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**The Alternative für Deutschland as an Agent of Change  
in the German Party System?**

Measuring Inter-Party Agenda-Setting Influence

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by

Frederik J. Tiedemann

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Dr. Valérie Pattyn

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## **Abstract**

Despite managing to escape the European financial crises relatively unscathed, an increasing number of Germans choose to give their votes in communal, federal, national as well as European elections to the newly established, rightwing populist party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). With Euroscepticism and later anti-immigration issues at the core of its agenda, the AfD is well on its way to become Germany's third-strongest party in the federal election of 2017.

Despite the AfD's increasing political representation, studies mainly focus on explanations for the party's success or its positioning on the political spectrum. Questioning how this success is going to influence Germany's political system, this research builds on recent theories of party behavior put forward by Meguid and others. Given the AfD's continuing electoral success as well as the low valence dimension and high saliency of the immigration issue, established parties are likely to employ accommodative or adversarial strategies, both of which legitimize the positions brought forward by the AfD. No matter the AfD's future success, this is likely to shift the general political consensus rightwards, because a previously unused or even taboo part of the political spectrum now has to be considered as a real alternative.

Analyzing parliamentary inquiries in federal parliaments with the AfD present, this research finds significant agenda-setting effects of the AfD on multiple parties for several sub-issues of the immigration issue.

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# **1 Introduction**

Despite managing to escape the European financial crises relatively unscathed, an increasing number of Germans choose to give their votes to the newly established Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). With Euroscepticism and anti-immigration issues forming the party's core agenda, the AfD is set to become Germany's third-strongest party in the September elections. Although the party is increasingly represented across Länder and regional parliaments, studies thus far focus mainly on explanations for the party's success as well as its political positioning, but in an isolated context that does not add to the understanding of how the success of the AfD can impact the political system, with the AfD as an active agent of change.

To better understand what a successful AfD means for the German political system, this research aims to diverge from the consequential view of the AfD as a mere product of political change. Viewing the AfD rather as an agent that is both product and cause of change in the German political system, new theories of party competition are used to analyze some of the AfD's first parliamentary activity and how it affects other parties.

In the following section, the origins of the Alternative for Germany are introduced in greater detail. Next, the current research on the party is summarized, following which an introduction to newer theories of party behavior and party competition provide the building block for arguments on how party competition evolves in the face of the AfD as a new competitor. The subsequent presentation of the data gathered to test the hypotheses includes a brief overview of the data and is followed by a section on the methodology employed as well as a discussion of the results, limitations and possible further research.

## **2 The Alternative for Germany**

Forerunners of the Alternative für Deutschland made several entries and exits into the German political arena long before the actual founding of the party. While most of these parties remained unsuccessful (Plehwe 2013, 53–55) the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, the implementation of the European Economic Union and the European Monetary Union, was followed by the establishment of transnational networks for a new, Eurosceptic right (Plehwe 2013, 57–59).

While members of this network were originally not taken seriously as members of a national and transnational European civil society, the contacts to experts and think tanks helped lay the foundations for the fast rise of new right parties in Europe later on, and as such many of the AfD's key members have been seen protesting the Maastricht Treaty prior to the party's founding (Plehwe 2013).

When Angela Merkel in 2010 vowed not to give direct financial assistance to crisis-struck Greece but agreed to the first of what would become several bailout packages at the EU summit, one of these pre-existing groups – a ‘plenum of economists’ around Bernd Lucke, professor at the University of Hamburg – founded the ‘Alternative für die Wahl in 2013’ (Alternative for the Election in 2013). This party allied with business associations and the FREIE WÄHLER (Free Voters) party to participate in the state elections of Lower Saxony. Hoping for electoral success to pressure Merkel into choosing a different economic policy, the actual outcome was disappointing. With an outcome of one percent, the alliance broke down. For a fresh start and to be better represented on a national level, the Alternative for Germany was founded shortly after, on February 6, 2013, and with immense success. The party “was able to form a nationwide and working organizational structure and adequate membership [...]” in extremely short time, overcoming the “legal obstacles that German political

associations are facing when they want to participate in elections” (Koschmieder and Niedermayer 2015, 156–57).

Rooted in a decidedly euro-critical protest movement, the AfD opposed the Euro rescue package in 2013 and demanded a dissolution of the European Currency Union, but quickly loosened its single-issue focus to offer voters a general vehicle of protest (Korsch 2013), most notably regarding the issues of immigration and refugee policy.

In the federal elections of 2013, the AfD fell short of the five percent-hurdle required for entering the parliament, but nevertheless gained recognition for having the best result for a new party since the 1950s (Oscar Niedermayer 2014) with four point seven percent of the votes. The party then entered the European Parliament with seven percent in 2014 and the Länder Parliaments of Saxony, Thuringia and Brandenburg with ten, eleven and twelve percent in the same year. Come the end of 2015, the AfD had split into two, with Lucke losing a power struggle to a more right-wing oriented fraction of the party led by Frauke Petry. While Lucke went on to found a new party rather unsuccessfully, the AfD’s continuing success was not hindered. The party entered the Länder parliaments of Saxony-Anhalt, Berlin, Baden-Württemberg, Mecklenburg-West Pomerania and Rhineland-Palatinate in 2016 as well as the parliaments of Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein and North Rhine-Westphalia in 2017 and is now represented in twelve of sixteen Länder parliaments.

With the party’s success, its ideological positioning, the factors determining its success and the party’s actual influence on other, more established parties have been subject to considerable debate among German academics. The next section discusses the research that has been done on the Alternative for Germany. Current research mainly relates to the party’s ideological positioning as well its success relative to the rather unsuccessful other German right-wing parties.

## 2.1 Position

Although the AfD has often been labelled as ideologically close to the ‘new populist right’ parties that emerged across Europe, this assessment has not been without controversy. Decker argues that the party essentially consists of neoliberal, national–conservative and rightwing–populist fractions that together make up an electoral ‘winning formula’ for many of the new European right–wing parties (Decker 2013).

Economically, academics position the party close to the liberal Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party, FDP). Whereas many right–wing parties across the EU promote protectionist policies, the AfD vehemently supports freedom of trade and market rights. At the same time, in the matters of social policy the party is thought to be right of the Christlich Demokratische Union (Christian Social Union, CDU) and its right–wing regional branch, the Christliche–Soziale Union (Christian Social Union, CSU), favoring the recollection of national identity, traditional Christian values and restrictions to immigration. Populism in this constellation acts as an overarching link between the different fractions, representing the party’s anti–establishment orientation, the belief to represent a ‘silent majority’ (Decker 2013).

Bebnowski goes as far as to attest the AfD a new form of populism termed *Wettbewerbspopulismus* (‘competition–populism’) made possible by this constellation: A constant reminding of economic rationality creates a ‘perpetuum mobile’, allowing the party to promote its program as unideological, economic truth and to display the government as unable to follow this line of rational reasoning (Bebnowski 2013, 28).

## 2.2 Success

This seemingly new form of populism has been picked up by other academics and combined with analyses of changes in the German party system to explain the success and the fast rise of the Alternative for Germany across Germany.

Indeed, Häusler and Roesner diagnose Germany a ‘rightwing populist gap’. Whereas rightwing niche parties had long established themselves across the EU, this did not happen in Germany, despite surveys indicating widespread nationalist and authoritarian thought (Häusler and Roeser 2014, 20–30).

Bebnowski sees the AfD as filling this gap by using a ‘populistic moment’. In an increasingly apolitical democracy where parties fail to carve out distinct policy positions and to publicly contend for political issues, this populistic moment was created by the parties’ inability to represent certain social segments and their interests. Rather, legitimization was done via political output that, because of practical constraints, was perceived as being without alternative (Bebnowski 2013).

More direct changes of individual parties, too, have been said to be the cause of the populist gap. The FDP had initially been founded with values of economic and national liberalism – ordoliberalism with a commitment to national sovereignty – at its core. With the downfall of the party from 2010 onward, proponents of the latter ideology sought to establish political influence elsewhere, migrating to the AfD (Becher, Begass, and Kraft 2015). Further, the CDU under Merkel has embraced social democracy, moving further to the left of the political spectrum rather than implementing liberal reforms as initially planned. In terms of social policy, too, the party moved leftwards, giving up key positions on the issues of family and social policy. This could not be stopped by coalition partner FDP either, that was expected to form a counterweight to the CDU’s shift to the left. Unable to push through liberal reforms

even prior, the FDP conclusively failed in forming this counterweight when it approved the CDU's bail-out policy in a close-call member's vote (Decker 2013).

Regarding the Alternative for Germany as an agent of its own success, Niedermayer finds the image of a conservative party with academic competence that was initially portrayed in German media to have been particularly helpful. With the founding so close to federal elections, the AfD's continuous campaigning helped portray an image of unity to the public in what is otherwise a rather divided party (Oscar Niedermayer 2014). This made the AfD "benefit[...] from an upward spiral, mutually supported by better poll numbers and more media coverage" (Koschmieder and Niedermayer 2015, 159).

The AfD further has rapidly built up a comprehensive organizational structure and sustainable membership numbers, both of which are required for admission to federal and state elections. The high institutional constraints of the German electoral system also made quick institutionalization and intra-party democracy a requirement, and the AfD managed even to get prominent public figures and small and medium-sized businesses on board (Oscar Niedermayer 2014, 185–189).

Analyzing general changes in the German party system, Poguntke finds it to be in a period of seminal partisan dealignment and high electoral volatility. For the longest time a centripetal mode of party competition, a 'dualism of the two core parties' seemed to continue in the 2013 elections, with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Merkels' CDU both remarkably improving their results. However, "15.8 per cent of the voters cast their ballot for parties which did not cross the 5 per cent threshold [...]," reaching levels of disproportionality "otherwise known from the United Kingdom" (Poguntke 2015, 235). While the Green and Left parties radicalized the ideological spectrum on the left, the increasing politicization of European and immigration policy in combination with mainstream parties' shift to the left and

the gradual erosion of historical taboos makes for new space that right-wing parties can potentially occupy. In Poguntke's words, "German parties find it increasingly difficult, just like their counterparts in EU member states, to pursue responsible policies and simultaneously fight off Eurosceptic and/or populist challengers. The considerable narrowing of the policy space through constraints emanating from European integration [...] structurally limits the room for manoeuvre of pro-European parties. Meanwhile, their challengers feel little need to consider whether or not their demands could be realized [...]" (Poguntke 2015, 248).

One thing that is agreed on is that the AfD, despite its best efforts to diversify its agenda by branching out into social policy, foreign policy and other areas, is perceived as a single-issue party, with that issue being anti-immigration (Oscar Niedermayer 2014, 190). This has benefited the party's success, as it allowed voters to vote on an issue irrespective of ideological bias on other issues.

Although the collection of research on the AfD has grown recently, most German academics resort to isolated explanations for the success of the Alternative for Germany. The AfD is thought to be a result of a changing German party system, in which established parties' changes in ideological positioning or general changes such as the Europeanization cause gaps in the previously fully occupied ideological space that is then left for new parties to challenge.

While this analysis of how the AfD came and is going to come to success is not invalid, it foregoes the increasingly important question of what actually is going to happen, now that the AfD is represented in most of the Länder parliaments and will join the ranks of the Bundestag in the near future. It is thus important to ask not only how the AfD became successful, but also how the party is going to affect the German political system, not as cause but as causer. Therefore, new models of party competition are introduced in the following section, dealing with the supply side of politics, about which too little has been said thus far. These new

theories provide the building-block for understanding the AfD’s contribution to an evolving party system.

### 3 New Models of Party Competition

In its initial version, the spatial model of party competition holds that voters are rational actors, voting for the party that minimizes the ideological distance between their own and the elected policy stance. Likewise, parties adjust their policy positions to capture the most votes possible. Parties can converge, i.e. move towards their competitors, or diverge, i.e. move away from them (Downs 1957). While initially thought to apply only to the left-right spectrum, it is now accepted that the policy space in which parties maneuver consists of ‘unequally-weighted dimensions’, the aggregate of which comprises the total utility gainable by the electorate (Meguid 2003, 4). The weight of these dimensions is made up by how important the electorate perceives them to be. The perceived importance of these dimensions, frequently referred to as salience, is anything but fixed. Rather, by increasing or decreasing attention on a specific dimension, parties themselves can manipulate its saliency.

The dimensions, often referred to as political issues, that make up the policy space, can be ‘owned’. An issue is owned when it is favorably associated with a given party. Riker (1996) demonstrates that, in the line of parties as rational utility-maximizers, they are expected to drop an issue if it is owned by another party and focus rather on issues they themselves are favorably associated with (Abou-Chadi 2016). While paying attention to only owned issues would be electorally advantageous, the dynamics of public political discourse forbid such narrow focus. “[Parties] are obliged to show interest in the major issues of the day, whether they own these issues or not” (Vliegenthart, Walgrave, and Meppelink 2011, 371).

Adding further complexity, all issues are not same. Every issue has a positional and a valence component. Issues with a dominant valence component are “seen as positive or negative, and

parties compete over competence in them” (Abou-Chadi 2016, 420). Issues with high valence components are bipolar issues that one either supports or disapproves of, such as climate change or many other prominent issues on Green parties’ agendas. Positional issues, on the other hand, have many alternatives that voters can have preferences on.

Given the success of a new party on a certain issue, positional adjustments of mainstream parties in line with the spatial theory of party competition would be much stronger on issues with high directional components. On issues with high valence components, mainstream parties would rather try to decrease the overall saliency of an issue because any action other than that would strengthen the small party’s issue ownership (Abou-Chadi 2016). When a party discovers a new issue and puts it at the core of its agenda it is thus more difficult for parties to react to it the higher that issue’s valence component. Any strategy that does not decrease the issue’s saliency would, in most cases, strengthen the original owner’s ownership because that party is perceived to be most competent on it.

Pedersen notes that political competition in West European party systems is increasingly characterized by such issue competition, where the “central aim of a political party [...] is to get other parties to pay attention to the issues that it would like to see dominate electoral competition” (Green-Pedersen 2007, 609). Each party can impact the agenda but is also constrained by it at the same time, because of the other parties that are impacting it as well.

Therefore, party competition based on political issues is important for party success. With consistent ownership of a highly salient issue, a party would be successful, while the reverse holds true as well. Meguid demonstrates this by attributing parties the agency to alter the salience of issues. Parties can change the importance of a political dimension in the perception of the electorate by employing accommodative, adversarial and dismissive strategies (Meguid 2005). An accommodative strategy is used to co-opt the challenger party’s

issue in the hope of drawing away voters. The dismissive strategy is to ignore the issue raised by the challenger to deny any exposure, i.e. to prevent the politicization of the issue.

Adversarial strategies on the other hand count on direct confrontation by presenting opposing views relating to the same specific issue. Dismissive and accommodative strategies both cause a decrease in the challenger's electoral support. Dismissive strategies reduce the saliency of the issue at hand, while accommodative strategies help transfer the ownership of it to the accommodating party. At the same time, adversarial strategies are the main driver of a niche party's success. By confronting rather than co-opting or ignoring the issue, the party's issue ownership is reinforced and the issue's saliency is increased at the same time. In her study, Meguid uses established parties' strategies to explain niche-party success. Given that adversarial strategies always benefit the challenger, the niche party, a niche party's success should consequently put pressure on mainstream parties ideologically close to the challenger to accommodate the issue, unless all established parties are employing dismissive strategies at the same time.

How mainstream parties react to a niche party's success depends also on how the key issues of that party are composed. For issues with low valence components, mainstream parties are likely to make positional changes, whereas for issues with high valence components, changes "will be more limited to the saliency dimension" (Abou-Chadi 2016, 421), where parties will try to decrease the issue's saliency. Immigration as an issue with an overwhelmingly positional component is thus more likely to provoke accommodative as well as adversarial strategies that are not just limited to altering the issue's overall saliency.

This is confirmed by van Spanje who, reversing Meguid's argument, finds that "other parties will – all other things being equal – adjust their positions more to the restrictive end of an immigration scale" given an anti-immigrant party's electoral success (van Spanje 2010, 567).

The shift in established parties' positions is caused by accommodative strategies that are more likely the more successful an anti-immigrant party becomes.

Further, small right-wing parties can be helped by an erosion of taboos that have thus far prevented the rise of these parties. Bale (2003, 69) argues that center-right mainstream parties are responsible for this political shift by removing "what was essentially an artificial constraint on the size of any right bloc in parliament [...]" in the hopes of strengthening the bloc as a whole and profit from the subsequent right-wing coalition building. Indeed, mainstream parties' attention on until then tabooed issues can increase their legitimacy in the eyes of voters, giving right-wing parties more issues to campaign on (Karapin 2002).

Similarly, questioning why small anti-immigrant parties do not always succeed despite widespread opposition to immigration in all European countries, Ivarsflaten (2005, 2) argues that it is difficult "for minor parties to appeal to voters on the immigration issue unless they have reputational shields – a legacy that can be used to fend off accusations of racism and extremism." To be successful, parties require 'reputational shields' that signal to the electorate that the party is not racist or extremist because most voters do not want to be associated with such party. Reputational shields can also be transferred from parties to issues. Parties can legitimize issues by increasing their salience and relating themselves and as such their reputation to those issues.

Moreover, non-policy factors impact the strength of mainstream party's reactions to changes in the political environment. Because changes in a party's policy preferences come with an "increase in uncertainty and risks about the outcomes of change" (Somer-Topcu 2011, 238), parties are careful in making tradeoffs between these risks and potential electoral success in the future. The best way for parties to gather information on the public's policy preferences is through election results. Somer-Topcu finds that parties that lost votes in the previous

elections are more likely to change their policy positions. At the same time, this tradeoff function is decreasing over time, with the information obtained from electoral results getting increasingly unreliable as time passes (Somer-Topcu 2011, 239–40).

Moving from the existing explanations of the Alternative for Germany's success to new theories of party competition it becomes clear why an isolated view with the AfD as merely a result of political changes cannot stand alone. Rather, the AfD as an agent should well be able to influence other political players as outlined in the following section.

## **4 Understanding Political Competition with the**

### **Alternative for Germany**

#### **An Expanded Toolkit**

From the beginning, the AfD never had the reputation problem that other German right-wing parties were facing. Because of its roots in the economically liberal Eurosceptic movement and the general perception of the AfD as an economically rational party, the party enjoyed a ‘reputational shield’ and could thus avoid the pitfall of being perceived as an extremist, extreme-right party. Furthermore, the asylum issue has very often been made highly visible by mainstream parties “at the same time that they appeared unable to resolve it” (Karapin 2002, 195). This eroded the taboo of extremer anti-immigrant positions in Germany and lent legitimacy to them and their proponents. It helped extend the policy space on the immigration issue that was now free for the AfD – a right-wing party more reputable than its predecessors – to occupy.

The Alternative for Germany has been increasingly successful also post-federal election 2013. It has always been perceived as a single issue, anti-immigrant party, with immigration also having been the major campaign topic in the state elections. This lent itself to providing

the mainstream parties with a continuous stream of information on just how salient the issue is with parts of the electorate.

Immigration is a highly positional issue with a low valence component. With the influx of refugees into Germany in 2015, politicians did not agree on even the fundamental question of whether there should be a general limit to immigration or not. As such, the AfD's occupation of the right spectrum of the policy space on a highly positional issue, and more importantly its success predominantly being based on this issue, should provoke reactions of the mainstream parties. These reactions can be in the form of changes in issue salience and policy positions.

Thinking in terms of Meguid's spatial model, mainstream parties are expected to adopt adversarial, accommodative or dismissive strategies. Meguid's model implicitly assumes the anti-immigrant challenger party to not have built up credibility, because credibility reduces the success of accommodative strategies. "Why would voters believe that, if elected for office, the accommodating mainstream party will de facto implement the niche party policy stance?" (Dardanelli 2014, 21). Given the AfD's preexisting reputation, the tradeoff between the different strategies is thus more complex. Nevertheless, established parties are expected to react to the changing political landscape.

As a political issue, immigration has been highly salient for decades throughout Europe. In Germany specifically, "debates on asylum rights, and on immigration issues more generally, have been recurrent and intense [...] because of [Germany's] problematic combination of liberal policies, high levels of immigration, and very exclusive, ethnically based citizenship policies," as well as "widespread antipathy to foreigners" (Karapin 2002, 195). Because the issue dimension had already been introduced long before the entrance of the Alternative for Germany, parties are expected to be constrained in their ability to simply reduce its saliency. Similarly, the high positional component of the issue is expected to constrain political

opponents even further in potentially using a dismissive strategy. As such, the hypothesis is that

*H<sub>1</sub>: In response to the AfD's success, mainstream parties employ accommodative or adversarial strategies, responding to the AfD's advances on immigration issues.*

The Alternative for Germany should thus exhibit a clear agenda-setting effect on other parties. Agenda-setting effects in this sense relate to how political parties pay attention to issues. If the agenda of the AfD significantly influences the agenda of another party, the AfD is said to be an agenda-setter in that specific circumstance. Agenda-setting relates to attention only and does not measure the specific political positions parties take on when reacting to the AfD's policy activity. As such, it will tell whether parties employed any of the two strategies – accommodative and adversarial – that are at their disposal, but not which one of them specifically.

Furthermore, in the Downsian spatial model right-wing and center-right parties would be expected to react more strongly to the success of the AfD than would left-wing parties. Repositioning for them is less costly because of ideological proximity and higher risk of losing voters to the new challenger. However, this straightforward model of party competition must not always hold true. In Meguid's spatial model, left-wing parties compete on the immigration issue just the same (van Spanje 2010). They do so because the issue either is important across the political system, e.g. because of a specific electorate, or because they act as a strategic political actor that intends to weaken parties ideologically closer to the AfD than themselves.

Thus,

*H<sub>2</sub>: Parties are expected to employ accommodative or adversarial strategies, responding to the AfD's advances on immigration issues to a similar extent, irrespective of ideological proximity to the AfD.*

Although the expected agenda-setting influence of the AfD does not reveal whether a party employed an accommodative or an adversarial strategy in reaction to the AfD's political activity, the results should be telling nevertheless. Meguid (2005) demonstrates that an adversarial strategy would strengthen the AfD's issue ownership and increase the issue's saliency at the same time, subsequently increasing the chances for the AfD's future success. Because of mainstream parties actively dealing with an issue owned by the AfD, the issue becomes increasingly legitimized as outlined in section three, and thus becomes part of the wider policy space which would now be extended towards the right. An accommodative strategy, on the other hand, would reduce the Alternative for Germany's chances for success as the other party would co-opt the issue. However, an accommodative strategy would in any case further legitimize the issue that was originally brought forward by the AfD and thus widen the space available for possible policies. All the space that previously was 'taboo' or simply not used would now be subject to consideration in policy-making process, even if those policies would not necessarily be implemented by the AfD itself. This is exactly what van Spanje (2010, 575) found: That accommodative strategies as a response to an anti-immigrant party's success significantly shifted the overall political positioning to the right. Thus, no matter the specific strategy employed, an observation of significant agenda-setting effects of the AfD on other, established parties spells changes in the political system, with the issue dimension being widened by either the reinforcement of the AfD and increasing issue saliency, or by the co-option and resulting legitimization of the issue by more established parties.

The following section discusses the choice of analysis for the testing of the agenda-setting hypotheses and introduces the model used to generate the data.

## 5 Data

### Measuring Agendas and Issue Saliency

To measure the agendas of established parties vis-à-vis the Alternative for Germany and to uncover the AfD's inter-party agenda-setting influence, parliamentary inquiries are used as a proxy variable for a party's agenda. Parliamentary inquiries are an important part of a party's 'symbolic' agenda. They form the "main institutional arena where government and opposition clash" and are used to set the general political agenda by highlighting "pet topics, force other parties to react to those topics, and set the broader political agenda of issues that are currently debated in the entire polity" (Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2011, 1033).

Vliegenthart, Walgrave and Meppelink (2011, 372) ascribe five characteristics to the parliamentary questioning process that make the occurrence of inter-party agenda-setting likely. Parliamentary questioning brings together a multitude of actors with differing agendas, and all actors are in competition with each other. All actors, further, perform a similar function in the political system and are constantly communicating with and observing each other. Lastly, while there are parliamentary rules regarding parliamentary inquiries – the Bundestag allows for individual MPs to submit small inquiries up to ten times a month – for federal parliaments this limit does not apply, making inquiries a 'high-frequency' and 'low-cost' activity.

As such, this research draws on written inquiries (Kleine Anfragen, small inquiries) to the governments of the Länder parliaments plus the Bundestag. A dataset containing all inquiries is drawn from the kleineAnfragen project of the Open Knowledge Foundation Deutschland e.V. (2017) that centrally gathers inquiries, making them easily available for public access.

Measuring saliency requires coding documents to specific issues. Topics that make up specific issues are extracted from the document corpus via Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA). Assuming that each document is a mixture of a number of topics, which themselves are a distribution over a vocabulary, LDA fits a generative model that returns distributions of topics and documents (Blei, Ng, and Jordan 2003). LDA can uncover hidden patterns underlying corpora and as such be used for the classification of issues in political documents. Atteveldt, Welbers, Jacobi and Vliegenthart (2014) show that the topics making up an LDA model can be categorized as sub-issues of political issues and recommend sparsity constraints and specific cutoff values to maximize the accuracy of the model.

As such, LDA is employed with sparsity constraints, taking into consideration words that appear in no less than 40 documents and in no more than 20 percent of the entire document, to select only meaningful words. This results in a vocabulary of 42,237 words across 53,514 inquiries that were submitted between the 2013 elections and April 30, 2017. To not put different topics in the same cluster, an LDA model with 500 topics is fitted. For the resulting topic distribution, a cutoff value of 0.15 percent was used to determine whether a topic occurred in a document or not. Topics were subsequently modelled dichotomously as 1 when the topic occurred in a document or 0 when it did not occur, thus generating count data time-series.

The topics are then analyzed via the word distributions fitted in the LDA model as well as the documents they occur in, and aggregated. Because the immigration issue has already been salient long prior to the AfD's political entry, parties are expected to feature political activity relating to immigration in any case.

To better check for where exactly the AfD has political impact on other parties, topics are aggregated to sub-issues relating to the immigration issue. These sub-issues are classified as

asylum law, asylum welfare, deportations, refugee-related issues, integration, xenophobia and xenophobic crime as well as immigrant criminality.

The specific issues, their underlying topics and some of the most important words of the distributions<sup>1</sup> are outlined below.

## 5.1 Issues

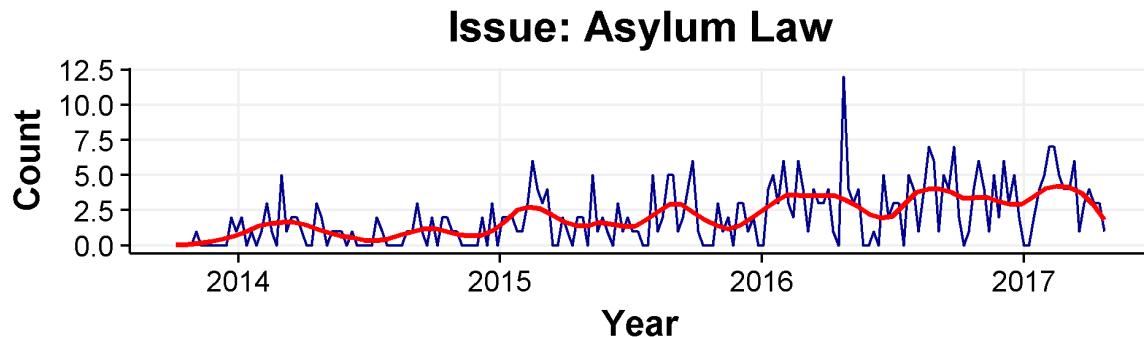


Figure 1: Asylum Law Issue, Frequency over Time, Loess smooth in red

The issue of asylum law refers to the specifics of the German asylum law: Specifics on who is eligible for asylum, how it is granted and taken away and what demographics make up asylum-seekers.

The sub-issue consists of the following topics:

**Topic 129:** Serbia, Kosovo, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Albania, Macedonia, Iran, Pakistan, Eritrea, Recognition, Somalia, Countries of Origin

**Topic 348:** Residence Law, Exceptional Leave to Remain, Residence Permit, Residence, Residence Status, Central Register of Foreigners, Stay Permit, Residence Title, Residence Permit for Partners and Children

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<sup>1</sup> Note: All words are translated from German to English.

**Topic 396:** Differentiate, Status, Table, Important, Countries of Origin, Reside, Capture, Gender, Subsidiary, Protection, Acceptance, Legal Protection Status

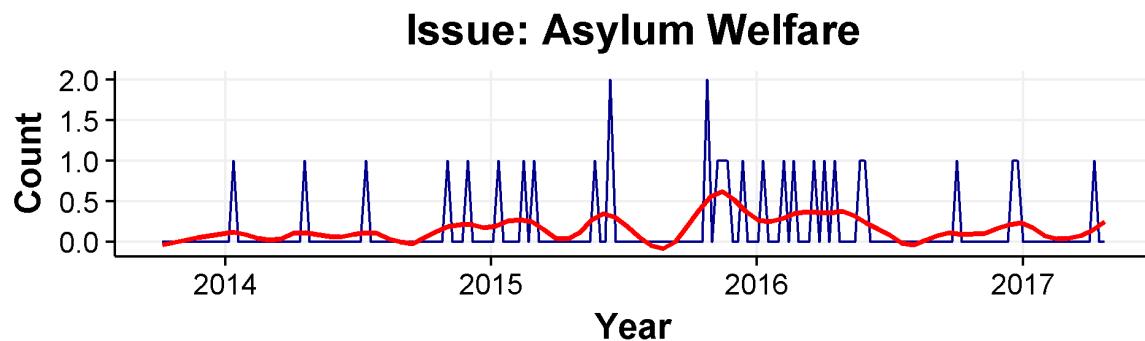


Figure 2: Asylum Welfare Issue, Frequency over Time, Loess smooth in red

Asylum welfare relates to the social welfare services asylum-seekers are entitled to receive. It is made up of the following topic:

**Topic 370:** German Social Welfare Law for Asylum Seekers, Release, Non-Cash Allowance, Guidance, Spending Money, Security Benefits, Young Adolescents, Job Opportunities

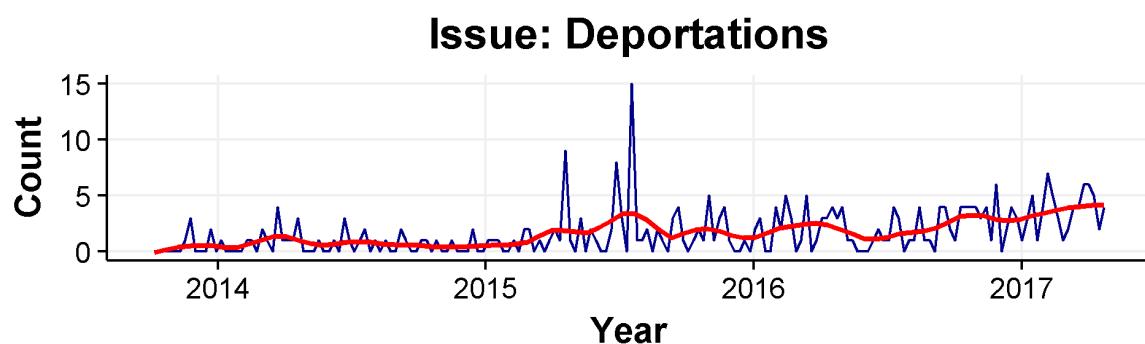


Figure 3: Deportation Issue, Frequency over Time, Loess smooth in red

The deportation issue is concerned with the deportation of criminal asylum seekers or people whose right of residence has simply expired. It is made up of the following topics:

**Topic 61:** Deportations, Deportation, Afghanistan, Departure, Deported, Return, Return, Leave, Subject to Immediate Extradition, Volunteers, Executable

**Topic 242:** Security Reasons, Time Planning, People, Returning, Deportation Holding Centers, Method of Evaluation, Reduced, Wunstorf

**Topic 441:** Citizenship, Foreigner, Aliens Department, Cases, Deportation, Custody to Secure Deportation, Many, Foreigners, Citizens, Residence Law, Person, Stay, Immigration

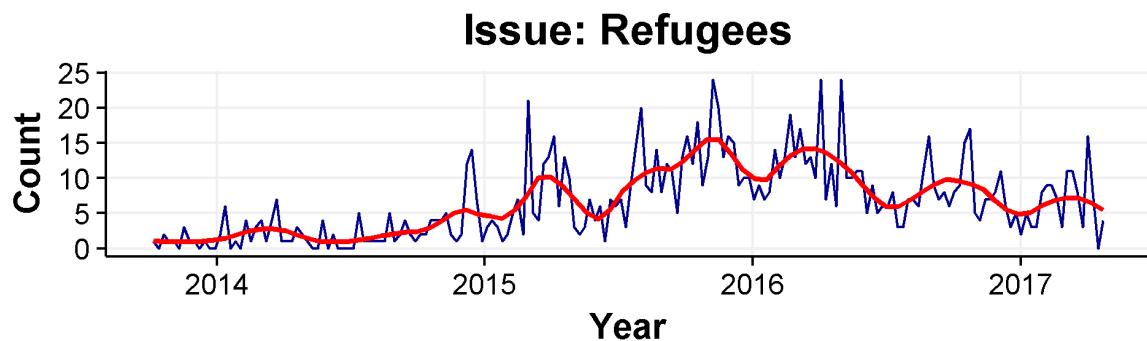


Figure 4: Refugee Issue, Frequency over Time, Loess smooth in red

The refugee issue is related to refugees: their status, demographics, situation and specifics such as the logistics of providing accommodation to refugees. It consists of the following topics:

**Topic 134:** Refugees, Asylum Seeker, Refugee, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Minors, Minor, Asylum Seekers, Unaccompanied, Migration, Asylum Seeking, Procedure for Granting Right of Asylum, Asylum Law, Accommodation

**Topic 223:** Accommodation, Operator, Residents, State Office for Health and Social Matters, Social, Health, Refugee Accommodation, Refugee Accommodations, Emergency Accommodation, Furniture, Facility

**Topic 237:** Branch Office, Central Facility for Initial Reception, Reside, Capacity, Harburg, Niendorf, Initial Accommodation, Wiesendamm, Rugenbarg, Schnackenburgallee<sup>2</sup>

**Topic 350:** Accommodation, Accommodated, German Civil Code, Accommodations, Refugees, Refugee Accommodation, Shared Accommodation, Assistance, Apartment

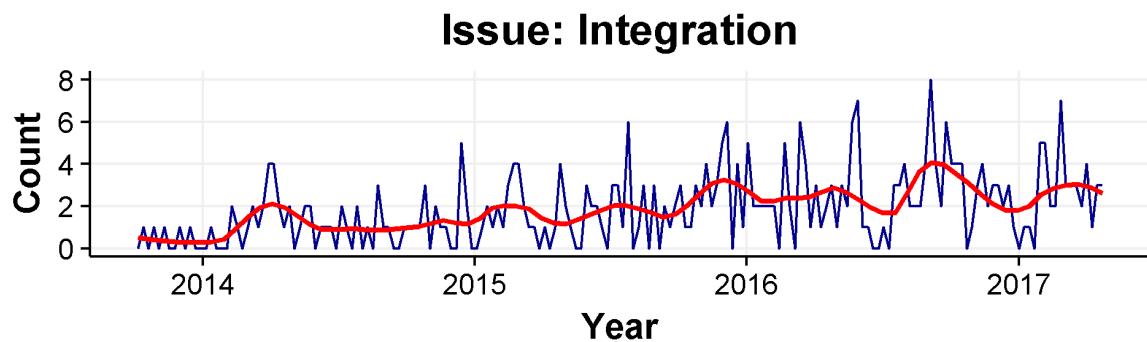


Figure 5: Integration Issue, Frequency over Time, Loess smooth in red

The integration issue relates to integrating asylum-seekers and migrants into German society, from cultural exchange to the acceptance of foreign degrees and diplomas in the German education system and job market. It consists of the following topics:

**Topic 98:** Integration, Refugee, Refugees, Offering, Steinberger, Offered, Participation, Participants, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Job Market, Language Courses, Integration Courses

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<sup>2</sup> Note: Several words in topic 237 relate to locations (cities, districts, streets) of refugee accommodation

**Topic 100:** Recognition, Recognized, Governmental, Recognized, Foreign, Qualifications, Qualification, Requirement

**Topic 480:** Migration Background, Migrants, Integration, Intercultural, Competence, Migrants, Humans, Regional Center, Culture, Country of Origin, Opening, Arabic

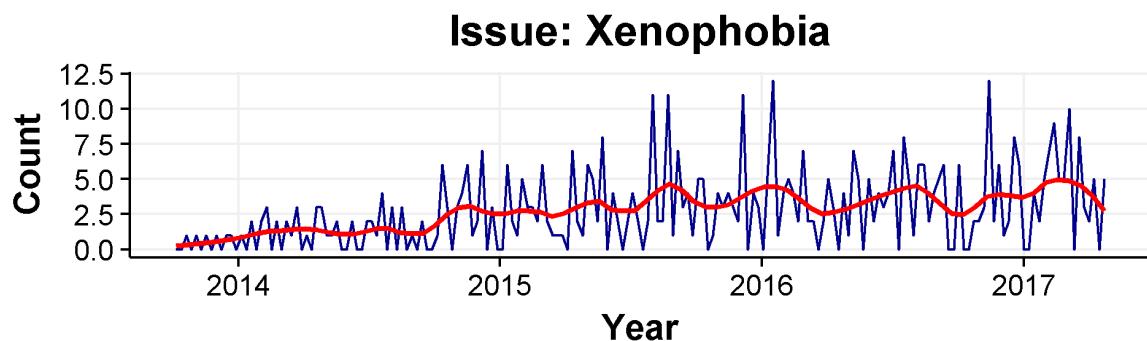


Figure 6: Xenophobia Issue, Frequency over Time, Loess smooth in red

The issue of xenophobia is concerned with open displays of xenophobia and crime motivated by xenophobia. It is made up of the following topics:

**Topic 133:** Quarter, NPD, Dublin, Stop, Rally, Individual, Right, neo–Nazi, Vigil, Asylum, Away, Asylum Surge, Arbitrary, Home, Defend, Extreme Right, Decision, Foreign Infiltration

**Topic 199:** Graffiti, Street, Injured, Crime Scene, Public, Incitement of the People, Right–Extreme, Xenophobic, Damage to Property, Dresden, Slogan, Offense, Leipzig

**Topic 266:** Criminal Code, Organization, Xenophobic, Hate Crime, National Socialism, Crime, Time of the Offense, Crimes, Political, Foreigners, Assign, Propaganda, Date, Asylum Topic, Confrontation, Registered

**Topic 436:** Incitement of the People, Use, Unconstitutional, Damage to Property, Organization, Insult, Criminal Procedure, Swastika, Heil, Criminal Assault, Sieg

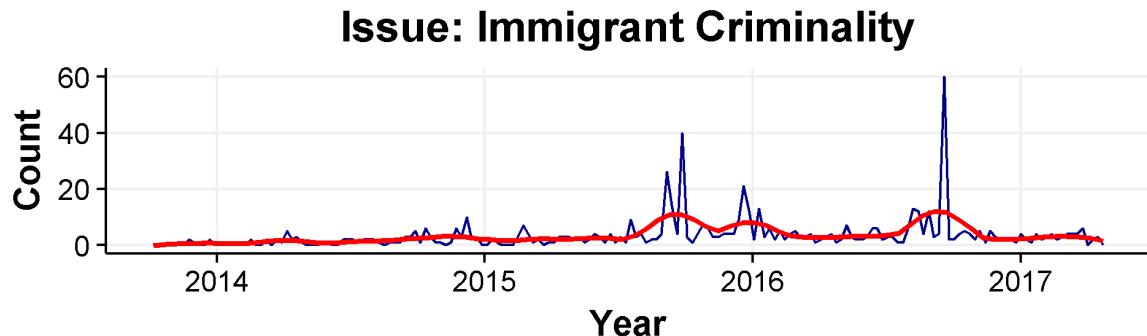


Figure 7: Immigrant Criminality Issue, Frequency over Time, Loess smooth in red

The issue of immigrant criminality relates to crimes conducted by foreign citizens, but also the mere danger thereof, e.g. through radicalization or returnees from the Syrian civil war. It consists of the following issues:

**Topic 51:** Asylum, Total, Judiciary, Time-period, Crime Statistic, Criminal Investigation Department, Gangs, Administrative Tasks, Intervention, Facilitating Entry of Illegal Immigrants, Resulting Loss of Life

**Topic 77:** State, Religious, Humans, Syria, To What Extent, Salafism, Situation, Radicalization, Knowledge, Security Agencies, Islamist, Islamism, Extremism, Inside, Islamists, Protection

**Topic 427:** Accommodation, Asylum Seekers, Syrian, Damaged, Date, Place, Disrupter, Police Operations, Month, Age, Asylum Seeker, Country of Origin, Vorpommern, Accused

**Topic 490:** Right, Left, Other, Motivated, Immigrant Crime, Phenomenon, Anti-Semitic, Topic, Victim, Anti-Semitism, Perpetrator, Case Numbers

## 6 Methodology

To test for the agenda-setting influence of the Alternative for Germany on its most prolific issue, immigration, regression analysis is employed. The data at hand is count data and as such exhibits a typical count data distribution where in most weeks parties do not discuss an issue at all in their inquiries, in other weeks just a few times and seldomly more often than that. Because a simple transformation of the variables (e.g. log-transformation) brings with it a tremendous loss of data and thus information, Poisson and negative-binomial regressions were considered.

Since the extracted data is overdispersed count data, i.e. the variance is significantly higher than the mean for all sub-issues, a negative binomial model is chosen and fitted for each issue and each party. To not ignore party competition that might not directly relate to the AfD, the model utilizes not only the agenda of the AfD but also controls for possible agenda-setting effects of all other parties as well.

$$\text{Party} = CDU_{issue_{t-1}} + SPD_{issue_{t-1}} + Linke_{issue_{t-1}} + FDP_{issue_{t-1}} + Grüne_{issue_{t-1}} + AfD_{issue_{t-1}}$$

This regression model is fitted on data from all federal parliaments the AfD has been a member of for a significant amount of time which, given the party's novelty, is not many.

As such and because theory expects similar political behavior across all states, the activity in the Länder parliaments of Bavaria, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Saxony and Thuringia, all of which are Länder parliaments where the AfD has been present for at least a year and a half, is aggregated to form the resulting count data.

With this time-series analysis, each 'traditional' parties' attention to each of the issues is predicted by the attention of other parties and itself, all lagged by one week. The lag is chosen because it does not take parliamentarians a lot of time to process as well as react to other parties' inquiries (Vliegenthart, Walgrave, and Meppelink 2011, 377), and at the same time of

course the cause has to precede the effect, i.e. the agenda setter has to act first in order to set the agenda of others.

What follows is a display of the regression results, as well as a discussion of the findings, its meanings and existing limitations.

## 7 Results

Table 1: Regression Results – Lagged AfD Variable Parameter Estimates

	Alternative for Germany <sub>t-1</sub>			Asylum Law Asylum Welfare Deportations Refugees Integration Xenophobia Immigrant Crime		
<b>CDU</b>	<b>0.6069***</b>	-21.2488	0.2650	<b>0.1766***</b>	-0.2143	<b>1.7228**</b>
	(0.176)	(1.38e+05)	(0.228)	(0.066)	(0.779)	(0.696)
	[0.26–0.95]			[0.05–0.3]		[0.36–3.09]
<b>SPD</b>	<b>0.8532**</b>	-20.7596		-0.0971	-21.5750	-22.9505
	(0.402)	(1.08e+05)		(0.205)	(6.66e+04)	(1.83e+05)
	[0.07–1.64]					
<b>Linke</b>	<b>0.6213***</b>	<b>4.5747***</b>	<b>0.6239**</b>	<b>0.1570***</b>	<b>1.1076**</b>	<b>0.0899</b>
	(0.157)	(1.503)	(0.257)	(0.054)	(0.488)	(0.451)
	[0.31–0.93]	[1.63–7.52]	[0.12–1.13]	[0.05–0.26]	[0.15–2.06]	
<b>FDP</b>	<b>0.4317</b>	-19.7596	0.5272	<b>0.2428***</b>	0.8398	0.6337
	(0.583)	(1.14e+05)	(0.480)	(0.065)	(0.901)	(0.255)
				[0.12–0.37]		
<b>B90G</b>	-21.3542	-20.8109	-0.6472	0.0649	<b>1.1816**</b>	-0.6977
	(0.246)	(1.25e+05)	(0.705)	(0.073)	(0.539)	(1.374)
					[0.13–2.24]	

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. 95% confidence interval in squared brackets for statistically significant results.

Estimations from negative binomial regressions.

\*p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01.

Using the resulting p-values as an indication of whether inter-party agenda-setting effects are occurring or not, table 1 demonstrates that significant inter-party agenda-setting effects occur for the Alternative for Germany on several parties and across several sub-issues of the immigration issue. This allows for a careful confirmation of the first hypothesis that parties do react to the AfD's agenda on the immigration issue.

The Alternative for Germany exhibits agenda-setting effects on the CDU, SPD, Linke (Left), Grüne (Bündnis 90 Die Grünen, B90G, Green Party) and the FDP, i.e. all established parties in the analyzed Länder parliaments. These effects are, however, dispersed across several sub-issues and on no issue does the AfD influence the agenda of all established parties. Notably, however, the AfD influences three out of five parties on the issues of asylum law and refugees, with the FDP and B90G, and the SPD and B90G not responding to the AfD's agenda respectively.

Whereas agenda-setting effects can be observed for the Linke on every issue except that of xenophobia, for the SPD agenda-setting effects are limited to just the asylum law issue. The Green party reacts to the AfD's agenda only on the issue of integration, while the CDU does so only on the issues of asylum law, refugees and xenophobia. The FDP responds to the AfD's agenda only on the refugee issue. This disconfirms the second hypothesis which stated that all parties are expected to react to the AfD's political activity equally.

It is important to note that all parties continuously focus on the various issues making up the immigration issue. When no significant result is found, their activity just stands in no relationship to that of the AfD on a specific issue. While an agenda-setting effect implies that parties adjust their agenda, by reacting to the political activity of the AfD in terms of accommodative or adversarial strategies, the converse argument does not necessarily hold true. Not exhibiting any agenda-setting effect does not necessarily mean a party is completely

unaffected by the AfD's political activity on a specific issue. Rather, disregard for its agenda can also be a conscious choice, e.g. a dismissive strategy aimed at giving no political room for maneuver to the AfD. Active agency here is all that can be captured via this analysis.

Although only twelve out of a possible 35 agenda-setting effects are observed, this must not mean the AfD's impact is as limited as this would suggest. As a new party that only recently begins to gain ground in terms of parliamentary representation, any direct reaction (accommodative or adversarial strategy) can help legitimize the political space the party is maneuvering in, whether it is just one or all the established parties reacting on that issue.

While it would be good to make sense of why certain parties respond to the AfD's activity on certain issues but not on others, this was not in the scope of this study that set out to find whether parties react to the political activity of the AfD at all. Nevertheless, one could argue that the Linke fight for a very similar demographic to that of the AfD, one that feels disadvantaged by globalization, and thus is under more pressure to react to the AfD. Meguid (2005) in her study of niche-party success also finds it to be true that left and right-wing parties both compete on the immigration issue. Similarly, Linke politician Sarah Wagenknecht even stated herself that there are “many overlaps [of the positions of die Linke] with the positions of the AfD” (Oscar Niedermayer 2014, 190). Similarly, the CDU can be said to be ideologically closer to the AfD than other parties, creating more pressure to react to a right-wing challenger's success, although this line of arguing gets more difficult when analyzing the reactions of the remaining parties.

It is also noteworthy that agenda-setting effects occur not only with the AfD as agenda-setter as observable in the remaining parameter estimates (A, B, C, D, E). However, no party exhibits as many agenda-setting effects as the AfD on the sub-issues of the immigration issue, with the CDU with eleven observed agenda-setting effects close behind the AfD. This

could well be an indicator of a) the AfD's one dimensionality as a single-issue party, although estimates for all issues would be required to confirm this or b) simply its ownership of the immigration issue that forces other parties to react with accommodative or adversarial strategies.

## 8 Limitations

Notable is also the small sample size of the study due to the AfD just recently gaining more ground in terms of representation in the Länder parliaments, and it would certainly be worth to repeat the study once the Länder election years are over and the AfD has gotten more time to establish themselves in the federal political system. This also relates to the grouping of the data, where data from multiple state parliaments has been aggregated to allow for analysis.

While this should not be an issue in theory because of the expected similarity of political competition, a fixed effects model accounting for state differences would certainly make for a more robust model.

What the model also does not cover is the agenda of the media that has also been shown to significantly affect the political agenda. While the results should thus be taken with a grain of salt, with a very important control variable missing, the finding of influential media agenda like that of the AfD's agenda would be surprising.

Concerning the generation of the topic count data, further caution is recommended. While 'best practice' was used in terms of model specification for extracting political issues, not much research and experimentation has been done in terms of extracting political agendas via fitting LDA models. As such, in an ideal setting a large training set would be classified to compute F1 values and optimize the model in that way, which would be an entirely new (and necessary) study.

## **9 Conclusion**

This study set out to find whether established parties would react to the political activity of the AfD via accommodative strategies, i.e. trying to co-opt issues of the AfD, or via adversarial strategies, i.e. confronting the issues of the AfD. By fitting an LDA model to generate topic data for parliamentary inquiries that provide an important basis for analyzing parties' agendas, count data for sub-issues of the immigration issue was generated to test for agenda-setting effects on the AfD's most important issue.

By finding significant agenda-setting effects for multiple parties across multiple issues, it was confirmed that parties do react to the AfD in terms of real political activity, although to a limited extent as in most cases no agenda-setting effect can be observed. Notwithstanding the fact that often the AfD does not spark reactions from established parties in the Länder parliaments it has entered, the observed results indicate that the AfD is not simply a product of changes in the German political system. Because agenda-setting effects indicate accommodative and adversarial strategies, they contribute to the legitimization of the issues put forward by the AfD. Whether the AfD itself is going to become a sustainable party or not, this study made clear that the AfD itself is also an agent bringing change to the political system by indirectly removing artificial barriers from the righter spectrum of several issues of immigration policy via pressuring other parties into employing adversarial or accommodative strategies.

This study can be seen as a precursor to studies similar to that of van Spanje (2010) that analyzes positional changes on immigration policy as an effect of anti-immigrant parties' successes. The AfD has previously been attributed ownership of the far-right position on this issue by German academics (2). The finding of agenda-setting effects could thus indicate an imminent shift to the restrictive end of the immigration issue because of the legitimization of

the issue's right spectrum. This makes clear the need for further studies of positionality on the contested issue of immigration in Germany, but also indicates that the time has come to move from explaining the AfD's success to analyzing the consequences of it.

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## A Parameter Estimate: Lagged CDU

	CDU <sub>t-1</sub>				
	Asylum Law	Asylum Welfare	Deportations	Refugees	Integration Xenophobia Immigrant Crime
<b>CDU</b>	<b>0.3065*</b>	<b>2.9653**</b>	<b>0.9606***</b>	<b>0.2302***</b>	<b>1.0333***</b>
(0.160)	(4.3e+04)	(0.240)	(0.073)	(0.312)	(4.76e+04)
[0.26–0.95]	[0.6–5.34]	[0.49–1.43]	[0.09–0.37]	[0.42–1.65]	-21.1135
<b>SPD</b>	<b>-0.0348</b>	<b>-20.7596</b>	<b>0.3596***</b>	<b>-0.1059</b>	<b>-21.2035</b>
(0.783)	(8.33e+04)	(0.126)	(1.124)	(9.85e+04)	0.7675
			[0.11–0.61]]		(0.597)
					[0–4.62]
<b>Linke</b>	<b>0.2827*</b>	<b>4.0639***</b>	<b>0.0466</b>	<b>0.2095***</b>	<b>-0.3237</b>
(0.150)	(1.459)	(0.355)	(0.060)	(0.652)	0.1311
[-0.01–0.58]	[1.2–6.9]		[0.09–0.33]	(0.287)	<b>0.7869*</b>
<b>FDP</b>	<b>0.7927**</b>	<b>-19.7596</b>	<b>1.6336**</b>	<b>0.2984***</b>	<b>0.2523</b>
(0.339)	(8.81e+04)	(0.548)	(0.077)	(0.893)	<b>0.9746**</b>
	[0.13–1.46]	[0.56–2.7]	[0.15–0.45]		(0.454)
<b>B90G</b>	<b>-0.0681</b>	<b>-21.3542</b>	<b>0.8925**</b>	<b>0.1125</b>	<b>0.7509</b>
(0.268)	(9.72e+04)	(0.445)	(0.075)	(0.457)	-0.1679
			[0.02–1.76]	(0.784)	-0.0333
					(1.057)

*Notes:* Standard errors in parentheses. 95% confidence interval in squared brackets for statistically significant results.

Estimations from negative binomial regressions.

\*p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01.

## B Parameter Estimate: Lagged SPD

	$SPD_{t-1}$	Asylum Law	Asylum Welfare	Deportations	Refugees	Integration	Xenophobia	Immigrant Crime
CDU	-0.3138 (1.742)	<b>3.8816***</b> (1.322)	-21.4762 (4.52e+04)	0.2446 (0.246)	<b>1.0476**</b> (0.457)	-22.5147 (1.52e+05)	0.4141 (0.681)	
		[1.29–6.47]		[0.15–1.95]				
SPD	-19.1891 (5.71e+04)	-19.8813 (8.49e+04)	-1.7031 (1.291)	-21.529 (6.53e+04)	-24.3200 (6.9e+05)	-22.2999 (6.05e+04)		
Link <sub>e</sub>	0.5452 (1.244)	-18.0754 (6.05e+04)	1.4584 (1.623)	<b>0.4438**</b> (0.180)	-0.2580 (0.812)	0.8948 (0.869)	<b>1.2205**</b> (0.541)	
				[0.09–0.78]			[0.16–2.28]	
FDP	-20.5305 (9.85e+04)	-18.7714 (8.5e+04)	-27.0556 (1.7e+06)	0.0243 (0.353)	0.6375 (0.665)		-22.0652 (4.28e+04)	
B90G	-23.8689 (1.54e+05)	-22.2806 (6.19e+04)	-23.8359 (3.7e+05)	0.3928 (0.203)	-21.9178 (3.59e+04)	-21.6548 (6.21e+04)	1.3531 (0.903)	

*Notes:* Standard errors in parentheses. 95% confidence interval in squared brackets for statistically significant results.

Estimations from negative binomial regressions.

\*p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01.

## C Parameter Estimate: Lagged Link

	Link <sub>t-1</sub>					
	Asylum Law	Asylum Welfare	Deportations	Refugees	Integration Xenophobia Immigrant Crime	
<b>CDU</b>	<b>0.4227*</b>	-21.2488 (0.235)	0.3685 (0.230)	<b>0.2223**</b> (0.097)	<b>0.8732**</b> (0.375)	0.0896 (0.152)
		[ -0.37–0.88 ]		[ 0.03–0.31 ]	[ 0.14–1.31 ]	[ 0.57–1.57 ]
<b>SPD</b>	<b>0.1678</b>	-20.7596 (0.853)		-0.2877 (0.260)	-0.0665 (1.143)	<b>0.3476*</b> (0.165)
		[ 1.08e+05 ]				[ 0.57–1.57 ]
<b>Link<sub>e</sub></b>	<b>0.3925*</b>	-18.6610 (0.211)	0.0270 (6.62e+04)	<b>0.2989***</b> (0.357)	0.6665 (0.424)	0.4094 (0.052)
		[ 0.12–1.13 ]		[ 0.15–0.45 ]		[ 0.03–0.67 ]
<b>FDP</b>	<b>0.3913</b>	-19.7596 (0.886)	-24.0797 (1.14e+05)	0.1230 (1.38e+05)	0.5605 (0.114)	<b>1.1686***</b> (0.862)
		[ 1.14e+05 ]				[ 0.350 )
<b>B90G</b>	<b>0.1068</b>	-20.8109 (0.337)	0.2802 (0.421)	0.1136 (0.098)	0.5753 (0.591)	0.0530 (0.105)
		[ 1.25e+05 ]				[ 0.48–1.85 ]

*Notes:* Standard errors in parentheses. 95% confidence interval in squared brackets for statistically significant results.

Estimations from negative binomial regressions.

\* $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

## D Parameter Estimate: Lagged FDP

	$FDP_{t-1}$	Asylum Law	Asylum Welfare	Deportations	Refugees	Integration	Xenophobia	Immigrant Crime
CDU	1.5072 (1.042)	-21.2488 (2.4e+05)	0.0533 (1.093)	0.2665 (0.171)	0.1336 (1.089)	8.467e-14 (6.36e-10)	0.3359 (0.576)	
SPD	-21.7928 (1.75e+05)	-20.7596 (1.86e+05)		0.0915 (0.339)	-22.1255 (1.06e+05)	-2.025e-15 (5.74e-11)	-22.7724 (3.96e+04)	
Linke	0.7064 (1.179)	-18.6610 (1.15e+05)	1.3022 (0.986)	0.1442 (0.145)	<b>1.4375**</b> (0.727)	-1.945e-16 (2.64e-16)	-0.0719 (1.049)	
FDP	-21.1519 (1.73e+05)	-19.7596 (0.173)	-24.4940 (2.04e+05)	<b>0.3835**</b> (0.114)	[0.05–0.72] [0.05–0.72]	-21.6279 (6.14e+04)	-23.2963 (7.2e+04)	
B90G	-23.8745 (1.55e+05)	-21.3542 (2.17e+05)	-23.9449 (1.74e+05)	<b>0.3058*</b> (0.162)	<b>1.6464*</b> (0.941)	2.283e-11 (6.54e-08)	-21.0633 (4.51e+04)	
					[-0.01–0.62] [-0.2–3.49]			

*Notes:* Standard errors in parentheses. 95% confidence interval in squared brackets for statistically significant results.

Estimations from negative binomial regressions.

\* $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

## E Parameter Estimate: Lagged B90G

	B90G <sub>t-1</sub>	Asylum Law	Asylum Welfare	Deportations	Refugees	Integration	Xenophobia	Immigrant Crime
CDU	0.3283 (0.440)	-21.7934 (4.3e+04)	-0.5172 (0.723)	<b>0.5049***</b> (0.162)	-0.0026 (0.654)	-0.2605 (0.779)	1.2169 (0.779)	
SPD	-20.8369 (4.55e+04)	-20.3934 (6.94e+04)		<b>0.6692***</b> (0.257)	0.3762 (1.099)	-21.8587 (4.73e+04)	<b>2.3082*</b> (1.178)	
Linke	-0.0195 (0.470)	-18.4017 (4.51e+04)	0.2894 (0.449)	<b>0.2456*</b> (0.139)	-0.3154 (0.780)	0.2683 (0.166)	[0-4.62] (4.1e+04)	
FDP	-20.8942 (3.66e+04)	-19.3524 (7.19e+04)	-22.9348 (3.84e+04)	<b>0.3398*</b> (0.353)	-21.6785 (4.11e+04)		-22.1020 (1.26e+05)	
B90G	-23.4788 (4.85e+04)	<b>3.3707***</b> (0.946)	-22.9731 (5.2e+04)	[0.03-0.71] [1.52-5.23]	<b>0.3376**</b> (0.158)	-1.2458 (1.412)	0.1896 (0.359)	-20.1795 (6.97e+04)

*Notes:* Standard errors in parentheses. 95% confidence interval in squared brackets for statistically significant results.

Estimations from negative binomial regressions.

\* $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .