linking and legitimizing Nazi authority to the Prussian kings.²⁰⁷ Hitler's corruption of Prussian pathos destroyed generations tradition as it helped lead to the Germany's destruction.²⁰⁸ Currently, because of its connection through Nazism to the Holocaust, the historic Potsdam Church remains an unwarranted tradition in the modern age and its rebuilding is mired with protests from the current generation.²⁰⁹

Unlike other mainstream political parties' like the CDU, SPD, Greens, and FDP, the AfD advertises and places the spotlight on its former soldiers who serve in the

²⁰⁵ "AfD Lawmakers Walk Out on Holocaust Survivor's Speech in Bavaria," *Reuters*, January 23, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-afd/afd-lawmakers-walk-out-on-holocaust-survivors-speech-in-bavaria-idUSKCN1PH2BM>.

²⁰⁶ "AfD Lawmakers Walk Out."

²⁰⁷ Abenheim, *Reforging the Iron Cross*, 33–34.

²⁰⁸ Michael Stürmer, "History in a Land without History," In *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler: Original Documents of the Historikerstreit, the Controversy Concerning the Singularity of the Holocaust*, trans. James Knowlton and Truett Cates, (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1993), 16.

²⁰⁹ "Church Reconstruction Begins in Potsdam amid Protests," *Deutsche Welle*, October 20, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/church-reconstruction-begins-in-potsdam-amid-protests/a-37826137>.

Bundestag.²¹⁰ Berenger Elsner von Gronow,²¹¹ Gerold Otten,²¹² Jens Kestner,²¹³ Jan Nolte,²¹⁴ and Rüdiger Lucassen,²¹⁵ are former professional soldiers who run the AfD's Bundestag Defense Working Group and published "Streitkraft Bundeswehr" in 2019.²¹⁶ Streitkraft Bundeswehr publishes the AfD's policies towards the military.

2. AfD Military Policies

Streitkraft Bundeswehr advocates for the creation of a national military general staff to increase operational capability and effectiveness.²¹⁷ Since West Germany recreated a national military with the Bundeswehr, its military structure above the squadron level has been incorporated into international organizations such as NATO.²¹⁸ In 2007, General Norbert van Heyst met with commanders who returned from foreign missions and concluded, "The Bundeswehr is good at ceremonies; militarily it is ineffective" and a suggestion was to create a General Staff to overcome poor control measures.²¹⁹ The slow bureaucratic gap between the ministry of defense and deployed Bundeswehr resulted in significant delays in support in 2008 as request for devices to neutralize roadside bombs were not filled though they were requested in 2003—General

²¹⁰ Abenheim, Donald, Uwe Hartmann, and Claus von Rosen (Hrsg.), "Bundeswehr and Alternative Fur Deutschland (AfD): Die „Soldatenpartei“? [The Soldier's Party]," In *Jahrbuch Innere Führung 2019: Bundeswehr Im Aufbruch. Hindernisse Von Den Verteidigungspolitischen Vorstellungen Der AfD Bis Zu Den Sicherheitspolitischen Meinungen In Der Zivilgesellschaft* [In the Yearbook Innere Führung 2019: Bundeswehr On the Move. Obstacles From the AfD's Defense Policy Ideas to Security-Political Opinions in Civil Society], 48–79, (Berlin: Carola Hartmann Miles-Verlag, 2019), 56.

²¹¹ "Berenger Elsner Von Gronow - AfD-Fraktion Im Deutschen Bundestag," AfD, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://www.afdbundestag.de/person/berengar-elsner-von-gronow/>.

²¹² "Gerold Otten," Startseite, AfD, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://www.afdbundestag.de/person/gerold-otten>.

²¹³ "Jens Kestner," Startseite, AfD, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://www.afdbundestag.de/person/jens-kestner>.

²¹⁴ "Jan Nolte," Startseite, AfD, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://www.afdbundestag.de/person/jan-nolte>.

²¹⁵ Rüdiger Lucassen, "Rüdiger Lucassen," accessed April 20, 2020, <https://ruediger-lucassen.de/>.

²¹⁶ Working Group Defense of the AfD, *Armed Forces Bundeswehr*.

²¹⁷ Working Group Defense of the AfD.

²¹⁸ Abenheim, *Reforging the Iron Cross*, 106.

²¹⁹ Herspring, *Civil-Military Relations and Shared Responsibility*, 130.

van Heyst's report argued that authority to control the transfer and deployment of troops should be given to the chief of staff.²²⁰

Historical restraint in recreating a national military general staff persists as post World War II public opinion has felt German militarism should be destroyed as it was embodied by the German Staff and High Command of the German Armed Forces's employment of the Wehrmacht's service to the Nazis racial extermination.²²¹ Though Germany's last general staff was not convicted as a criminal organization, its senior leaders Wilhelm Keitel and Alfred Jodl were condemned to death by the Nuremberg Trial in 1946—forever linking the German Staff and High Command of the German Armed Forces to the atrocities committed by the Third Reich in World War II.²²²

The AfD's emphasis on unilateral national defense is at the expense of its commitment to multilateral cooperation. Without a General Staff, the AfD observes Germany has weaker defense capabilities, is more dependent on the abilities of NATO, and prevents it from taking military leadership role with European partners.²²³ The AfD calls for a national safety strategy that incorporates cyber, coastal, air, and ground security with the armed forces able to cover the entire conventional warfare spectrum.²²⁴ In addition, the AfD aims to have the Bundeswehr participate with civilian law enforcement for population protection.²²⁵ However, German Basic Law's restrictions fuel AfD advocates to adapt it and allow the Bundeswehr to react to threat scenarios like captured airplanes terrorist raids, and drone attacks.²²⁶ The employment of military forces in support of domestic security has recently been a popular policy amongst Central

²²⁰ Herspring, *Civil-Military Relations and Shared Responsibility*, 130.

²²¹ Ronald M. Smelser, and Edward J. Davies, *The Myth of the Eastern Front: the Nazi-Soviet War in American Popular Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 40.

²²² Barry A. Leach, *German General Staff*, (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1973), 158.

²²³ Working Group Defense of the AfD, *Armed Forces Bundeswehr*.

²²⁴ Working Group Defense of the AfD.

²²⁵ Working Group Defense of the AfD.

²²⁶ Working Group Defense of the AfD.

European right wing parties.²²⁷ The Bundeswehr's command and control would improve with a General Staff, make it more individually capable, and less reliant on NATO partners. However, its adoption would reject post-World War II multinational integration with its redirection of the military to be a political instrument for domestic security.

Streitkraft Bundeswehr advocates that because of the special considerations of military service, the Bundeswehr should compose its own military justice system.²²⁸ Previous right wing parties such as the National Democratic Party (NPD) advocated for the reinstitution of military judges and was met with civil protests from the 1950s to 1970s.²²⁹ However, removing the military from the federal courts jurisdiction would create a barrier to prevent the formation of a military caste—a goal of *Innere Führung*. Before the founding of the Federal Republic, Prussian army officers were subject to trial only by their military peers, which separated them legally from the civilian population.²³⁰ A military justice system removed from civilian courts would be a retrenchment from integrating soldiers into civilian society and contradict the foundation of *Innere Führung*. Bundeswehr founder Wolf Graf von Baudissin wanted soldiers as citizens subject to civilian oversight and a separate military justice system would be a rebuke of his ideals.²³¹

The AfD advocates that the Basic Law governing the federal budget and military funding should be adapted to increase the Bundeswehr's readiness.²³² Shortages on ammunition in addition to inoperable jets and ships have led to Social Democrat, Hans-Peter Bartel and Bundestag member in charge of Bundeswehr monitoring to admit there

²²⁷ Abenheim, Hartmann, and Rosen (Hrsg.), "Bundeswehr and Alternative Fur Deutschland," 55.

²²⁸ Working Group Defense of the AfD, *Armed Forces Bundeswehr*.

²²⁹ Abenheim, Hartmann, and Rosen (Hrsg.), "Bundeswehr and Alternative Fur Deutschland," 60.

²³⁰ James Hawes, *The Shortest History of Germany*, (Devon, Great Britain: Old Street Publishing, 2017), 133.

²³¹ Beardsley, "Citizens in Uniform," 9.

²³² Working Group Defense of the AfD, *Armed Forces Bundeswehr*.

is not enough personnel or material.²³³ The AfD want to readopt military conscription and aim to increase the military to 230,000 active duty soldiers.²³⁴ From its maximum number of 600,000, the Bundeswehr was reduced to 370,000 in 1994, to 250,000 in 2010,²³⁵ to its present number of 183,000 active duty soldiers.²³⁶ Military officers, defense civilians, and veterans have been voicing concerns about the army's diminished role in the state since the end of the Cold War and appears to not be addressed by the government.²³⁷

Streitkraft Bundeswehr aims to create civilian appreciation of Germany's soldiers.²³⁸ The AfD aim to create mutual loyalty between the Federal Republic of German and the Bundeswehr and see an emotional connection between soldiers and citizens as necessary.²³⁹ Unlike the victors of World War II like the United States, United Kingdom and even France, Germany is a country where veterans who dress in clothes that associate themselves with military service can be insulted or laughed at.²⁴⁰ The Third Reich propagandized the Wehrmacht with public parades during the day and torchlight marches at night to reinforce the military's special role in society and deflected political turmoil.²⁴¹ In similar fashion to the Nazi regime, the AfD want to hold capital parades with German units.²⁴² To further display the Bundeswehr to the public, the AfD

²³³ Matthew Karnitsching, "Germany's Soldiers of Misfortune: The Once Bundeswehr Is Looking Increasingly Threadbare," *Politico*, February 15, 2019, <https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-biggest-enemy-threadbare-army-bundeswehr/>.

²³⁴ Working Group Defense of the AfD, *Armed Forces Bundeswehr*.

²³⁵ Beardsley, "Citizens in Uniform," 22.

²³⁶ "About the Bundeswehr," Startseite, Bundeswehr, accessed April 20, 2020, <https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/ueber-die-bundeswehr>.

²³⁷ Abenheim, Hartmann, and Rosen (Hrsg.), "Bundeswehr and Alternative Fur Deutschland," 53.

²³⁸ Working Group Defense of the AfD, *Armed Forces Bundeswehr*.

²³⁹ Working Group Defense of the AfD.

²⁴⁰ Noah Barkin, "Where Veterans Aren't Thanked for Their Service," *The Atlantic*, August 6, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/08/what-makes-german-military-veteran/595381/>.

²⁴¹ "Nazi Parades," Global Security, accessed April 20, 2020, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/de-nazi-parades.htm>.

²⁴² Working Group Defense of the AfD.

call for military recruiting offices to be placed in city centers²⁴³ reminiscent of the United States' armed forces center at the heart of New York's Time Square.²⁴⁴ AfD aims to distinguish soldiers from civilians reflects other western cultures, previous German regimes, and not reflective of Federal Republic of Germany, Bundeswehr's, or the citizen in uniform *Innere Führung* concept.

The AfD further aim to separate soldiers' identity from the citizen population by amending labor law so it does not apply to the armed forces.²⁴⁵ In addition, hostilities committed by civilians against soldiers in uniform in public would be considered criminal.²⁴⁶ Daily life military rituals with soldiers in public ceremonies were specifically aimed to be eliminated by the new Federal Republic of Germany in its early years.²⁴⁷

Based on Streitkraft Bundeswehr, it appears clear that the AfD aim to redefine what it means to be a citizen in uniform in German society by rekindling an emotional connection between the military as the defenders of the country and the men and women who comprise the civilian population.²⁴⁸ The granting of social privileges to soldiers and reconnecting the Bundeswehr to centuries of military tradition,²⁴⁹ threaten to recreate a "state within the state."²⁵⁰ Though government policy still rules out honoring most soldiers from the World Wars,²⁵¹ the *Guidelines on Traditional Understanding and Traditional Care* states, "Establishment of tradition and cultivation of tradition are dynamic and never-ending actions that elude all attempts to determine it centrally or

²⁴³ Working Group Defense of the AfD, *Armed Forces Bundeswehr*.

²⁴⁴ Ruthie Weissmann and Laura Italiano, "Times Square Recruiting Center Gets Patriotic New Look," *New York Post*, November 10, 2017, <https://nypost.com/2017/11/10/times-square-recruiting-center-gets-patriotic-new-look/>.

²⁴⁵ Working Group Defense of the AfD, *Armed Forces Bundeswehr*.

²⁴⁶ Working Group Defense of the AfD.

²⁴⁷ Abenheim, *Reforging the Iron Cross*, 130.

²⁴⁸ Working Group Defense of the AfD, *Armed Forces Bundeswehr*.

²⁴⁹ Working Group Defense of the AfD.

²⁵⁰ Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army*, 217.

²⁵¹ Herspring, *Civil-Military Relations and Shared Responsibility*, 124.

permanently.”²⁵² The impermanent status of tradition reflects the durability of *Innere Führung* and the German government—nothing is permanent. The current accepted tradition is illustrated by former Minister of Defense, Ursula von der Leyen’s order to rename barracks named for World War II officers, including Field Marshal Erwing Rommel, to illustrate that Bundeswehr’s tradition are not rooted in the *Wehrmacht*.²⁵³ However, the AfD advance a counter traditional narrative with its deflection of the cultural importance of the Holocaust towards Germans’ glorious history.²⁵⁴

C. CONCLUSION

AfD leaders have started publicizing the term *Soldatenpartei* [soldiers party], and for good reason.²⁵⁵ As of February, 2019, before the publication of *Streitkraft Bundeswehr*, the AfD’s already amassed a military following as 2,100 of its 35,000 members were professional soldiers.²⁵⁶ Its goal to elevate soldiers to special positions in civil society is not in keeping with *Innere Führung*’s citizen in uniform concept and regresses back to militarism under Prussian and Third Reich leadership. However, the durability of *Innere Führung* and commitment to no fixed heritage creates opportunities for the AfD to exploit. Years of government neglect and growing divide between the military and civilian population separates soldiers from society and affords them a base of political support to serve as their means.

²⁵² Ministry of Defence, *Guidelines on the... Tradition in the Bundeswehr*.

²⁵³ David Crossland, “Should Germany Keep Its Nazi Relics to Teach Young People about the Holocaust?” *Deutsche Welle*, September 8, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/should-germany-keep-its-nazi-relics-to-teach-young-people-about-the-holocaust/a-40008125>.

²⁵⁴ “AfD’s Gauland Plays down Nazi Era as a ‘Bird Shit’ in German History,” *Deutsche Welle*, June 2, 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/afds-gauland-plays-down-nazi-era-as-a-bird-shit-in-german-history/a-44055213>.

²⁵⁵ Abenheim, Hartmann, and Rosen (Hrsg.), “Bundeswehr and Alternative Fur Deutschland,” 48.

²⁵⁶ Kain and Scheucher, “Will the AfD Become the New Soldiers Party?”

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IV. THE SOLDIER, STATE, AND SOCIETY IN THE FRG: ANTIMILITARISM AND THE BUNDESWEHR

Because of the devastation and defeat in World War II, a society that had embraced the people at arms and endured the effort of total war grew skeptical about military institutions. All the same, within a decade of war's end, the two German states each had their own new army. Especially in the FRG (but surely also in the GDR) these new armies were regarded with skepticism and, in some cases, open hostility. The role of the former military elite in the FRG, that is the old officer class and its relation to politics, was also an issue in the first decades of the Bonn Republic and was regarded as potential problem as had been the case in the period 1919–1933, when the military caste had ended up actively destroying the republic. This problem of extreme nationalists in uniform has more or less been a constant concern in episodes since the 1950s, and with the advent of an extreme nationalist party in the 21st century, this old concern has reappeared.

The AfD's nationalist positions does or does not provide cover for right-wing extremists serving in uniform to operate against the constitutional order. This chapter has three main parts with subdivisions. First, it illustrates the civil military relations that developed following a divided Germany's defeat in World War II and the establishment of the Federal Republic's Bundeswehr. Second, German citizens' skepticism of military affairs is not an absolute defining feature; however, it is adopted by enough of the population to wield a significant amount of restraint with policy makers with operations abroad in the post-Cold War world. Finally, in view of the abolition of conscription in the defense reform of the year 2011, it examines Germany's post-conscription society and the friction between those skeptical of the country's military and defense policy that is necessary for national defense and has a history with right-wing extremists.

A. POST-WWII AND COLD WAR ANTI-MILITARISM

1. Destroyed By War—Hour Zero

The war which began in 1939 was the second in a quarter century and ended with six million German dead out of a total of some fifty five million worldwide and the

destruction of Germany's cities and its moral collapse with millions more who suffered disabilities.²⁵⁷ Nearly all of the 11 million members of the military were imprisoned, with many serving as slave laborers in the Soviet Union for years.²⁵⁸ Still, the population of postwar East and West Germany still grew from 59 million in 1939 to 64 million in 1946 as 10 million-12 million German refugees fled the nations behind the Iron Curtain.²⁵⁹ The growth in population faced the challenge of rebuilding a country that had 25 percent of housing destroyed and some cities exceeding 50 percent.²⁶⁰ Starvation and deprivation reigned in all the zones of occupation in the hour zero until, at least in the west, the currency reform operated in 1948–9 and brought some relief.²⁶¹

Thomas Berger describes post-war Germany as physically and psychologically shaken to its core as old nationalist dreams of empire ended in divided nation among the four victors that was populated by a war-weary disillusioned public.²⁶² The German public turned inward and in part came to grips with the effects of national socialism and militarism while other parts of society evaded this responsibility and blamed the allies.²⁶³

2. Never Again, Never Alone: Building a Government and Military

The Bonn Republic that emerged slowly from 1948 was led by the Cologne mayor Konrad Adenauer, whose central idea was to integrate the new FRG into the West, i.e., the Euro Atlantic West that emerged in the years 1946–55.²⁶⁴ As a part of its statecraft,²⁶⁵ the FRG integrated its security within western powers military's by joining

²⁵⁷ Turner Jr., *Germany from Partition to Reunification*, 3.

²⁵⁸ Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan*, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 23.

²⁵⁹ Turner Jr., *Germany from Partition to Reunification*, 6.

²⁶⁰ Turner Jr., 6.

²⁶¹ Hawes, *The Shortest History of Germany*, 194; Bryan Taylor, "The Currency Reform That Created Two Germanies," Global Financial Data (blog), October 15, 2015, <https://www.globalfinancialdata.com/the-currency-reform-that-created-two-germanies/>.

²⁶² Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*, 24.

²⁶³ Berger, 27.

²⁶⁴ Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 25.

²⁶⁵ Schmidt, "Germany: The Grand Coalition State," 84.

NATO in 1955.²⁶⁶ Ascension into an multinational alliance²⁶⁷ limited the old militarist caste and excluded German aggression and was key to reduce fear from European countries as the Belgians wanted the Germany army strong enough to defeat the Soviet Union but weak enough to be deterred by Belgium. West German multilateralism and skepticism towards militarism became a kind of civil religion in the FRG which all the same in the cold war, had a considerable military force, but has ensured the country is not diplomatically isolated and reassures the security of its neighbors.²⁶⁸ It also has become a defining characteristic in the postwar German self-image and this civil religion of no more national socialism, although this taboo has begun to collapse in the past decade.

B. POST-COLD WAR RESTRAINT ON MILITARY

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, end of the Cold War, and subsequent German unification returned Germany to a role of power and centrality in Europe. International pressures compelled the government into military conflicts while it was still restrained by the post-WWII policies of no to anything other than national defense in the most limited sense. Three major cases can be examined to show the Bundestag's recent evolution. The 1990s Balkans and Bosnia/Kosovo conflicts show the German people's willingness to support military mission. The challenges of the NATO ISAF mission in Afghanistan illustrate the difficulties of the security building role in the post 11 September atmosphere of German military role in alliance cohesion and popular attitudes of anti-Americanism and displeasure with a government which portrayed the Afghan role as security building when after 2009 it devolved into open warfare. The 2011 NATO Libyan operation illustrated the functional limits of a custom of no to former out of area operations especially in North Africa and the role of the FDP in the coalition in combination with public skepticism of UK and French action against Ghadaffi via NATO.

²⁶⁶ Julian Lindley-French, *A Chronology of European Security & Defence 1945–2005*, (Geneva: Centre for Security Policy, 2005), 50.

²⁶⁷ Schmidt, "Germany: The Grand Coalition State," 84.

²⁶⁸ John S. Duffield, "Political Culture and State Behavior: Why Germany Confounds Neorealism," *International Organization* 53, no. 4 (1999): 781–782, <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081899551066>.

1. 1990s: Courts, Morality and Kosovo

The restrictive constitutional definition of Article 87a as to the defensive mission of the Bundeswehr was tested in the 1990s once the eastern and central European state system rearranged itself and did so violently in the wars of the Former Yugoslavia Republic in the 1990s. This process of reorientation had begun with the 1990–1991 Gulf War, in which the FRG had not participated, but in which the question of the limits on the operations of the Bundeswehr became urgent in alliance cohesion and national politics. The upshot of this was that the parliament put the issue to the constitutional court in Karlsruhe. July 12, 1994, was a landmark day for Germany’s military, foreign policy, and anti-war public as its Constitutional Court ruled that Bundeswehr could employ Article 24 of the Basic Law as concerns Germany’s role in collective security to endorse military action. As a result of this reinterpretation, a German role in the EU and NATO missions in the Former Yugoslavia Republic was allowed under the Basic Law and gave legal justification for future deployments in a range of missions provided the approval of parliament.²⁶⁹ Granted the close relations between, say, Croatia and Germany, and the manner in which the siege of Sarajevo and the slaughter of Bosnian Muslims by Bosnian Serb militias had unfolded, a humanitarian imperative for intervention operated first in the Kohl government’s justification for authorize use of military force for the first bombings in 1994 by NATO aircraft. The country had not outlived the crimes of the Nazi regime a half century earlier as government leaders explicitly argued that because of Germany’s past, it had a moral obligation through collective action and force to preserve peace in Europe.²⁷⁰ German moral responsibility to protect innocent life only grew greater following the 1995 Srebrenica massacre which deeply affected Germany’s policy makers.²⁷¹ Though post-WWII society heavily rejected war beyond the limits of the old

²⁶⁹ Kerry Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force: The Evolution of German Security Policy 1990–2003*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 64, <https://doi.org/10.7228/manchester/9780719067082.001.0001>.

²⁷⁰ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 67.

²⁷¹ Sarah Brockmeier, “Germany and the Intervention in Libya,” *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 55, no. 6 (2013): 68–69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2013.862937>.

Article 87a, Germany was finding itself politically motivated by humanitarian considerations to use it military outside of its borders.

In the case of the Kosovo intervention in 1998–9, the German people were morally able to reconcile their identity with their responsibilities to European security and human rights. Around 60 percent of the population approved of the Bundeswehr's deployment to Kosovo, although 57 percent of the population in the east disapproved because of the legacy of the GDR and a hostility to the U.S. and to NATO that is deeply ingrained there.²⁷² Following the earlier military operations of the 1990s, and especially true after the siege of Sarajevo and the slaughter in Srebrenica, the moral aspect of the growing humanitarian need in Kosovo struck a chord with a majority of the German people.²⁷³ Germans were determined to be on the right side of history as they were confronted with Serbian atrocities and ethnic cleansings that equated to crimes committed by the Nazi regime in World War II.²⁷⁴ Because Germany's post-WWII identity was crafted by a general rejection of wars of aggression and militarism as well as singular German bids to rule Europe as a master race, broad public support developed for military intervention to stop ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.²⁷⁵

2. Afghanistan

Following the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001, Germany again faced the question on whether it should use military force and what restraints its population would place on it. NATO invoked Article 5 on September 12, 2001, and the Bundeswehr deployed in support of the U.S. led special operations included in the limited Operation Enduring Freedom that was manifestly not under NATO command.²⁷⁶

²⁷² Wolfgang-Uwe Friedrich, et al., "The Legacy of Kosovo: German Politics and Policies in the Balkans," *German Issues* 22, (2000): 18, www.aicgs.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/legacy_of_kosovo.pdf.

²⁷³ Adrian Hyde-Price, "Germany and the Kosovo War: Still a Civilian Power?" *German Politics* 10, no. 1 (2001): 22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644000412331307374>.

²⁷⁴ Hyde-Price, "Germany and the Kosovo War," 22.

²⁷⁵ Hyde-Price, 22.

²⁷⁶ Lindley-French, *Chronology of European Security & Defence*, 224–225.

Germany's culture of restraint would heavily influence battlefield operations as it was the country's first large scale non-humanitarian military operation away from Europe since the Nazis held power.²⁷⁷ Social Democrat leader and Chancellor Gerhard Schröder wanted to deploy troops to the northeast part of Afghanistan which had no Taliban presence.²⁷⁸ Outside of a small number of special forces conducting combat operating in eastern Afghanistan, the 1,100 soldiers who comprised the bulk of Germany's contribution to ISAF was confined to the Kabul region.²⁷⁹ In order to authorize movement of personnel outside of Kabul and be sent to Kunduz Province, the Bundestag had to approve it in October 2003.²⁸⁰

In addition to approval from Berlin, the German government also placed caveats on soldiers and operations. NATO countries individually decide in what capacity to support operations and with what restraints.²⁸¹ Caveats installed by Berlin included restriction on troop movements at night and all patrols requiring ambulances.²⁸² In essence, government restrictions were heavily removing German soldiers from significant danger and former Supreme Allied Commander—Europe, General James Jones warned against restrictive national caveats as they diminish deployed forces ability to accomplish missions.²⁸³ Jones failed to remember, however, what Clausewitz wrote, that the more limited a war in its nature, the more political it does become. Jones also failed to see that from Mons in Belgium at Headquarters, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (HQ, SHAPE) opinions about domestic politics can only go so far. The ambiguities of the COIN mission that then unfolded in NATO ISAF. The Afghan mission was marred for its

²⁷⁷ Lindley-French, 227.

²⁷⁸ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: the United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*, (New York, NY: Viking, 2008), 350.

²⁷⁹ Rob Broomby, "German Special Forces in Action," *BBC News*, March 4, 2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1854187.stm>.

²⁸⁰ Lindley-French, *Chronology of European Security & Defence*, 251.

²⁸¹ Stanley R. Sloan, *Permanent Alliance? NATO and the Transatlantic Bargain from Truman to Obama*, (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2013), 13.

²⁸² Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, 354.

²⁸³ David S. Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act*, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2014), 142.

start by strategic and operational missteps which then eventuated as conflicted civil military relations (see McChrystal) and the German/NATO/ISAF experience was no exception.

From the years 2004 until 2009, as the character of the conflict in Afghanistan worsened and the U.S. role of all out combat became more prominent, public support for the German role in ISAF deteriorated. As depicted in the Figure 3, as the Bundeswehr maintained a footprint in Afghanistan, the German public grew progressively dissatisfied with its mission in Afghanistan because of the general problems of policy strategy and operations in a theater of war that has generally ruptured the plans of outside powers in campaigns of attrition and heart break.

The Bundeswehr should leave Afghanistan now :

March 2002	30%
April 2004	47%
July 2006	56%
July 2007	55%
September 2008	60%
July 2009	69%

Source: Infratest Dimap, *Der Spiegel*, July 6, 2009

Figure 3. Growing Dissatisfaction with the ISAF Mission²⁸⁴

The German public's growing dissatisfaction of the war has multiple contributing factors. From the beginning, Germany was ISAF's third largest contributor of forces in Afghanistan.²⁸⁵ Since operations started in 2001 in the various campaigns in Afghanistan, 53 Germans serving in the army, air force, police, or Georgian army have

²⁸⁴ Source: Wilfried von Bredow, "Germany in Afghanistan: The Pitfalls of Peace-Building in National and International Perspective," *Res Militaris* 2 no. 1, (2011): 5, http://www.resmilitaris.net/ressources/10150/00/7_res_militaris_article_von_bredow_germany_in_afghanistan.pdf.

²⁸⁵ Eric Sangar, "The Weight of the Past(s): The Impact of the Bundeswehr's Use of Historical Experience on Strategy-Making in Afghanistan," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38, no. 4 (2013): 411, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2013.798584>.

died.²⁸⁶ Of those 53 deaths, 37 were due to hostile enemy action which then as of about 2009 became manifest.²⁸⁷ Afghanistan represents the largest number of casualties German has suffered since the end of World War II.

This transition from the limited ISAF security role in Kabul in 2002–2004 through the burden shifting increase of a NATO ISAF across the breadth of Afghanistan by 2009 led to German public discontent with operations in Afghanistan. In 2009, a reduction in the restriction of rules of engagement resulted in a German request for an air strike that killed several dozen civilians in what was or was not a friendly fire episode.²⁸⁸ Controversy surrounded the command decisions that had led to the incident and it became embroiled in parliamentary controversy and public opinion that resisted the expanded combat mission with ISAF. Newly appointed Minister of Defence Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg forced the resignations of Bundeswehr Chief of Staff Wolfgang Schneiderhan and Deputy Defence Minister Peter Wichert for the subsequent handling of the mission.²⁸⁹ The cabinet asserted that the Bundeswehr was “enforcing a United Nations mandate rebuild Afghanistan” but the public debate perceived its operations as combat in service of an aggressive U.S. and such operations had little to do with stabilization and reconstruction efforts.²⁹⁰ Disconnect from military operations, to civil military command and oversight, and the public’s understanding allowed for greater freedom of operations until the friendly fire event in 2009–2010 led to a crystallization of anti ISAF sentiment especially in The Left which put the great coalition government about the strategic problems of the mission.

²⁸⁶ “Afghanistan Fatalities Total: 3573,” iCasualties Iraq: Afghanistan Fatalities, accessed February 25, 2020, <http://icasualties.org/App/AfghanFatalities?country-name-contains=german&page=1&rows=50>.

²⁸⁷ iCasualties Iraq: Afghanistan Fatalities, “Afghanistan Fatalities Total: 3573.”

²⁸⁸ Timo Noetzel, “The German Politics of War: Kunduz and the War in Afghanistan,” *International Affairs* 87, no. 2 (March 2011): 407, https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/20869666?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents.

²⁸⁹ Noetzel, “The German Politics of War,” 407.

²⁹⁰ Noetzel, 402.

As of 2019, the Bundeswehr had up to 1,300 troops deployed to Afghanistan.²⁹¹ The Train Advise Assist Command – North is under German command.²⁹² Even with the Bundeswehr’s presence, Germany has not suffered a casualty from hostile enemy fire since 2013.²⁹³ As a result of time, casualties, and high profile events, the anti-war German public has been able to constrain its government from allowing to engage in operations that put German lives at major risk.

3. Libya

Germany’s vote on the 2011 United Nations’ use of force in Libya showed the traditional skepticism on the part of the coalition, in this case, the FDP foreign minister Westerwelle, to military operations over and above the ISAF mission in that year. The German people and its government were split on the country’s position on the UN Security Council vote for the authorized use of force in Libya in 2011. Not the best demoscopic source notwithstanding, *Stern* magazine published a poll illustrating that 88 percent of the population opposed German troops involvement in Libya.²⁹⁴ *Stern* magazine is not the “will of the German people” by any measure. The will of the German people is either a vote in parliament or a national election.

Thus, Libya placed the government between civil military doubts and sustaining good relations with its NATO allies. As a result of such dissent, fierce debate occurred in the Bundestag over the UN resolution proposal for an enforced no-fly zone over Libya.²⁹⁵ Poorly communicated changes in the U.S. position before the UN Security Council Resolution vote on March 17, 2011 resulted in Germany breaking from the

²⁹¹ “NATO Commander in Northern Afghanistan - An Interview,” *Bundeswehr*, January 17, 2020, <https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/einsaetze-bundeswehr/die-bundeswehr-in-afghanistan/nato-kommandeur-in-nordafghanistan-ein-interview-170702>.

²⁹² “Train Advise Assist Command – North,” NATO Resolute Support Afghanistan, accessed February 25, 2020, <https://rs.nato.int/rs-commands/train-advise-assist-command-north.aspx>.

²⁹³ iCasualties Iraq: Afghanistan Fatalities, “Afghanistan Fatalities Total: 3573.”

²⁹⁴ Brockmeier, “Germany and the Intervention in Libya,” 73.

²⁹⁵ Brockmeier, 65.

United States, United Kingdom, and France and abstaining from voting along with Russia, China, Brazil, and India.²⁹⁶

Germany's separate path from its European allies caused alarm in neighboring capitals, where skepticism of German power is ever present, and the question operated about a German special path in statecraft that combined with its economic power meant problems for collective defense.²⁹⁷ Critics argued that Germany's abstention damaged its reputation and trustworthiness in NATO and its isolation and semi-neutral strategy could undermine the western alliance.²⁹⁸ German Minister of Defense Thomas de Maizière defended Germany: "We are not convinced of this military action... We do not see ourselves as obliged here now, but we do support when others do so, but without our participation."²⁹⁹ The government's abstention was supported by 56 percent of the population and reflected overall public opinion as a clear majority was against German military engagement in Libya but more supportive of the overall NATO mission itself.³⁰⁰ To quell concerns about German alliance cohesion, and send a signal of alliance solidarity, Berlin made available 300 more German troops to support AWACS reconnaissance flights in Afghanistan.³⁰¹ However, the anti-interventionist section of the German public proved to be a critical restraining factor over government policy within the NATO alliance.

C. GERMAN CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

The soldier and the state in contemporary Germany contain military institutions amid sectors of society that are hostile to the armed forces because of historical memory

²⁹⁶ Brockmeier, 63.

²⁹⁷ Brockmeier, 63–64.

²⁹⁸ Kai Oppermann, "National Role Conceptions, Domestic Constraints and the New 'Normalcy' German Foreign Policy: The Eurozone Crisis, Libya and Beyond," *German Politics* 21, no. 4 (November 2012): 503, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2012.748268>.

²⁹⁹ Jetzt Teilen, "AWACS Reconnaissance: Germany Flies to Afghanistan Instead of Libya," *Handelsblatt*, March 18, 2011, <https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/awacs-aufklaerer-statt-in-libyen-fliegt-deutschland-in-afghanistan-seite-2/3966958-2.html>.

³⁰⁰ Oppermann, "National Role Conceptions," 514.

³⁰¹ Oppermann, 514.

and political perspective. The Bundeswehr has endeavored to manage this challenge through various civil military means, none of which has been especially vital or strong since the 2010–2011 defense reform which included the end of conscription, which was seen at the time a relic of the cold war and as unsuitable for the kind of expeditionary security mission as visible in ISAF.

1. Conscription: Its Effects and Abolishment

Conscription was a pillar of the FRG's defense structure for decades. A conscription law was adopted in 1956 that obligated all able-bodied young men upon their eighteenth birthday, excluding conscience objectors, to serve in the Bundeswehr.³⁰² As Henry Turner Jr. illustrates, conscription was the government's "method to prevent a predominance of professional military men."³⁰³ The German Ministry of Defense 1971/72 White Book highlights that the importance of conscription and its ensuing identity between German society and its military.³⁰⁴ Reflecting civilian society in the Bundeswehr was a rejection of Hans von Seeckt, chief of staff of army command in the inter-war period who reorganized the *Reichswehr* with his preference for officers with aristocratic and old military families who could carry on Prussian traditions.³⁰⁵ The 1970s saw the Bundeswehr grow in numbers close to half-million and reflects the 1971/72 White Book's call for a reflection of German society in its military.³⁰⁶

In 2010, the Merkel-led German government announced it would abolish the country's conscription requirement.³⁰⁷ At the time, roughly 72,000 of the 250,00 German

³⁰² Turner Jr., *Germany from Partition to Reunification*, 125.

³⁰³ Turner Jr., 125.

³⁰⁴ Gerhard Kümmel, "The Winds of Change: The Transition from Armed Forces for Peace to New Missions for the Bundeswehr and Its Impact on Civil–Military Relations," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 26, no. 2 (December 2003): 11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390412331302955>.

³⁰⁵ Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army*, 393–396.

³⁰⁶ Turner Jr., *Germany from Partition to Reunification*, 126.

³⁰⁷ Jennifer Pietras, "Military Conscription to End in Germany," *The European Institute: Shaping European-American Cooperation in the 21st Century* (blog), September 29, 2010, <https://www.europeaninstitute.org/index.php/archive/208-blog/107-september-2010/1153-military-conscription-to-end-in-germany>.

soldiers were conscripts.³⁰⁸ The Germany's Ministry of Defense still considers the Bundeswehr as a reflection of all socially relevant groups as thousands of men and women enter and depart active service each year and supplemental reserves help interaction between the military and civilian population.³⁰⁹ Though the Bundeswehr was able to recruit a sufficient number of personnel after five years from the suspension of compulsory service, it still lacked engineer, medical, and information technology personnel along with female and ethnic minority volunteers.³¹⁰ Competition from the police force and private sector along with record-low unemployment has created great difficulty for the Bundeswehr in sustaining its personnel numbers.³¹¹ The Bundeswehr saw its just 23,000 new recruits in 2017 and then even fewer in 2018 with only 20,000.³¹²

Because of new security requirements in response to Russian aggression, the Ministry of Defense aimed at increasing the number of its armed forces from its historic low of 166,500 in 2016 to 200,000 by 2024.³¹³ To meet demand for personnel, German officials launched a reality show called "The Recruits" [*Die Rekruten*] to introduce military life to the civilian population. The show was promptly decried by the parties on the left of the political spectrum—the Greens and The Left—as deceptive and militaristic propaganda.³¹⁴

³⁰⁸ Pietras, "Military Conscription to End in Germany."

³⁰⁹ Ministry of Defence, *2016 White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr*, (Berlin: Germany Federal Ministry of Defence, 2016), <https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library/Other-Documents/The-2016-German-White-Paper-Strategic-Review-and-Way-Ahead>.

³¹⁰ Ministry of Defence, 2016 White Paper on German Security Policy.

³¹¹ Tobias Buck, "German Army Struggles to Attract Much-Needed Recruits," *Financial Times*, January 29, 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/ffc33796-23ce-11e9-8ce6-5db4543da632>.

³¹² Buck, "German Army Struggles to Attract Much-Needed Recruits."

³¹³ "Germany Tried to Solve Its Problems with the Army with a Reality Show," *Il Post*, December 30, 2017, <https://www.ilpost.it/2017/12/30/reality-show-esercito-tedesco-die-rekruten/>.

³¹⁴ "Army with a Reality Show."

2. Civilians' and Military Members' Perception of Each Other

The German public's post-WWII antimilitarism shapes its perception and the government's policies towards the armed forces. Confrontations between a militarily skeptical population the armed forces have persisted from the beginning as youth groups, pacifists, and trade unionists protested the creation of the Bundeswehr in 1955.³¹⁵ This cultural struggle continues into the current century and percolates into the media regularly. Fighter Squadron 74 was named after World War II pilot Colonel Werner Moelders, but in 2005 his name was removed as it was discovered that Moelders conducted missions in Spain apart of the Legion Condor and is now considered attached to the criminal Wehrmacht.³¹⁶ Later that year, the Bundeswehr celebrated its 50 year anniversary with a ceremonial tattoo [parade] but was met with 1,200 protestors,³¹⁷ which included parliament members from the Left Party.³¹⁸

Public hostility towards the armed forces has reciprocated mistrust and has helped plunge the Bundeswehr's morale. In 2007, 73.5 percent of surveyed uniform members responded that they "would not recommend the Bundeswehr to their friends."³¹⁹ Only 3 percent of those surveyed believed they were supported by policy makers.³²⁰ The Bundeswehr Institute of Social Sciences conducted a 2012 population survey and showed that 44 percent of the population opposed a day to honor veterans of the Bundeswehr. This minority is substantial especially when compared to other western countries that

³¹⁵ "An Army on the Ropes — What Will Happen to the Bundeswehr?" 2019, *Deutsche Welle*, video, <https://www.dw.com/en/an-army-on-the-ropes-what-will-happen-to-the-bundeswehr/av-48274958>.

³¹⁶ Herspring, *Civil-Military Relations and Shared Responsibility*, 123.

³¹⁷ Herspring, 124.

³¹⁸ Nina Werkhäuser, "Opinion: The Germans and Their Army," *Deutsche Welle*, November 11, 2005, <https://www.dw.com/en/opinion-the-germans-and-their-army/a-1772659>.

³¹⁹ Herspring, *Civil-Military Relations and Shared Responsibility*, 126.

³²⁰ Herspring, 126.

have national holidays for veterans.³²¹ A 2014 Helmut Schmidt University and Bundeswehr University survey convey similar results as 77 percent of respondents would not recommend the military to their friends or family.³²² Additionally, 66 percent of respondents had to defend their decision to serve in the Bundeswehr.³²³ Figure 4 depicts that 84 percent of respondents little to no appreciation from society.³²⁴

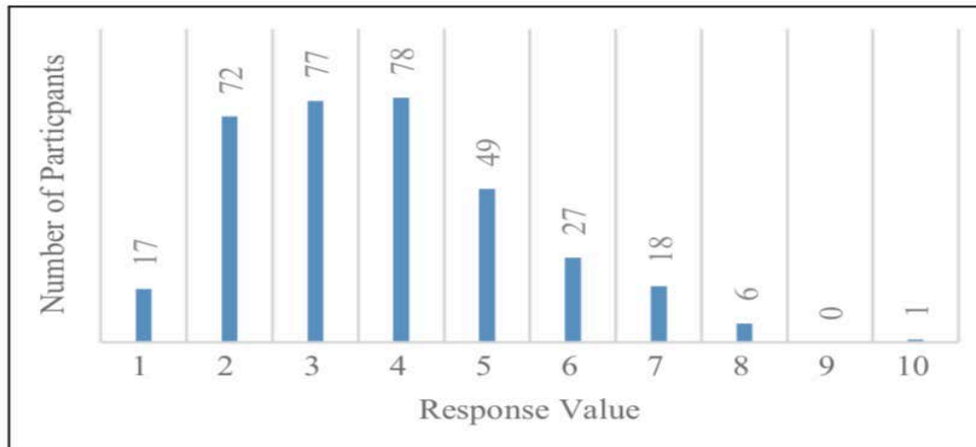


Figure 4. Soldiers' Feelings about Their Appreciation from Society³²⁵

The statistics illustrated show that the Bundeswehr as a whole do not necessarily share or reflect the same values as their civilian population. Following a brief confrontation with antimilitary demonstrators, Bundeswehr recruiter, Major Marcel

³²¹ Thomas Bulmahn, "Wahrnehmung und Bewertung des Claims 'Wir. Dienen. Deutschland.,' Image der Bundeswehr sowie Haltung zum Umgang mit Veteranen: Ergebnisse der Bevölkerungsumfrage 2012" [Perception and Evaluation of the Claim 'We. Serve. Germany.,' Image of the Bundeswehr and Attitude Towards Dealing with Veterans: Results of the 2012 Population Survey], trans Google Translator (Strausberg, Germany: Bundeswehr Institute of Social Sciences, 2012), 7, https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=2f1b18c9-a6b3-9a28-5722-f78315f1a87c&groupId=270955.

³²² Francesca Fogarty, "Backing the Bundeswehr: A Research Note Regarding the State of German Civil-Military Affairs," *Armed Forces & Society* 41, no. 4 (2014): 750, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327x14554278>.

³²³ Fogarty, "Backing the Bundeswehr," 750.

³²⁴ Fogarty, 746.

³²⁵ Source: Fogarty, "Backing the Bundeswehr," 746.

Bohnert conveyed to *Deutsche Welle* documentary his concern for the growing German civil-military divide.

You could say that the Bundeswehr is gradually becoming separated from society. That has to do with the end of conscription and the fact that troop numbers have been going down for years. We have vanished from public view by closing down garrisons and we're involved in missions abroad that take place without most of society being aware of them. Or interested in them.³²⁶

Unfortunately, though only a fraction of the German population protest and rebuke social support for the armed forces, scandal further divides the civil population and feeds soldiers' discontent. The opening of the Bundeswehr Showroom in Berlin, which is a source of information and recruitment, was met with protests in 2014.³²⁷ Additionally, in 2015, the Bundeswehr Showroom was splattered with red and blue colors in an act of antimilitarist protest.³²⁸

3. Veterans Returning from Foreign Campaigns—Past and the Present

For the first time since World War II, Germany's antimilitaristic population has been reintegrating veterans with significant combat experience back into the civilian society. Currently, Afghanistan marks the fiercest ground combat operations the German military has endured since World War II.³²⁹ In addition to Afghanistan, in total, over 400,000 German soldiers have supported operations in Kosovo, and Mali.³³⁰

German history must be examined to foretell new frictions and increased division between the antimilitarist population and soldiers returning from combat environments. Following years of conflict with millions serving in combat, president of the first German Republic, Social Democrat, and leader of the Weimer Republic, Friedrich Ebert's

³²⁶ *Deutsche Welle*, "An Army on the Ropes."

³²⁷ "Color Attack on Bundeswehr Showroom in Berlin," *Die Welt*, November 9, 2015, <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article148630030/Farbattacke-auf-Bundeswehr-Showroom-in-Berlin.html>.

³²⁸ "Color Attack on Bundeswehr Showroom in Berlin."

³²⁹ Nicholas Kullish, "No Parade for Hans," *New York Times*, November 14, 2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/15/weekinreview/15kullish.html>.

³³⁰ Barkin, "Where Veterans Aren't Thanked."

acceptance of allied demands was a seed that grew into the “stab in the back” myth.³³¹ The division between military leaders and civilians with the truth of German forces exhaustion proliferates the myth as media concentrated on Germany’s eastern victories and promise of total victory—Nazis used this myth to discredit their enemies and support their right-wing agenda.³³²

Similar to 1918 and post-World War II eras, German society has had to reintegrate large numbers of combat veterans into civil society. In addition to the millions who served, starting in 1946, over 1.1 million prisoners of war were repatriated from the Soviet Union in which over 700,000 resettled in West Germany and Berlin.³³³ However, unlike World War I and subsequent Treaty of Versailles, the German army was utterly defeated in 1945 and removed any interpretation for a “stab in the back” myth to blossom.³³⁴

Based on Germany’s history and modern antimilitaristic culture, caution must be paramount as combat veterans whose interests differ from many civilians are reintegrated into society. First, for years German politicians labeled the Afghanistan mission as peacekeeping and training even though German soldiers were dying and returning home traumatized.³³⁵ However, the Good Friday battle in April 2010 forced German politicians to publicly face their constituents with the truth that peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan constituted a legitimate war.³³⁶ Similar to the disconnect with information from the battlefield to the civilian population in World War I, the government must be prepared to bridge the military and civilian populations’ understanding of its foreign war. Second, Hew Strachan warns that governments who engage in counterinsurgency operations must be ready to deal with large numbers of

³³¹ Albert Seaton, *The German Army, 1933–45*, (London: Sphere Books, 1983), 1–2.

³³² “Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State, Auschwitz 1940–1945. Germany Between the Wars,” Public Broadcasting Service, accessed April 10, 2020, <https://www.pbs.org/auschwitz/40-45/background/>.

³³³ Frank Biess, *Homecomings: Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ Press, 2009), 45.

³³⁴ Biess, *Homecomings*, 43.

³³⁵ Barkin, “Where Veterans Aren’t Thanked.”

³³⁶ *Deutsche Welle*, “An Army on the Ropes.”

returning soldiers who have operated in blurred political-military environments and are estranged from their home culture.³³⁷ There is a danger of domestic blowback from imperial battlefields that fuel political turmoil and fringe political movements.³³⁸ Domestic blowback is an even greater danger today as intelligence agencies and law enforcement have warned against disillusioned veterans as prime targets for recruitment by right-wing extremists.³³⁹

4. Extremism and the Bundeswehr—A Historical Trend and Oversight

Since its founding and not without justification, the Bundeswehr has been under suspicion for connection to right-wing extremists. Its origin was tainted with its affiliation to the Third Reich because out of necessity, the Bundeswehr hired 300 Waffen-SS officers and over 12,000 Wehrmacht officers including over 40 Nazi generals to fill its ranks in the early years.³⁴⁰ As late as 1967, 41 percent of the Bundeswehr officer corps served in the *Wehrmacht*.³⁴¹ At least three active duty Bundeswehr soldiers were members of the 1970s criminal organization, the Nationalsozialistische Kampfgruppe Großdeutschland [National Socialist Combat Group Great Germany – NSKG], which claimed to be the embodiment of Hitler’s last wishes and aimed to execute bombings and kidnappings against Jews, Communists, and the government.³⁴² In the late 1970s, the Wehrsportgruppe Rohwer [Military Sports Group Rohwer] was the first post-World War II right-wing extremist organization to be legally classified as a terrorist group as they conducted robberies against German army personnel and was provided detailed knowledge of military installations security procedures by an active

³³⁷ Porch, *Counterinsurgency*, 334.

³³⁸ Abenheim and Halladay, “Professional Soldiers and Citizens in Uniform,” 4-5.

³³⁹ Daniel Koehler, “A Threat from Within? Exploring the Link between the Extreme Right and the Military,” (The Hague: International Center for Counter-Terrorism, 2019), <https://icct.nl/publication/a-threat-from-within-exploring-the-link-between-the-extreme-right-and-the-military/>.

³⁴⁰ Volker Wager, “The Bundeswehr’s Image Problem - Is It Overrun with Right-Wing Extremists?” *Deutsche Welle*, May 3, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/the-bundeswehrs-image-problem-is-it-overrun-with-right-wing-extremists/a-38684538>.

³⁴¹ Smelser, and Davies, *The Myth of the Eastern Front*, 76.

³⁴² Koehler, “A Threat from Within?”

duty Bundeswehr corporal.³⁴³ Authorities found a cadre of right-wing extremists soldiers in 1997 who possessed bomb manufacturing manuals, weapons, detonators, and an anti-tank rocket launch pad.³⁴⁴

In recent years, the elite commando unit Kommando Spezialkräfte (KSK) has been linked to multiple right-wing extremism on multiple occasions. KSK soldiers deployed to Afghanistan in 2006 were found to use the Wehrmacht's Afrika Korps emblem on their vehicles.³⁴⁵ The 70-person unit came under fire in 2017 after a farewell party which had right-wing rock music and one soldier fined 4,000 Euros for performing a Sieg Heil salute.³⁴⁶ The most recent KSK incident came in 2019 when a Lieutenant Colonel, who had been monitored by military intelligence since 2007, was suspended for posting on social media extreme right-wing comments.³⁴⁷

Probably the most high-profile Bundeswehr member linked to right-wing extremism is Lieutenant Franco Albrecht who had been posing as a Syrian refugee and planning a terrorist attack.³⁴⁸ Franco previously escaped suspicions of right-wing links when his master's thesis was flagged for xenophobic and racist ideology—reprimanded by superiors however not reported to the Bundeswehr's counter-extremism intelligence unit.³⁴⁹ Franco and the KSK have links to the right-wing Nord Kreuz (Northern Cross) group through a private security company who actively recruits former and active soldiers called Uniter.³⁵⁰ The Nord Kreuz prepper network was initially uncovered by

³⁴³ Koehler.

³⁴⁴ Koehler.

³⁴⁵ Koehler.

³⁴⁶ Davis VanOpdorp, "Media Report German KSK Special Forces Commando Suspended for Right-Wing Extremism," *Deutsche Welle*, February 9, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/media-report-german-ksk-special-forces-commando-suspended-for-right-wing-extremism/a-47437417>.

³⁴⁷ Koehler, "A Threat from Within?"

³⁴⁸ "Far-Right Extremism Probe into Elite German Army Unit Opens," *Deutsche Welle*, August 17, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/far-right-extremism-probe-into-elite-german-army-unit-opens/a-40138355>.

³⁴⁹ Koehler, "A Threat from Within?"

³⁵⁰ Koehler.

the Franco investigation as a group who believe in the collapse of Germany society, labeled “Day X” and have members horde weapons, ammunition, and body bags.³⁵¹

Uncovering Franco ignited an immediate probe into right-wing members of the Bundeswehr from then Minister of Defense Ursula von der Leyen who ordered a search of military barracks.³⁵² In total, 41 items associated with the Wehrmacht were uncovered in the search of military barracks.³⁵³ As illustrated by Figure 5, the Bundeswehr polled overwhelmingly supported the defense minister’s discussion about problems in the military but the majority felt right-wing extremism was more prevalent in Germany society than the military.

³⁵¹ Ben Knight, “‘Far-Right Prepper’ Goes on Trial in Germany,” *Deutsche Welle*, November 20, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/far-right-prepper-goes-on-trial-in-germany/a-51335288>.

³⁵² “Berlin Orders Barracks to Be Searched after Nazi-Era Symbols Discovery,” *Deutsche Welle*, May 7, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/berlin-orders-barracks-to-be-searched-after-nazi-era-symbols-discovery/a-38741433>.

³⁵³ “Findings on Right-Wing Extremism in Germany’s Military – DW’s Naomi Conrad,” *Deutsche Welle*, May 17, 2017, video, <https://www.dw.com/en/findings-on-right-wing-extremism-in-germanys-military-dws-naomi-conrad/av-38872770>.

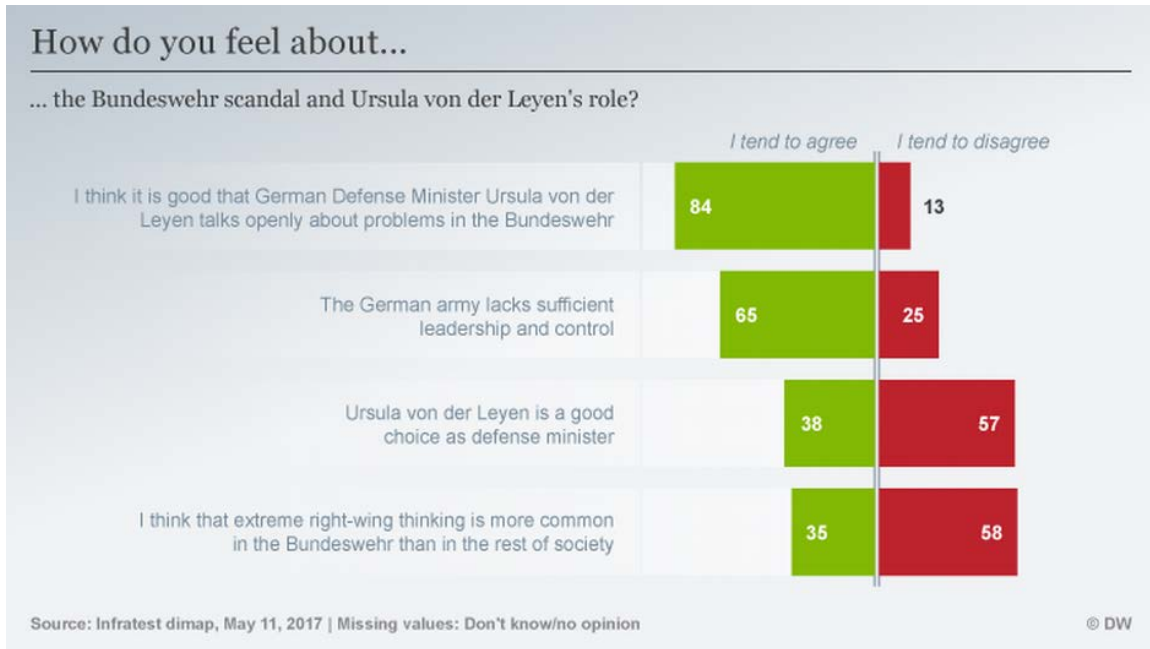


Figure 5. Bundeswehr Poll on Minister of Defense³⁵⁴

The Militärischer Abschirmdienst [Military Intelligence] (MAD) is responsible for identifying, investigating, and removing extremist soldiers from service.³⁵⁵ From 2008 to 2017, 200 soldiers were classified as far-right extremists which Green Party lawmaker, Irene Mihalic criticized recruitment of 20 extremists a year as a serious challenge to security.³⁵⁶ MAD announced that suspected extremists in the Bundeswehr increased 30 percent in 2019.³⁵⁷ In January, 2019, the country's federal domestic

³⁵⁴ Source: Vera Kern, "What Draws Right-Wing Extremists to the Military?" *Deutsche Welle*, May 11, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/what-draws-right-wing-extremists-to-the-military/a-38806723>.

³⁵⁵ Koehler, "A Threat from Within?"

³⁵⁶ "German Military: 200 Soldiers Classified as Far-Right Extremists since 2008," *Deutsche Welle*, October 23, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/german-military-200-soldiers-classified-as-far-right-extremists-since-2008/a-41071074>.

³⁵⁷ Austin Davis, "New Figures on Extremism in German Military 'Tip of the Iceberg'," *Deutsche Welle*, January 27, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/bundeswehr-extremism-antisemitism-auschwitz/a-52165548>.

intelligence service took aim at the AfD's Der Flügel [The Wing] and youth group Junge Alternative [Young Alternative] as suspected extremists.³⁵⁸

Following the abolishment of conscription in 2011, experts predicted more right-wing extremists would be attracted to voluntarily serving in the military.³⁵⁹ Based on a 2007 study of 2,300 students at the armed forces universities revealed 13 percent identified with the New Right and 4 percent had right-wing extremist opinions.³⁶⁰ However, greater numbers of right-wing extremists may exist in the military who choose to use coded language as dog whistles to hide their true political views. Ex-Nazi and Bundeswehr soldier who was discharged for his extremist view, Christian Weissgerber, explains the subtle language adopted by neo-Nazis to avoid investigations and links it to the rhetoric promulgated by the AfD.

You normally only find what you are looking for. And if there just looking for supposedly open racists or anti-Semites and so-forth, the old school Nazis you could say, then they probably won't find many. But if, and this is the problem in our society, they go looking for the neo-Nazis who like calling themselves the New Right because it sounds a little bit nicer, then they would find many more... People who are to become soldiers are more likely to relate to the typical ideas that are widespread in the right-wing scene... I'm a nationalist. I'm a nationalistic-socialist. Which at that time was a kind of cosmetic label suggesting I'm not a national-socialist, I'm not a racist but an ethno-pluralist. We hear that now a days in the debate about the AfD and the like. They all say they are not racists or Nazis and I used those tricks too.³⁶¹

D. CONCLUSION

Post-WWII antimilitarist German culture has restrained the Bundestag's commitment of the Bundeswehr in operations abroad. In a post-conscription Germany, the military and population are diverging in understanding and acceptance of each other. Conscription was a key component of the Bundeswehr's citizen in uniform philosophy as

³⁵⁸ "Germany: Number of Right-Wing Extremists Rose by a Third in 2019," *Deutsche Welle*, December 16, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-number-of-right-wing-extremists-rose-by-a-third-in-2019/a-51698446>.

³⁵⁹ Koehler, "A Threat from Within?"

³⁶⁰ Koehler.

³⁶¹ *Deutsche Welle*, "An Army on the Ropes."

it ensured the armed forces would represent cross-sections of society.³⁶² However, with troops returning from combat operations abroad facing a population that is disinterested at best, or antagonistic at worse, fuels discontent amongst veterans and opens political opportunities for right-wing extremists to exploit. To compound this, the Bundeswehr's troubled past with neo and actual Nazis creates greater suspicion as the AfD have legitimized in the mainstream racist rhetoric that previously could only be whispered.

³⁶² Wagener, "The Bundeswehr's Image Problem."

V. ANALYSIS, TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY, AND CONCLUSION

A. THE AfD'S IMPACT ON GERMANY'S CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS: GOVERNMENT, PEOPLE, AND MILITARY

The center of German politics is eroding as the AfD eats away at the CDU/CSU voting base. Therefore, the governing from the center model of government is fracturing as a result of the AfD's rise on the right and the Left Party and Greens' success on the political left. Similar to the CDU/CSU losing support to the AfD, the SPD has recently lost voters and influence in local and national government to the Left/Greens. Today's growing polarization between German political far left and far right parties is reminiscent of the parliamentary gridlock that characterized the late interwar years which fueled the rise of the Nazi party.³⁶³ The AfD's far right-wing populist agenda is incompatible with parliamentary centrist governance.

The AfD's *voelkisch* nationalist agenda has carved out enough political representation that it creates questions about the stability of the country's embrace of pluralist values that were accepted in the founding years of the new republic.³⁶⁴ Similar to the Nazis' building their support from antiliberalism, anticommunism, and anti-Semitic rhetoric,³⁶⁵ the AfD has tapped into anti-immigrant sentiment to fuel its political rise.³⁶⁶ The AfD's philosophy in broadcasting the threat of Muslim migration to Europe has more in common with *Generation Identity* and less with a liberal democratic Germany.³⁶⁷ The AfD's *voelkisch* nationalist and anti-immigrant policies are incompatible with 70 years of Germany's pluralist *Willkommenskultur* (culture of welcome).

³⁶³ Shelley Baranowski, "Nazism And Polarization: The Left And The Third Reich," *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 4 (2000): 1158, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0018246x00001576>.

³⁶⁴ Robert Rohrschneider, "Pluralism, Conflict, and Legislative Elites in United Germany," *Comparative Politics* 29, no. 1 (October 1996): 45, <https://doi.org/10.2307/422182>.

³⁶⁵ Brustein, *The Logic of Evil*, 50.

³⁶⁶ Hansen and Olsen, "Flesh of the Same Flesh," 15.

³⁶⁷ Markus Willinger, *Generation Identity* (London: Arktos Media, 2013), 66.

The AfD's emphasis on soldiers' importance in society contradicts the Bundeswehr's citizen in uniform principle and *Innere Führung*. German soldiers are intended to reflect a pluralistic and democratic Germany. Policies aimed to elevate soldiers socially and separate them from the citizenry represent ideals that the Bundeswehr founders want to avoid. Germany's suspension of conscription removed an important political integration function that ensured the Bundeswehr at least in part, reflected greater German society, and not just those who made a choice to serve in the armed forces. The AfD's aim to rekindle soldiers' importance in German society only exacerbates this growing divide and is incompatible with 70 years of citizen in uniform principles.

The return of soldiers who identify with *Generation Deployment* and may feel neglected by militarily skeptical citizenry, in addition to a government that was arguably slow at supporting forces bogged down for decades in a long protracted war, creates new vulnerabilities. The opportunity to create a false myth like the Lost Cause of the Southern Confederate States or a Stab in the Back narrative that fueled German right-wing support in the interwar period is possible. As soldiers integrate back into civil society, political institutions must compete to represent their interests. A party such as the AfD can craft a narrative to attract more veteran support. Additionally, soldiers returning from foreign operations can reshape the culture and identity of the German armed forces. The durability of *Innere Führung* provides disgruntled combat veterans the means to reshape their role in the Bundeswehr and, in effect, alter their civil-military relationship.

Political forces are the custodians of acceptable national and military history and traditions. The AfD's rhetoric downplaying the historical significance of the Holocaust creates division and undermines Germans 20th Century shared history. As an instrument of the Third Reich's crimes, the *Wehrmacht* is tarnished and excluded from the Bundeswehr's traditions. However, because the cultivation of tradition is never-ending and not permanent, the durability and pillars of *Innere Führung* are amendable and open to perversion from political forces.³⁶⁸ The AfD's reinterpretation of German history is

³⁶⁸ Ministry of Defence, *Guidelines on the... Tradition in the Bundeswehr*.

incompatible with *Innere Führung*, as it idolizes instruments of criminal regimes and is a threat to citizens in uniform of a democratic parliament.

B. IMPACT ON EUROPEAN AND TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY

The AfD rejects Germany's post-World War II never again and never alone mantra at a time when confidence in European and transatlantic security is weak. Rebuilding a general staff illustrates that the AfD want capacity to be able to conduct military operation alone, and outside of NATO and multilateral security organizations. In addition, the AfD's emphasis on independent and unilateral interests, such as securing national borders instead of regional security multilateralism, rejects the country's post-WWII principles of peace through cooperation.

Though the AfD advocate Germany to embrace national solutions instead of regional cooperation, current Merkel led government is still attempting to reinforce partnerships. Germany and France launched the "Alliance for Multilateralism" in September 2019 with Western and non-Western countries to create a league of democratic states that can defend a liberal international order.³⁶⁹ A September 2019 Pew Research Center survey showed that 60 percent of Germans see France as its most important foreign policy partner.³⁷⁰ French President Emmanuel Macron proposes the need for European sovereignty as a response to predatory great powers but under the leadership of France.³⁷¹ The French-German relationship will determine the continent's leadership and feasibility of accomplishing any defense and foreign policy agenda.³⁷² However, with the AfD selling a Germany first agenda and growing in support, any new initiatives for multilateral cooperation will be constrained by its political representation.

³⁶⁹ Wolfgang Ischinger, "Munich Security Report 2020," *Munich Security Conference*, (2020): 16, https://securityconference.org/assets/user_upload/MunichSecurityReport2020.pdf

³⁷⁰ Jacob Poushter and Christine Huang, "Despite Some Improvements, Americans and Germans Remain Far Apart in Views of Bilateral Relations," *Pew Research Center*, November 25, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/11/25/americans-and-germans-remain-far-apart-in-views-of-bilateral-relations-2/>.

³⁷¹ Martin Quencez and Sophia Besch, *The Challenges Ahead for EU Defense Cooperation*, Policy Brief No. 2, (Washington, DC: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2020), <http://www.gmfus.org/publications/challenges-ahead-eu-defense-cooperation>.

³⁷² Quencez and Besch, *The Challenges Ahead for EU Defense Cooperation*.

Europe's crisis of leadership comes at a time when faith in the transatlantic security community and the United States is in decline. Questions have been raised if the era of *Pax Americana* is coming to an end as the transatlantic alliance—an anchor in the world order since WWII is deteriorating.³⁷³ In Germany itself, only 17 percent of the population approve of the leadership in the United States, with 73 percent disapproving—marking a negative 5 percent change from the previous year.³⁷⁴ As illustrated by Figure 6, Europeans' confidence in leadership of the United States is sliding downwards.

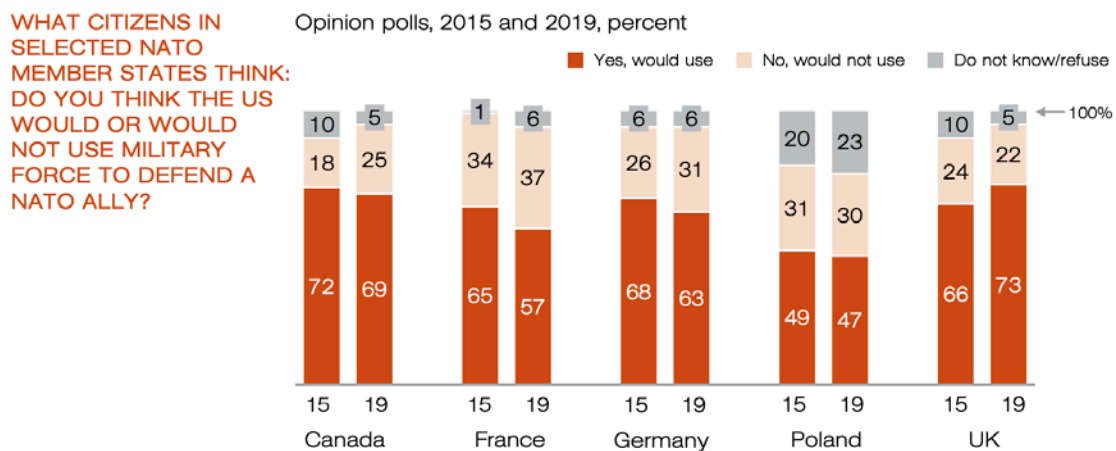


Figure 6. Opinion on U.S. Using Military Force to Defend Allies ³⁷⁵

In addition to diminishing confidence in U.S. leadership, Figure 7 illustrates that if Germans had to choose sides in a conflict between the United States and Russia, most would prefer to remain neutral.

³⁷³ Ian Bremmer, "The Rest of the World Knows Pax Americana Is Over," *Gallup* (blog), February 28, 2019, <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/247169/rest-world-knows-pax-americana.aspx>.

³⁷⁴ Clifton, Joh, "Rating World Leaders: The U.S. vs. Germany, China and Russia," Gallup Inc, 2019, <https://www.gallup.com/analytics/247040/rating-world-leaders-2019.aspx>.

³⁷⁵ Source: Ischinger, "Munich Security Report 2020," 28.

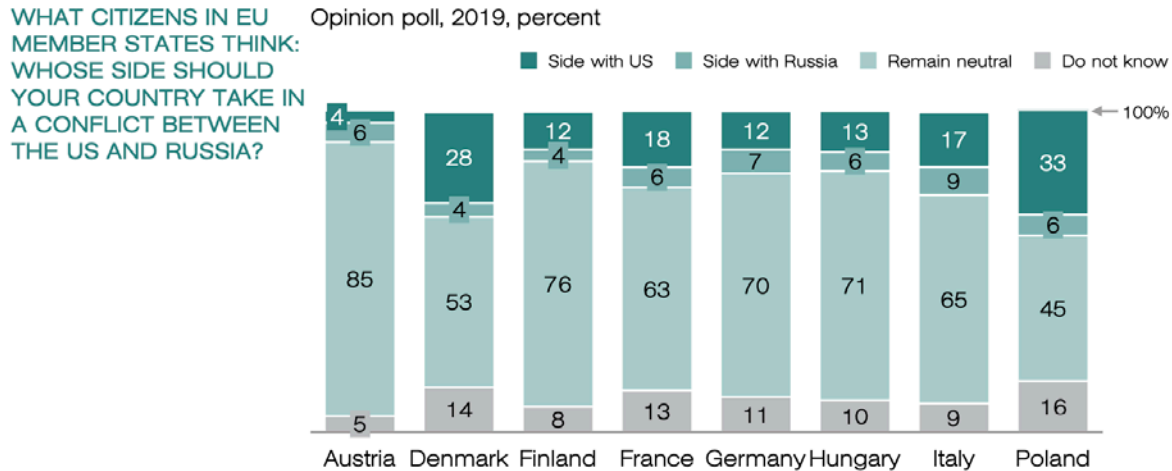


Figure 7. EU Members Opinion on Siding with U.S. or Russia³⁷⁶

Part of this pivot away from the United States to neutrality or even pro-Russia is due to the growth of European right-wing populists parties such as the AfD in Germany, Frances' National Front, and Austria's Freedom of Austria, who have held conferences with Russian officials.³⁷⁷ AfD leaders have been accused of a pro-Russia agenda as they are not concerned with Moscow's homophobic, anti-liberal, and anti-America ideology.³⁷⁸ With the current weakness in transatlantic security coupled with the rise of the AfD's populist ideology, German foreign policy could shift away from the west and oriented eastward.³⁷⁹ The interconnection of the FRG's economic, diplomatic, and military structures into the European and transatlantic system was the greatest achievement of the Konrad Adenauer's government in the 1950s.³⁸⁰ However, the combination of the AfD's Germany first and pro-Russia agenda at a time when confidence in the United States has waned, creates vulnerability in the European and

³⁷⁶ Source: Ischinger, "Munich Security Report 2020," 19.

³⁷⁷ Von Melanie Amann and Pavel Lokshin, "Moscow's Fifth Column: German Populists Forge Ties with Russia," *Spiegel International*, April 27, 2016, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/german-populists-forge-deeper-ties-with-russia-a-1089562.html>.

³⁷⁸ Amann and Lokshin, "Moscow's Fifth Column: German Populists Forge Ties with Russia."

³⁷⁹ Colin Dueck, "Eastern Promises: Our German Problem," *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, January 10, 2020, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2020/01/eastern-promises-our-german-problem/>.

³⁸⁰ Dueck, "Eastern Promises."

transatlantic security system that can be exploited by adversaries. The AfD's domestic security policy on national borders, in addition to its foreign policy toward aggressors like Russia, is incompatible with the FRG's early government focus on orientation toward cooperation and integration into the European and transatlantic system.

C. CONCLUSION

Overall assessment is that the AfD reject many of the values instituted by the FRG in its early years to sustain a stable democracy. Its hostility towards immigrants is reminiscent of the Third Reich. Its emphasis on soldierly virtues harkens more towards Prussian militarism and does not resemble *Innere Führung*'s citizen in uniform principle. The AfD's aim to remove many of the subjective control measures of the military to create a more objectively independently capable Bundeswehr that can operate outside of European and transatlantic security organizations at a time when American influence is in retrenchment goes against the ideals of the founders of the FRG. Ultimately, if the AfD continue to gain political influence and able to apply any number of its security proposals, it will be a pivot away from cooperative transatlantic security, which has been the foundation since the end of World War II, and a step towards independent German security which characterized the country's history up to the end of the Third Reich.

The FRG's civil-military relationship between the government, citizenry, and military, which has its foundation in the post-WWII era, is vulnerable to AfD policies and influence. The AfD's agenda in the Bundestag can create a more independent armed forces, redirect focus from multilateral security to national borders, and reorient strategic partnerships. At a time when volunteer recruitment is not sustaining personnel numbers, the AfD's embrace of Prussian militarism further divides a skeptical population of the military from those who serve in uniform. Finally, the AfD's focus on recreating special roles for soldiers in civilian society is in direction contradiction with the founders of the FRG and Bundeswehr's goal to never have a "state within a state" again. The AfD does not look to synchronize the country's government, citizens, and military, but actually distinctly divide them further from each other.

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