

RADICAL RIGHT-WING POPULISM AND CLIMATE ACTION IN
EUROPE: THE CASE OF THE ALTERNATIVE FOR GERMANY (AfD)

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ABSTRACT

RADICAL RIGHT-WING POPULISM AND CLIMATE ACTION IN EUROPE: THE CASE OF THE ALTERNATIVE FOR GERMANY (AfD)

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As the driving force of the EU economy and the main bearer of the economic consequences of the bailout of the weak economies of the EU in the wake of the Euro Crisis of 2008, Germany has become a conducive ground for populist politics with its vast immigrant population. In such a political environment, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) which came out in the aftermath of the Euro Crisis as the right-wing populist party in German politics, gradually reinforced itself as the rising actor in both state and federal elections as well as at the European level. It has embraced hostile language towards climate change policy, incorporated climate science denial in its discourse and caused polarization of the issue in Germany which is known with its ambitious climate action objectives and environmentally friendly energy transformation policies and regarded internationally as “an environmental leader”. This thesis analyzes why and how the European radical right-wing populist parties are opposing climate science and climate action and scrutinizes various aspects of the case of the AfD vis-à-vis anti-climate action.

Keywords: Europe, climate change, climate action, radical right-wing populism, Alternative for Germany (AfD).

ÖZ

AVRUPA’DA RADİKAL SAĞ POPÜLİZM VE İKLİM POLİTİKALARI: ALMANYA İÇİN ALTERNATİF (AfD) ÖRNEĞİ

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Yüksek Lisans, Avrupa Çalışmaları

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AB ekonomisinin itici gücü ve 2008’de yaşanan Avro krizi sonrasında AB’nin zayıf ekonomilerine yapılan mali yardımın ana yüklenicisi olan Almanya, büyük göçmen nüfusuyla popülist siyaset için elverişli bir zemin haline gelmiştir. Böyle bir siyasi ortamda Avro Krizi sonrasında ortaya çıkan Almanya için Alternatif Partisi (AfD), Alman siyasetindeki sağ popülist parti olarak hem eyalet seçimlerinde hem de federal ve Avrupa düzeyindeki seçimlerde yükselişe geçmiştir. AfD iklim değişikliği politikalarına yönelik düşmanca bir dil benimsemiş, iklim bilimi inkarcılığını söylemine katmış, iddialı iklim politikası hedefleri ve çevreci enerji dönüşüm projeleri ile bilinen ve uluslararası alanda “çevre öncüsü” olarak tanınan Almanya’da konunun kutuplaşmasına yol açmıştır. Bu kapsamda, bu tez Avrupa’da radikal sağ popülist partilerin iklim bilimi ve iklim değişikliği politikalarına neden ve nasıl karşı çıktığını analiz etmekte ve çeşitli yönleriyle AfD örneğini ele almaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Avrupa, iklim değişikliği, iklim değişikliği politikaları, radikal sağ popülizm, Almanya için Alternatif (AfD)

To my beloved father whose love, endless trust and unconditional support have made everything possible for me and in loving memory of my mother Vildan İskender...

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| AfD | Alternative for Germany |
| BMU | Federal Ministry for the Environment, Natural Conservation and Nuclear Safety |
| CDM | Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism |
| CDU/CSU | Christian Democratic Union / Christian Socialist Union |
| CFACT | US Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow |
| CFC | Chlorofluorocarbon |
| CH ₄ | Methane |
| CO ₂ | Carbon Dioxide |
| COP-15 | Fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC |
| COP-18 | Eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC |
| COP-23 | Twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC |
| DF | Danish People's Party |
| EEG | German Renewable Energy Sources Act |
| EEWärmeG | Renewable Energy Heat Act |
| EFSF | European Financial Stability Facility |
| EIKE | European Institute for Climate and Energy |
| EKRE | Conservative People's Party of Estonia |
| EnEV | German Energy Saving Regulations |
| EP | European Parliament |
| EPL | Employment Protection Legislation |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| ETS | Emissions Trading System |
| EU | European Union |
| EUA | European Emission Allowance |
| FDP | Free Democratic Party |
| FPÖ | Freedom Party of Austria |
| GDR | German Democratic Republic |
| GHG | Greenhouse Gases |
| HFCs | Hydrofluorocarbons |
| IDD | Identity and Democracy Group |
| IPCC | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change |
| ISD | Institute for Strategic Dialogue |
| Lega | Lega Nord |
| MFA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey |
| N ₂ O | Nitrous Oxide |
| NA | National Alliance |
| NASA | National Aeronautics and Space Administration |
| NF ₃ | Natrium Trifluoride |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NO _x | Nitrogen Oxide |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PFCs | Perfluorocarbons |
| PiS | Law and Justice |
| PP | Progress Party |

| | |
|--------|---|
| PPP | Purchasing Power Parity |
| PS | Finns Party |
| PVV | Party for Freedom |
| RN | National Rally |
| SD | Sweden Democrats |
| SF6 | Sulphur Hexafluoride |
| SNS | Slovak National Party |
| SPD | Freedom and Direct Democracy |
| SPD | Social Democratic Party |
| SVP | Swiss People's Party |
| TT | Order and Justice |
| UKIP | United Kingdom Independence Party |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCC | United Nations Climate Change |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| US | United States of America |
| VB | Flemish Interest |
| VMRO | Bulgarian National Movement |
| XA | Golden Dawn |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The political environment of the Member States of the European Union (EU) have been turbulent since 2009. European leaders and policy makers have experienced a substantial amount of pressure mainly stemming from the financial crisis of 2008, migration flows from the Middle East, political tensions with Russia stemming from the crisis in Ukraine and Syria and Britain's decision to leave the EU, and last but not least, terrorist acts on the European soil. In such an environment, right wing populist parties have started to increase their influence throughout Europe.

While political and economic events keep European leaders/politicians busy, throughout the planet people have been experiencing serious impacts of climate change and environmental degradation, such as extreme heat and drought, melting mountain glaciers, floods, rise in sea levels, in their daily lives (European Commission, n.d.-e). Severe heatwaves caused loss of lives throughout Europe¹ and a prolonged drought² had been experienced. There were devastating forest fires in Greece, Portugal, Sweden; crop failures³ in

¹ For further information please see: Carrington, D. & Marsh, S. (2018, August 3). Deaths rose 650 above average during UK heatwave – with older people most at risk. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/aug/03/deaths-rose-650-above-average-during-uk-heatwave-with-older-people-most-at-risk>

² For more information please see: Byant, L. (2019, July 17). After Record Heat Wave, Parts of Europe Now Face Drought. *VOANEWS*. Retrieved from: <https://www.voanews.com/europe/after-record-heat-wave-parts-europe-now-face-drought>

³ For more information please see: Neslen, A. (2018, July 20). Crop failure and bankruptcy threaten farmers as drought grips Europe. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jul/20/crop-failure-and-bankruptcy-threaten-farmers-as-drought-grips-europe>

Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Scandinavia, the Netherlands and the Baltics and extensive melting of mountain glaciers⁴.

Even though people feel the severe effects of global warming and environmental degradation in their daily lives⁵, right-wing populist parties adopted skeptic/denialist approach against anthropogenic climate change, included it into their political discourse, some of them openly present hostility toward climate policy and with such stance they still attract vast amount of audience throughout Europe.

As the driving force of the EU economy and the main bearer of the economic consequences of the bailout of the weak economies of the Union in the wake of the Euro Crisis of 2008, Germany has become a conducive ground for populist politics with its vast immigrant population⁶. In such a political environment, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) which came out in the aftermath of the Euro Crisis as the right-wing populist party in German politics, gradually reinforced itself as the rising actor in both state and federal elections as well as at the European level. It has embraced hostile language towards climate change policy, incorporated climate science denial in its discourse and caused polarization ⁷ of the issue in Germany which is known with its ambitious climate action objectives and environmental friendly energy transformation policies and regarded internationally as “an environmental leader” (Hillebrand, 2015, p. 373).

⁴ For more information please see: Nace, T. (2019, July 22). Europe's Heatwave Melted an Entire Lake in The High Alps. *Forbes*. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/trevornace/2019/07/22/europes-heatwave-melted-an-entire-lake-in-the-high-alps/#31972ed32436>

⁵ For more information please see Europe heatwave: Records tumble in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. (2019, July 24). *BBC News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-49100271>

⁶ 13,7 million - 16,6 % of its population is foreign-born; of which roughly 7,7 million - 9,4 % was not born in an EU country (Eurostat, 2019a).

⁷ For further information please check: Sauerbrey, A. (2019, April 18). How Climate Became Germany's New Culture War. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/18/opinion/germany-climate-cars.html>

Results of the European Parliament (EP) elections (23-26 May 2019) underlined the polarization of climate issue throughout Europe. Both right-wing populist parties⁸ and the Greens⁹ increased the number of their seats compared to the previous European elections. While the Green's success gives hope for future collective action in climate policy, concerns for a potential backlash against international efforts to curb climate change have been increased due to right-wing populist parties' simultaneous augmented influence.

Germany as being the world's fifth and Europe's largest economy in terms of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), is a leading exporter of machinery, vehicles, chemicals, and household equipment (CIA Factbook, 2019). With its immense production capacity, it comes at the sixth place (Global Carbon Atlas, 2019) after China, the US, India, Russia and Japan in carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy release by burning fossil fuels in the process of producing and consuming energy (CIA Factbook, 2019). Accepting its huge responsibility in the carbon dioxide emissions, Germany has voluntarily been part and pioneer of international efforts to mitigate climate change. In an economy with such a vast production and trade capacity, distribution of wealth and sacrifices shouldered by various groups of society due to environment and

⁸ Identity and Democracy Group (IDD) consisting of National Rally, Lega Nord and the AfD has gained 73 of 751 seats. Other radical right populist parties including the Brexit Party scattered across other groups in the European Parliament. The IDD replaced Europe of Nations and Freedom Group which had 36 of 749 seats in the previous parliament (European Parliament, 2019a). Retrieved from: <https://election-results.eu/tools/comparative-tool/> For further information please see Mudde, C. (2019, May 28). The far right may not have cleaned up, but its influence now dominates Europe. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/28/far-right-european-elections-eu-politics>

⁹ In 2014 elections the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance got 52 of 749 seats; and in 2019 elections, they win 74 of 751 seats (European Parliament, 2019a). Retrieved from: <https://election-results.eu/tools/comparative-tool/> For further information please check: Graham-Harrison, E. (2019, June 2). A quiet revolution sweeps Europe as Greens become a political force. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/jun/02/european-parliament-election-green-parties-success>

climate change policies of the government become a controversial issue and is frequently used by the AfD leaders and supporters.

Within this backdrop, because of Germany's responsibility in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and its dedication to ambitious climate and energy policies, in this descriptive and explanatory research, the relationship between right wing populism and climate action in Europe will be examined by focusing on the case of the AfD in Germany. The research questions of this thesis are as follows: "why and how radical right-wing populist parties are against climate action?", as a case "what is the position of the AfD on climate policies?", "is the AfD skeptic/denialist about anthropogenic climate change?", "is it against climate action?", if yes, "has it always been anti-climate action?", "how the AfD is against climate action?", "what are the reasons of its opposition to climate policies?", "does its opposition come from populism's ideology?" or "does it adopt an anti-climate action approach because of the increased issue salience of the environment in the agenda of the German public?" or "does this approach emanate from pragmatic reasons to get more votes? or for instance, to counter the Greens in terms of party competition?

First, in order to find out the reasons of radical right-wing populist parties' negative stance towards climate action, conceptual and theoretical approaches to populism and ideological content of radical right-wing populism will be examined. The core elements of populism ("the people", "the elites", "the others", "the will of the people", "the leader", "the heartland") and their interaction in the populist discourse will be presented from various scholars' contributions to the literature. Later, common characteristics of radical right-wing populist parties: nativism and authoritarianism will be explained.

To have a better understanding in their anti-climate discourse, some of the supply and demand side theories on the root causes of the success of populist radical wing parties will be reviewed. It will be suggested that comprehending the root causes of the rise of populist radical right-wing parties will be beneficial to explain their climate science skepticism/denialism and/or hostility towards climate action as their policy choice. By doing that, this thesis aims to contribute to the literature in explaining the motives of this party

family in their antagonism against climate action. It will be argued that comprehending the adoption of skeptic or denialist approach on climate science or hostility against climate action by the populist radical right, require considering several of the theories simultaneously and demand side theories carry more potential than supply side theories to explain this inclination.

To this end, under the framework of demand side theories, vast amount of literature will be reviewed. The single-issue thesis and “niche parties” in party competition will be explained in detail along with social breakdown and economic interest thesis due to their relevance to the research questions of this study. Under social breakdown thesis, special emphasis will be given to “cultural backlash theory”. Economic interest thesis will be elucidated within the context of the concept of “losers of globalization”, theory of “relative deprivation” and “labor market dualization and protest voting” theory.

Consequently, after going through supply side theories on electoral success of radical right-wing populists, the concept of anthropogenic climate change and international efforts to tackle climate change will be explicated.

For the research purposes of this thesis, it is deemed necessary to understand the policies populist right wing parties are opposing to, therefore perusing through international climate policies will be beneficial in grasping their logic.

This thesis will also display discussions on the relationship between party/personal ideology and position on climate change/action. Works of several scholars that gave particular emphasis to radical right’s climate science denialism and climate action antagonism will be reviewed. But it has been understood that there is limited amount of comprehensive research on specifically populist radical right-wing parties’ tendencies and the literature has many shortcomings in explaining this party group’s policy choices.

The communication frames and their usage in identifying the populist right wing parties’ variations as well as major arguments on energy transition policies and climate action will also been addressed to illustrate how they are hostile to climate action.

Finally, the AfD in Germany, a radical right-wing populist party, will be taken as a case. Its history and its characteristics will be explained. Afterwards, the statements made by the party members, posts on its social media accounts and relevant parts of its manifesto will be highlighted to determine its position on climate change and action. Thus, its position vis-à-vis the environment issue will be taken up in detail. Subsequently, the reasons of the AfD's position on climate action will be explained by using various concepts and theories stated throughout this thesis.

Within this context, in light of the increasing influence of right-wing populism, understanding the reasons of right-wing populism's skepticism towards climate science and enmity towards climate action will be beneficial to develop strategies to cope with a possible backlash against climate action in the future when the severe impacts of climate change will be more severely felt than today.

CHAPTER 2

POPULISM

In this chapter, to better discern radical right-wing populists' approach towards climate policies, intrinsic characteristics of radical right-wing populism will be addressed.

Since, the negative stance of radical right-wing populist parties towards climate action in European countries will be analyzed in this research, only right-wing populism in Europe and merely the relevant elements of populism to understand the reasons of right-wing populism's antagonism to climate policy and its climate skepticism/denialism will be examined.

So, keeping the purpose of this thesis in mind, first this research will concentrate on theoretical and conceptual approaches to populism¹⁰ and subsequently, it will dwell on description and ideological content of radical right-wing populism.

Finally, supply and demand side theories on the causes of the success of radical right and more specifically on radical right populist parties will be summarized, to shed a light for possible explanations for their anti-climate action stance.

2.1. Theoretical and conceptual approaches to populism

Populism is a term used to define various phenomenon in diverse geographies and time spans. It was identified in variety of political systems and nations with distinct cultures, features, history and political context. For instance, while it could imply “anti-immigration and xenophobia” (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p.2) in Europe, it could indicate “clientelism and economic mismanagement” in Latin America (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p.2). Populist

¹⁰ I will take the core elements of populism irrespective of its disposition on the right or left political spectrum, since core arguments are relevant to both types of populism.

actors can be placed on left or right side of the political spectrum or either be “conservative or progressive” as well as “religious or secular” (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p.21).

Therefore, there is no unanimously accepted definition. But in the last couple of decades many scholars have developed a more systematic approach to define and understand it.

Plethora of scholars and pundits who have been studying populism, try to examine it from several aspects such as “actors (the “people,” some elite, a leader); actions (mass mobilization, strategic leadership); style (moralistic, dichotomous, majoritarian); domain (old–new, left–right, democratic–nondemocratic, European–non-European); consequences (polarization, social homogenization, charisma); and normative implications (threat to or corrective of democracy)” (Pappas, 2016).

Within this context, many distinctive approaches have emerged to examine populism and each of them view this phenomenon from a different perspective. While some of them defines it as a “movement” (Di Tella, 1965, p. 47; Dix, 1978; Roberts, 2006, p. 127; Jansen, 2011, p. 82, as cited in Pappas, 2016), others describe it as an “ideology” (Wiles, 1969, p. 166; Canovan, 1999, p. 3; Mudde, 2004, p. 543; 2007; Abts & Rummens, 2007, p. 409; Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p. 3, as cited in Pappas, 2016). Several scholars classify it as a “discourse” (Laclau, 1977, pp. 172–173; Kazin, 1995, p. 1; de la Torre, 2000, p. 4; Hawkins, 2009, p. 1042, as cited in Pappas, 2016), and others as a “style” (Knight, 1998, p. 227; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007, p. 322, as cited in Pappas, 2016), a “strategy” (Weyland, 2001, p. 14; Barr, 2009, p. 44, as cited in Pappas, 2016), a “political culture” (Riker, 1982, p. 238; Urbinati, 2013, p. 141, as cited in Pappas, 2016), an “omnibus concept” (Taguieff, 1995, p. 25, as cited in Pappas, 2016) or “an organizational form” (Taggart, 1995, as cited in Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011).

Among these, three distinctive approaches, explaining populism as “an ideology” (a set of interrelated ideas about the nature of politics and society) , as “a political style”(a way of making claims about politics; characteristics of discourse), and as “a political strategy” (a form of mobilization and

organization), surfaced to be the main systematic ones in the literature of populism (Gidron & Bonikowski, 2013, p.17).

2.1.1. Definitions and core elements of populism

In this section, various scholars' definitions of populism will be dwelled on and core elements inherent to populism which are "the people", "the elite", "the others", "the will of people", "the charismatic leader" and "the heartland" will be examined.

One of the most referred definitions of populism was put forth by Cas Mudde, which describes populism as:

a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people (2004, p.543).

In this definition, the mentioned "ideology" is not a "full ideology" such as fascism or socialism, but a 'thin ideology' (Freedon, 1998, as cited in Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011), which only focuses on a limited sort of concepts such as nationalism, feminism, and ecology (Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011) and seems enclosed to other ideological rudiments, which are necessary for the "promotion of political projects that are appealing to a broader public" (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p.6). Therefore, according to Mudde and Kaltwasser, "populism can take very different shapes", must be grasped "as a mental map through which individuals analyze and comprehend political reality", it "seldom exists in pure form" and it "appears in combination with, and manages to survive thanks to, other concepts" (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p.6-7).

Albertazzi and McDonnell defines populism as "an ideology which pits a virtuous and homogenous people against a set of elites and dangerous 'others' who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity and voice" (2008, p. 3).

According to them there are four entwined principles at the core of populism: “the people are one and are inherently ‘good’; the people are sovereign; the people’s culture and way of life are of a paramount value; the leader and party/movement are one with people” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p.6).

Paul Taggart investigates “six themes that run through populism” (Taggart, 2000, p.2). He argues that “populists are hostile to representative politics; identify themselves with an idealized heartland within the community they favor” and “populism is an ideology lacking core values; it is a powerful reaction to a sense of extreme crisis; contains fundamental dilemmas that make it self-limiting; is a chameleon, adopting the colors of its environment” (Taggart, 2000, p.2). He suggests these “six themes are designed to be independent and capable of interacting with each other in different ways” (Taggart, 2000, p.2).

Ben Stanley states that four interconnected elements come together in order to point out populism: “the existence of two homogeneous units of analysis: ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’; the antagonistic relationship between the people and the elite; the idea of popular sovereignty; the positive valorization of ‘the people’ and denigration of ‘the elite’ ” (Stanley, 2008, p.102).

Wejnert, cites the definition of populism from Laclau and she maintains that populism is portrayed by four characteristics: “ingrained hostility toward the status quo, the establishment; mistrust of traditional politicians; an appeal not on the basis of class identity but a sense of belonging to masses, to the ‘the people’; and an anti-intellectual disposition” (Laclau, 1977, pp. 143-198, as cited in Wejnert, 2014, p.146).

Albertazzi and McDonnell argue that, notwithstanding populists’ place on the left/right scale, populists assert that they are the “true democrats” who are battling to redeem “the people’s sovereignty from the professional political and administrative classes” (regional, national, supranational) and “other elite enemies” (2008, p.4) and condemning the elites as “false democrats” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p.6). In their view, “the government and democracy...have been occupied, distorted and exploited by corrupt elites”,

instead of mirroring the “will of people” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p.4). “The elites and others” are guilty of the existing unwanted situation of the people and the people must gain their voice and power back “through the populist leader and party” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p.4). People are regarded as “homogenous” and “virtuous” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p.4). On the contrary, “enemies of people” (the elites and ‘others’) are not “homogeneous” or “virtuous” and they are blamed for “conspiring together against the people” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p.5). The people are under attack “from above by the elites and from below by a range of dangerous others” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p.5). They will defeat their foes through “their homogeneity and virtue”, by supporting “the populist leader/party” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p.5).

Taggart sustains that populists demonizes certain social groups and this “demonization” cause more support among the people who “share a grievance” and establish “solidarity” against “enemies” (2000, p.94).

Taggart also put forth the term “the heartland” which is a “territory of imagination” where “virtuous and unified” people reside in (Taggart, 2000, p.95-96). The heartland “lies at the core of the community and excludes the marginal or the extreme” (Taggart, 2000, p.96). It constitutes “the inward-looking nature of populism (Taggart, 2000, p.96).

The heartland is “a prosperous and harmonious place” of the past, but “lost in the present era due to the enemies of the people”. (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p.5). The populist leader/party promise to redeem this heartland and remind people of the risk to “lose everything” and convoke people to “find their voice and make it heard” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p.5).

Populist people “want leadership”. They want “politicians who know (rather than ‘listen to’) the people, and who make their wishes come true” (Mudde, 2004, p.558). They call for politicians who compose policies that are “in line with their wishes” without much contribution from them (Mudde, 2004, p. 558).

Populists abhor “internationalism and cosmopolitanism” (Taggart, 2000, p.96). “Isolationism and insularity are the natural predispositions of populists” (Taggart, 2000, p.96). Issues sourced out of “the heartland” are of “secondary concerns” or not concerns at all for populists (Taggart, 2000, p.96).

According to Taggart, “populism is a feature of representative politics” and modern Europe constitutes a “fertile” ground for populism with frictions within the “representative democratic practices, ideas and institutions (2004, p.269). He argues that European integration is established “on elite agreements premised on the ‘permissive consensus’ at the mass level” instead of “representative politics”. (Taggart, 2004, p.269)

Albertazzi and McDonnell argues, irrespective of populists’ left or right disposition, common denominator of them is “good people are suffering due to the deliberate actions of a bad set of elites” (2015, p.4).

They do not agree with Mudde’s (2004, p.544) definition of “the elite” as “a single homogenous group” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015, p.4) and use the remaining of the description “as a useful minimal definition of populism” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015, p.4). Elites encompass “political, financial, economic, media, bureaucratic, judicial, cultural, and intellectuals” who are accused of being “distant from the people and incompetent (and, at worst, downright corrupt)” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015, p.6)

Populists criticize the complex structure of liberal democracy and its inherent checks and balances (Albertazzi and Mueller, 2013, pp. 348-349 as cited in Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015). Within this framework, Takis Pappas defines “contemporary populism” as “democratic illiberalism” and argues that these concepts are “substitutable” and can be used “interchangeably” (Papap, 2016, p.15).

Another feature of populists is, they have a disposition to conspiracy theories (Taggart, 2004). Their proclivity to “demonizing elites” and expectation of danger coming from those elites make them vulnerable to conspiracy theories. They believe elite groups such as politicians, industry leaders, intellectuals, bankers are collaborating “as part of a conspiracy” and covertly working together to advance their interests (Taggart, 2004, p.105). For

them, those conspiracy theories function as a “mobilizer” to impact the disappointed sectors of the society (Taggart, 2004, p.105). Taggart argues that, “conspiracy theories provide populists with an explanation for the problems that populists have in sustaining themselves as political movements and parties” (Taggart, 2004, p.106).

2. 2. Description and ideological content of radical right-wing populism

All of the core elements and arguments mentioned above are considered to be inherent to both right-wing and left-wing populism. But here, the focus will be on specifics of radical right-wing populism.

According to Mudde, the populist radical right describes “the people” in their own way and challenge “different enemies” with various “motivations and prejudices” but all of them shares three common features: nativism, authoritarianism and populism (Mudde, 2017, p.4).

Because core elements and arguments of populism have already been indicated above, here, the primary focus will be on nativism and authoritarianism of populist radical right-wing parties to better understand the relation between radical right-wing populism and its negative standpoint against climate action.

In order to talk about right-wing populism, Albertazzi and McDonnell believe it is necessary to add another component to populism which is “the others” (2015, p.4). According to right-wing populists, people are repressed by the elites and they are threatened by the existence of those “others” with different “identity and/or values” and supposedly those others are favored by the elites (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015, pp.4-5). Those “others” are not “homogenous”, like the “elites” and they consist of the ones “whose identity, behavior, or beliefs preclude them from being considered part of the natural community formed by the people” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015, p.6).

In Western Europe, “others” could be regarded as immigrants, “welfare scroungers, regional minorities, those with ‘non-traditional’ lifestyles, communists, and so on” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015, p.6).

All those groups are perceived to force their “values and traditions on the people” and backed by the “liberal elites” (politicians, the judiciary, the media, and those within EU institutions) (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015, p.6).

This “nativism” includes both “nationalism” and “xenophobia” and stipulates that “states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (‘the nation’) and that non-native (or ‘alien’) elements, whether persons or ideas, are fundamentally threatening to the homogeneous nation-state” (Mudde, 2017, p.4). It targets the foes “both within and outside” (Mudde, 2017, p.4).

The nativism of the populist radical right in Europe utilize socio-economic and socio-cultural motivations to validate their nativism and by using racial, ethnic, religious prejudices (in combination or single handedly) to antagonize immigrants (refugees or guest workers) or minorities (Mudde, 2017, p.4). The nativist distinction in society manifests itself “between (good) ‘natives’ and (evil) ‘aliens’ ” (Mudde, 2017, p.5).

Authoritarianism of the populist radical right accentuates “a strictly ordered society”, in which authority violations “are to be punished severely” (Mudde, 2017, p.4). Therefore, authoritarianism reflects itself in “strict law and order policies, with call for more police with greater competencies as well as less political involvement in the judiciary” (Mudde, 2017, p.4).

Those three features (nativism, authorities and populism) can be found together in the propaganda of the populist radical right parties (Mudde, 2017, p.4).

Mudde argues that populist radical right does not take the concept of right “in the classic socio-economic understanding of the state versus the market” (2017, p.5). He highlights that “most populist radical right parties support a hybrid socio-economic agenda” with a combination of “calls for fewer rules and lower taxes with economic nationalism and welfare chauvinism, i.e. protection of the national economy and support for welfare provisions for ‘natives’ (only)” (Mudde, 2017, p.5). He also posits that “economic program is a secondary feature in the ideologies of populist right parties” and their electorates share this view (Mudde, 2007, p.120). Generally

populist radical right parties “use their economic program to put into practice their core ideological positions and to expand their electorate” (Mudde, 2007, 120). Thus, the economic program of populist radical right parties “is not neoliberal”, “economics is not a primary issue to the party family” and “the economy should always be at the service of the nation” (Mudde, 2007, pp.136-137).

2.3. Theories on the causes of success of radical right-wing populism

In the previous section, first the theoretical and conceptual approaches to populism as well as definitions and core elements of it have been explicated. Here, in this section, theories on the causes of success of populism will be explained. While doing this, the classification used by Roger Eatwell (2017) will be utilized. Since it has been deemed more relevant to the subject of this thesis, the emphasis will be given to “demand” side theories and “supply” side theories will only be briefly touched upon. The shortfalls of any of those theories will not be elaborated since they remain out of the limits of this thesis.

It will be argued that neither of the “demand side” or “supply side” theories are individually sufficient enough to shed a light on the reasons of the inclusion of climate science skepticism/denialism or antagonism to climate action into the discourse of radical right-wing populist parties. But still, it is suggested that reviewing these supply and demand side theories will give an insight on the logic of their approach.

There are several explanations in the literature as to the success of extreme right-wing parties. Eatwell identifies five demand side and five supply side explanations for electoral support for the extreme right and he argues that every and each of them has its respective problems and shortages but still give some perceptiveness as to the success of extreme right (2017, p.405). Therefore, for widening the perspective of this research and where it is deemed conducive to the research purposes of this thesis, other scholars’ explanations/theories under the relevant titles will be accommodated.

2.3.1. “Demand side theories” explaining the success of radical right-wing parties

Although supply side theories give an understanding as to the success of radical right-wing parties, they do not provide a full perspective regarding this party group’s negative tendency towards climate science and action. At this point, demand side theories have a better potential in connecting the dots and provide a rationalization of right-wing populists’ antagonism against climate science and climate action. Hence, this section will begin with the “demand side theories”.

“The single-issue thesis” gives special emphasis to the anti-immigration policies and issues connected with immigration such as “unemployment, welfare, law and order” (Eatwell, 2017, p.405) and claims extreme right parties succeed when there are serious concerns on immigration in society (Eatwell, 2017, p.405).

Here, at this point, the focus of this sub-section will be more on the concept of “niche parties”, since populist right wing parties are regarded as “niche parties”. So, some literature will be reviewed to give a general idea on the reasons of niche party success and their impacts on party competition.

The literature mentioned below is particularly interesting, because other than analyzing populist radical right-wing parties and issue of anti-immigration, they also take the issue of environment in terms of “issue ownership” of the green parties. Although green parties belong to a different party family, they are also considered as niche parties and their concern for the environment might be helpful, because one of the research questions of this thesis is “why and how radical-right wing populist parties are against climate action?”. Accordingly, it is worth going through the literature for possible explanations within the context of party competition for better perceiving the inclination of radical right-wing populist parties to climate change skepticism/denialism and their antagonism for climate policy.

Wolinetz and Zaslove argue that green parties and populist parties have become a possible danger against mainstream parties’ supreme position (2018,

p.4). They assert that populist radical right parties “are the single most successful new post-war political family” (Wolinetz & Zaslove, 2018, p.12), and green parties, with the support of younger and more educated people disappointed by social democrats, express concerns about “environment, the quality of life and the quality of democracy”, get more votes (Wolinetz & Zaslove, 2018, p.4). Their electoral success in Western democracies provoked interest in their impact on political competition (Abou-Chadi, 2014).

Abou-Chadi (2014), defines radical right parties and green parties as “niche” parties. On the other hand, as regards to the meaning of niche parties Meyer and Miller propose a minimal definition¹¹ and argue, “niche party emphasizes policy areas neglected by its rivals” (2015, p.261). On distinctive characteristic of niche parties Meguid notes that, they do not “prioritize economic demands, they politicize sets of issues which were previously outside the dimensions of the party competition” (Meguid, 2005, pp.347-348). They raise new issues that do not match with “existing lines of political division and attract voters that can forego “traditional partisan alignments” as well as they constraint “their issue appeals” and “adopt position only on a restricted set of issues” (Meguid, 2005, pp.347-348). Niche parties are considered as ‘issue entrepreneurs’ because they “contribute to the evolution and politicization of new political issues” (de Vries and Hobolt, 2012; Spoon, Hobolt & de Vries, 2014, as cited in Abou-Chadi, 2014).

Briefly, they compete on specific issues. While green parties compete mostly on environment, radical right parties generally focus on immigration.

Meyer and Miller (2015, p.266) conducted a study measuring the “niche-ness” of parties and claim that “the Greens have always been a niche party in the sense that they stressed the environmental dimension more than other parties did” and they give special emphasis to the Greens in Germany. According to them, German Greens are “by far the largest and most successful

¹¹ To overcome the “definition problem” caused by the complexity of the concept, Meyer and Miller followed Sartori’s (1976, p.61, as cited in Meyer and Miller, 2015) suggestion on “minimal definition” which means “when all properties or characteristics of an entity that are not indispensable for its identification are set forth as variable, hypothetical properties-not as definitional ones”.

Green party” (Meyer & Miller, 2015, p.266). On the “niceness” of German Greens, Rihoux and Rüdig (2006, as cited in Meyer & Miller, 2015, p.260) argue that the Green Party in Germany was a very good “example of a niche party” during the 1980s but it does not carry some of “its ‘niche’ characteristics by now”, since taking part in government in 1998.

Meyer and Miller demonstrate that “issue emphasis varies from election to election”, depending on the contested parties’ issue emphasis and “issue emphasis of all parties on environmental policies increased in 1990” (2015, p.267), because of the developments such as Montreal Convention on banning CFCs, a new recycling system ‘the Green dot’ and the decontamination of old-fashioned industrial sites in the former GDR (2015, p.269). Meyer and Miller also show Greens shifted towards “the mainstream in 1990... compared to the other elections”, and later recover its position as the owner of issue of the environment (2015, p.267).

Meyer and Miller contend that niceness of the party has impacts on coalition and government formation as well as government termination and they think niche and mainstream parties may be compatible with each other as long as they “do not compete on the same topics” (2015, p.268).

It is worth mentioning here, there is plethora of research on how niche parties “restructure multiparty competition and the behavior of established parties” (Abou-Chadi, 2014, p.1). There is some empirical research suggesting that established parties react to other parties’ policy positioning (Adams, 2012; Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009, as cited in Abou-Chadi) as much as to the electoral success of niche parties (Bale et al., 2010; Van Spanje, 2010, as cited in Abou-Chadi).

Parties are “competing by offering different positions along a policy dimension” (Downs, 1957 as cited in Abou-Chadi 2014, p.3). A party’s vote share in this spatial conception of political competition is thus, determined by the redistribution of the electorate on this issue dimension, as people will vote for the party that is ideologically closest to them (Downs, 1957; Enelow & Hinich, 1982 as cited in Abou-Chadi 2014, p.3).

If radical right-parties surface and got support of the electorate, “conservative and moderate right-wing parties” shifts their positions to the right to preclude them from permanently snipping votes from them (Abou-Chadi, 2014, p.3). The same dynamic will be relevant for the parties at the left-of-center and greens (Rohrschneider, 1993 as cited in Abou-Chadi, p.3).

There is a positive association between “niche party strength and the repositioning of established parties” (Alonso and da Fonseca, 2011; Dalton, 2009; and van Spanje, 2010 as cited in Abou-Chadi; p.3). Abou-Chadi denominate this feature as the ‘contagious’ effect of niche parties (2014, p.3).

Niche parties has the “issue ownership” of “issues for which a majority of the electorate has traditionally regarded them as competent and effective problem solvers” (Budge & Farlie, 1983; Petrocik, 1996 as cited in Abou-Chadi, p.3).

As a matter of fact, parties cannot liberally decide the issues they choose to underscore, and they will recourse to the issues “on the party system agenda” (Green-Pedersen & Monteresen, 2010 as cited in Abou-Chadi 2014, p.3). Hence, by bringing up “a new issue on the agenda and increasing its salience”, niche parties behave as “issue entrepreneurs” and force “established parties to adapt their behavior accordingly” (de Vries and Hobolt, 2012; Meguid, 2008 as cited in Abou-Chadi 2014; p.3).

The accomplishment of green and radical right parties can drive mainstream parties to highlight the issues of “environment and immigration” more powerfully and change their way “toward the niche party” (Abou-Chadi, 2014, p.3). There is risks when reacting to the issues promoted by niche parties. Taking action in these issues by the established parties, will cause these issues’ politicization and they will be reinforced on the political agenda of the country (Green-Pedersen, 2010, as cited in Abou-Chadi, 2014).

In **the protest thesis**, supporters of extreme right are regarded as “vehicles for expressing discontent with the mainstream parties” (Eatwell, 2017, p.407). Decrease in votes for mainstream parties and decline in turnouts in many European countries are good demonstrators of this approach (Eatwell, 2017, p.407).

In an article, Birch and Dennison (2019) test explanations for protest voting in parliamentary democracies and take the results of 2015 General Elections in Great Britain as the reference point. They assess ideological protest voting, trust-based protest voting and campaign-based protest voting as well as compared the voter support for UKIP and the Greens against mainstream parties. The result of their research shows that voters are not so concerned about total shifts in the positions of their parties but voice concern over “specific shifts on certain issues” (Birch& Dennison, 2019, p.122). As a result, protest voters are “sensitive to parties’ core issues¹², but less so to issues such as austerity” (Birch & Dennison, 2019, p.122).

Therefore, parties’ preference to shift to new policy areas will not secure votes from protest voters (Birch & Dennison, 2019). Whereas, political communication variables of party contact and leader have implications on protest voting (Birch & Dennison, 2019). So that, parties can get positive results to mobilize protest voters merely changing the ways of communication of party and leader without sacrificing their fundamental policies (Birch & Dennison, 2019).

The social breakdown thesis articulates that, “traditional social structures, especially those based on class and religion, are breaking down” (Eatwell, 2017, p.408). People lose their “sense of belonging” and charmed by “ethnic nationalism” which boosts their “sense of self-esteem and efficacy” (Eatwell, 2017, p.408).

At this juncture, Norris and Inglehart (2019)’s “cultural backlash theory” on the rise of populism¹³ proves to be quite explanatory in understanding the rise of right-wing populist parties and their strategies while choosing their discourse.

¹² For example, in UKIP’s case, anti-immigration issue has been added to its anti-EU stance and in the case of the Greens being anti-austerity have been coupled with its environmentalist stance (Birch & Dennison, 2019, p.122).

¹³ Norris and Inglehart’s theory is not necessarily explain only the right-wing populism but also the left-wing populism. They assort political parties along the lines of “authoritarian/libertarian”; “populist/pluralist”; and “economic left/right” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). But still, their logic on the rise of populist parties provides a good explanation for the research purposes of this thesis.

Norris and Inglehart assert that populists disturb the “long-established patterns of party competition in many contemporary Western societies” (2019, p.3) They take the concept of populism with a minimal definition, “as a style of rhetoric reflecting first-order principles about who should rule, claiming that legitimate power rests with the people not the elites” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.4) They understand populism in a way that does not make propositions on “second-order” principles, “concerning what should be done, what policies should be followed, what decisions should be made” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.4). In their understanding the discourse can be adjusted according to the “ideological values and principles” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.4).

They use Norris’s (2005) description on the electoral marketplace and brings together demand side factors (“societal forces” affecting “public’s values, attitudes, and beliefs” that could be attracted by the parties) with supply side factors (“appeals” of the public that could be utilized by the parties/leaders while summoning support and the electoral system) and governance concerns (Norris, 2005, as cited in Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.32).

They also refer to Inglehart’s “silent revolution” theory and claim that a “silent revolution” took place in the second half of the twentieth century that changed the “cultures of post-industrial societies” and in the postwar period “high levels of existential security led to an intergenerational value shift among Western publics” (Inglehart 1977, as cited in Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.32). This change caused a corrosion in “materialistic values emphasizing economic and physical security above all” and “post-materialist values” that underscore “individual free choice and self-expression” get precedence over others (Inglehart 1977, as cited in Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.32).

Cultural backlash theory argues that upsurge in “post-materialistic values” is a component of “a broader cultural shift” that give prominence to “environmental protection, peace movements, sexual liberalization, democracy and human rights, gender equality, cosmopolitanism, and respect for the rights of homosexuals, immigrants, handicapped people, and ethnic/racial minorities” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.33). The switch to those post-materialistic tendencies also related with abrasion in classical political participation (voting,

membership to political parties, trade unions, and voluntary associations), and instead yield to “protests, demonstrations, and digital activism among the younger generation” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.33).

Traditional moral beliefs, social norms, and behaviors of the mid-twentieth century, left its place to “post-materialist and socially liberal values” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.34). Growing up in more secure and economically stable societies than the previous generations, give younger generations an opportunity to attach more significance to post-materialistic values such as the protection of environment (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.34). “The cultural norms of high-income societies were changing, which meant that the gap between contemporary conditions and the world into which one was born was much smaller for Millennials¹⁴ than for the Interwar generation¹⁵” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.34).

Thus, as the time goes by, older generations find a different world and society with different values than the one they have had once. This cause them to feel alienated “in their own land” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.35). “Generational replacement, the expansion of access to higher education, urbanization, growing gender equality, and greater ethnic diversity” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.35) lead to “the process of cultural change” which is affected by “period-effects associated with shifts in economic conditions and population migration” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.35). As a result of these changes, while the number of people who stick to the social conservatist values decrease, the number of people who have socially liberal tendencies and post-materialistic values increase (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.35-36).

Accordingly, Norris and Inglehart, contend that “the composition of society is gradually transformed through long term processes of population

¹⁴ Norris & Inglehart define “Millenials” as the people “who came of age under the era of neo-liberalism economics and globalization associated with Reagan and Thatcher (1980-1996)” (2019, p.36).

¹⁵ According to Norris & Inglehart “the interwar cohort” are the ones “who lived through two World Wars and the Great Depression (born 1900-1945) (2019, p.36).

replacement¹⁶”, while “in 2002, the Interwar and Baby Boomer¹⁷ generations constituted almost two-thirds of the European electorate ... by 2014, ...these cohorts¹⁸ had shrunk to less than half of the electorate-although they were still a majority of those who actually voted” (2019, p.36). They suggest generational variances have more significance than “period-effects” (the ones related to economic insecurity- job loss due to decline of manufacturing industries; migrant flows; perceived risk of terrorism) (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.42) and “life-cycle effects” (entering the paid workforce, settling down and starting a family and retiring) (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.37).

Norris and Inglehart state that on the demand-side, the value shifts bring about “a rise of libertarian populists” when the escalation in social liberalism “among the younger, college-educated population” combined with the disappointment with the failure of established political parties and their leaders (2019, p.43). When political parties resort to use digital tools such as social media they have a chance to attract younger populations (Norris & Inglehart, 2019).

They maintain that while older cohorts have a tendency to vote and enroll to political parties, younger generations have a tendency to “participate in direct protest politics, community volunteering, new social movements, and online activism” instead of resorting to “conventional electoral channels such as voting” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, pp.43-44).

Therefore, populists promoting a “socially liberal agenda” looking for the “support of younger, college educated” people get serious rivalry from social movements with progressive agenda (such as LGBTQ rights, climate change, gender equality) as well as mainstream center-left parties and Green parties (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, pp.44). When socially liberal values,

¹⁶ “The exit of some older citizens and the entry of new ones” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.36)

¹⁷ Norris & Inglehart use the term for people who “came of age during the growing affluence and expansion of the welfare state during the post-World War II era (1946-1964)” (2019, p.36).

¹⁸ In their identification of generational cohorts, Norris & Inglehart refer to an additional one: “Generation X” which “socialized during the counter-culture era of sexual liberalization and student protest” (1965-1979) (2019, p.36).

progressive agendas get precedence over more traditional ones through, for example, policies of mainstream social democrats or Greens, an opposite reaction is to be expected from social conservatives at the “tipping point” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, pp.44-45).

When social changes reached to a “tipping point” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, pp.47-48), through progressive policies, where the relative size of groups in society surpass the groups backing socially conservative ones, the cultural cleavages have been deepened. While older social conservatives constitute minority of society, they remain to be the majority of voters (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.49). They are scattered through isolated rural areas dealing with manufacturing and/or agriculture (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.45).

On the contrary, younger people who support socially liberal values live in cities for educational purposes or better job prospects. (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.45). People with conservative values will feel threatened by the proliferation of unorthodox beliefs and values and this will cause reaction in the form of anger and resentment which will eventually trigger an affinity towards “authoritarian values” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.47).

Conservative/traditionalist reactions can be seen in the form of “violent, nativist force directed against the other, fueled by resentment against globalization, migrants, the closure of factories and plants, the blurring of genders, and the intrusion of different languages” or can appear as opposition to “politically correct¹⁹ views on the benefits of global markets, feminism, diverse lifestyles, and multiculturalism favored by the urban, cosmopolitan liberal elite dominating the media, intellectual life, and parliamentary representatives” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.47).

They may feel either “becoming minorities” in their own societies or suppose that they reflect “the real majority” with the influence of “media-

¹⁹ According to Merriam Webster Dictionary politically correct means “conforming to a belief that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities (as in matters of sex or race) should be eliminated”
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/politically%20correct>

bubbles” or “like-minded” social media groups (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.48).

If there is no political party promising to mitigate their resentments or grievances, these social conservative electorates might not vote on the election day (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.49). Conversely, if there is a populist party which advocates their traditional values, they tend to go to the ballot box. (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.49).

In **the (reverse) post-material thesis**, the “post-materialist values” mentioned above within the context of Norris & Inglehart’s (2019) cultural backlash theory take the reverse form.

As stated above, throughout 1970s and 1980s, Western societies had become wealthier and they developed “post-materialist values” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). They were gradually less concerned with “traditional class and economic interests” and more concerned for lifestyle issues (e.g. environmentalism and feminism) (Eatwell, 2017, p.409). They lost faith in national institutions and traditional political parties; grew more interest in “issue-based and protest politics” (Eatwell, 2017, p.409).

During 1990s, this theory applied to extreme right voting in Western Europe (Ignazi, 1992; Minkenberg, 2000, as cited in Eatwell, 2017, p.409) and it has altered into the reverse form. For many voters, particularly “unskilled males” the new “post-material agenda” is irrelevant to “their material concerns” with the effects of “growing job insecurity” (Eatwell, 2017, p.409). Those voters who hold traditional values also, feel threatened by “post-material emphasis on sexual and other freedoms” and blame “mainstream, especially left of center, elites” for “social liberalization, which increases the alienation from conventional politics” (Eatwell, 2017, pp.409-410). Eatwell also argues that “a reaction against post-material internationalist values” could be the result of “strong nationalism and xenophobia” (Eatwell, 2017, p.410).

The economic interest thesis suggests “losers in the competition over scarce resources and/or those suffered from some form of relative deprivation” or “fear economic change” support the radical right wing (Eatwell, 2017, pp.410-411).

On this point, Dani Rodrik argues that economic globalization has a significant role in explaining the rise of populism along with “changes in technology, rise of winner-take-all markets, erosion of labor-market protections, and the decline of norms restricting pay differentials” (2018, p.13). He suggests all these developments contributed to globalization and globalization strengthened them (Rodrik, 2018, p.13). He maintains that “advanced stages of globalization are prone to populist backlash” (Rodrik, 2018, p.13). Rodrik holds that “the distributional and other economic fault lines created or deepened by globalization generate potential public support for movements that position themselves outside the political mainstream and oppose established rules of the game” (Rodrik, 2018, p.24). The “discontent, fairness concerns, loss of legitimacy and economic anxiety” created “as a byproduct of globalization” do not offer any “policy perspectives” or “obvious solutions” (Rodrik, 2018, p.24). They should be pointed to a “programmatic direction” via “narratives that provide meaning and explanation to the groups in question” (Rodrik, 2018, p.24). Populists “supply the narratives required for political mobilization around” those concerns (Rodrik, 2018, p.24). They introduce a narrative “that is meant to resonate with their base” and formulate their story (Rodrik, 2018, p.24).

Mukand and Rodrik offer an explanation dividing society into three groups: “the elite, the majority, and the minority” (Mukand & Rodrik 2017, as cited in Rodrik, 2018, p.24). “The elite” are disconnected from society “by their wealth”; “the minority” are diverged from society by “particular identity markers (ethnicity, religion, immigrant status)”.

Consequently, they find two cleavages “an ethno-national/cultural cleavage and an income/social class cleavage” (Rodrik, 2018, p.24). Populists use one of these two cleavages to mobilize voter support and the “enemies of the people” differ every time (Rodrik, 2018, p.24). In right wing populism, they utilize the “identity cleavage” and they aim at “foreigners or minorities”; in left wing populism, they use the “income cleavage” and they aim at “the wealthy and large corporations” (Rodrik, 2018, p.24). They decide which one to use, according to those issues’ “salience” in “every- day experience of

voters” (Rodrik, 2018, p.24). For instance, inflow of “immigrants and refugees with dissimilar cultural and religious identities”, will facilitate the activation of “ethno-national/cultural cleavage” for populists and “economic anxiety” might be used as a tool for opposing to immigrants and refugees (Rodrik, 2018, p.25). Those groups will be introduced by populists “as competing for jobs, making demands on public services, and reducing public resources available for natives” (Rodrik, 2018, p.25). In Europe, the anxiety to lose “benefits of welfare state” because of immigration, has been a primary cause for support for far-right parties, especially in countries dealing with austerity measures and recession (Rodrik, 2018, p.25). This perspective shows us that “even when the underlying shock is fundamentally economic the political manifestations can be cultural and nativist” (Rodrik, 2018, p.25).

According to Rodrik, in Europe, globalization shock in the form of immigration and refugees, facilitate populists’ mobilization of the public “along ethno-national/cultural cleavages” (Rodrik, 2018, p.13). On the other hand, in southern Europe and Latin America a simpler version, “globalization shock” in the form of “trade, finance, and foreign investment” enable mobilization via “income/social class lines”. (Rodrik, 2018, p.13). He points out that both types of shocks are pertinent in the case of the United States. He also highlights the significance of differentiating “between the demand and supply sides of the rise in populism” (Rodrik, 2018, p.14). Rodrik thinks “economic anxiety and distributional struggles” intensified by globalization create a ground for populism but do not form the political orientation of it (2018, p. 14).

Rodrik states that: “The relative salience of available cleavages and the narratives provided by populist leaders is what provides direction and content to the grievances. Overlooking this distinction can obscure the respective roles of economic and cultural factors in driving populist politics” (Rodrik, 2018, p. 14). He thinks the anti-immigrant, anti-refugee backlash in Europe emanate from the fear of losing-wholly or partly- the social benefits of the welfare state (Rodrik, 2018, p. 17).

On the other hand, Eatwell and Goodwin (2018) add another aspect to Rodrik's explanations and note the concept of "relative deprivation". They underline that global financial crisis in 2008 and the subsequent "great recession" brought about fiscal austerity measures in many countries along with cuts in government spending and services (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018, p.180). Millions of people felt the negative impacts of those policies, and "neoliberalism has significantly altered the distribution of income and wealth" (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018, p.180). They associate the "populist revolt" with "the rise of neoliberalism" which manifest itself with "a growing sense of relative deprivation that unites large numbers of citizens" (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018, p.181). By "deprivation"²⁰ they do not mean "living on low income, losing a job or enduring slow economic growth" but they mean "strong fears among people that both they and their group are losing out relative to others in society, that a world of rising prosperity and upward social mobility has come to an end for them" (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018, p.181). Eatwell and Goodwin think this "sense of relative deprivation" does not only has an impact on "the poorest at the bottom of society" but also "full-time workers, parts of the middle class and young voters" (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018, p.182).

In connection with economic interest theory's suggestion that "losers in the competition over scarce resources and/or those suffered from some form of relative deprivation" or "fear economic change" is conducive to the radical right-wing parties, Dustin Voss's (2018) research on "the Political Economy of European Populism: Labor Market Dualization and Protest Voting in Germany and Spain" is quite interesting, and appropriately applicable to the case study of the AfD. It specifically inspects the rise of AfD in Germany by making a comparison with the rise of Podemos in Spain. Here, for the research goals of this thesis, the parts relevant to Podemos- Spain are skipped and the case of the AfD in Germany is taken.

²⁰ For more information on "relative deprivation" please see: p.640: Vlandas, T. & Daphne, H. (2015). Risks, Costs and Labor Markets: Explaining Cross-National Patterns of Far-Right Party Success in European Parliament Elections, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 54(3), p.636-655 and Runciman, W. G. (1966). *Relative deprivation and social justice: A study of attitudes to social inequality in twentieth century England*. London: Routledge & Keagan Paul.

In his research, Voss (2018) scrutinizes German labor markets after the oil crisis and reunification of Germany, studies and explains the rise of the AfD with the theory of “dualization in labor markets”. He points to the Hartz²¹ reforms put into force between 2003-2005 by the German government and argues that those reforms curtailed the “employment protection legislation (EPL)” for “temporary workers in sheltered service sectors, who consequently had to take the brunt of internal wage adjustment”, teared the labor market into two groups as “protected insiders” and “marginalized outsiders” (Hassel, 2011, as cited in Voss, 2018, p.3).

He suggests that “deregulation of employment protection and the reduction of benefits for parts of the working population increase dualization and undermine the protective capacities of labor market institutions” (Voss, 2018, p.8).

In his research Voss refers to the “partisanship theory” and posits that “dualization in labor markets”²² as “market insiders”²³ and “market outsiders”²⁴ has transformed “policy preferences within the labor class in industrialized economies” (Voss, 2018, p.2). He also argues that right-wing populism is a result of “intense dualization in labor markets, which leads to political disregard of outsider interests by social democratic parties” (Rueda 2007, p.221, as cited in Voss 2018, p.2) While “insiders” benefit from “high labor market protection”, “outsiders” gradually “marginalized”, “employed

²¹ Hartz reforms were “policy proposals to reform the labor markets and social system” and the reforms were materialized by the coalition government of SPD and the Greens between 2003-2005 under the leadership of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. Peter Hartz (Director of Volkswagen) was the president of a “corporatist commission of high-ranking representatives of leading unions and business associations” (Hassel and Schiller, 2010, as cited in Voss, 2018, p.16).

²² Dualization means variant treatment of “protected insiders in the labor market and marginalized outsiders” (Voss, 2018, p.2 and p.12)

²³ “Insiders”: “employed full-time with a permanent job or as those with part-time or fixed-term jobs who do not want a full-time or permanent job [including] individuals with permanent contracts (defined as not having a time limit)” (Rueda, 2005, p. 63, as cited in Voss, 2018, p.12).

²⁴ “Outsiders”: “are unemployed, employed full-time in fixed-term and temporary jobs (unless they do not want a permanent job), employed part time (unless they do not want a full-time job), and studying” (Rueda, 2005, p. 63, as cited in Voss, 2018, p.12).

with low salaries and restricted and means-tested for social security entitlements” (Voss, 2018, p.13). As a result, these two groups in labor, have differentiated policy choices. Former group request “ever-increasing job protection to contain competition” and the latter group ask for “generous unemployment benefits and access to stable employment” (Voss, 2018, p.13). Voss claims that social democratic parties are no longer be able to represent “homogenous class of workers with one coherent set of policies” (Häusermann, 2010, as cited in Voss, 2018, p.2).

He suggests that if the group of “labor market outsiders are small”, conflicting interests of “insiders” and “outsiders” will not constitute a problem since there will be no disappointed group of “underrepresented voters and no breeding ground for populism” (Voss, 2018, p.14). But, if the “outsider group is medium sized, a dualization problem for social democratic representation emerges, because interests within labor diverge significantly” (Voss, 2018, p.14) Under these conditions far-right populists can possibly abuse “the representational vacuum by reframing economic issues in cultural reforms” (Voss, 2018, p.14). According to him, if the size of the “marginalized labor group” sufficient enough to “regain political attention” and if the group is not ignored as “politically irrelevant outsiders”, “left-wing parties will represent them and right-wing populism becomes unlikely” (Voss, 2018, p.14).

2.3.2. “Supply side theories” explaining the success of the radical right parties

In the previous part of Chapter 2, after going into detail of the demand side theories as regards to the success of the radical right parties, in this subsection the supply side theories will be examined and where applicable, layers will be added to Eatwell’s classification with other scholars’ explanations.

The political opportunity structure thesis maintains that extremist parties have more chance for electoral success when mainstream parties neglect issues which have rising voter attraction and gather at the center of the political spectrum. Therefore, for the success of extremist parties, programs and actions

of mainstream parties matter (Eatwell, 2017, p.412). If the themes used by extreme right become prevalent in the “political discourse”, extreme right will be “legitimized” (Eatwell, 2017, p.412).

As regards to this theory, it will be beneficial to examine the concepts of “positional issue” and “valence issue” in terms of party competition. Here, again the literature scrutinized, take the radical right parties and immigration issue, and green parties and the environment issue as examples and give an opportunity to compare radical right vis-à-vis the green parties within the context of party competition but on differentiated valence issues.

There is a differentiation between “positional and valence issues” (Stoke, 1963, as cited in Abou-Chadi, p.4) “Positional issues are characterized by a set of alternatives on which voters have different preferences”, and “valence issues are those that are generally seen as positive or negative, and parties compete over competence in them” (Abou-Chadi, 2014, p.4) As a consequence of this differentiation of issues, dynamics of political competition will change. Competition over positional issues will be determined by parties’ position taking and competition over valence issues will be affected by parties’ issue ownership and salience (Abou-Chadi, 2014; p.4). For the radical right parties, immigration will constitute a “high valence” issue (Abou-Chadi, 2014; p.4-5). Thus, radical right parties contest “on a polarized and more positional issue” and “different issue types are also linked to different degrees of issue ownership” (Abou-Chadi, 2014; p.5).

Acceptance of a new issue by mainstream parties, will increase the issue’s “salience” and harbors the risk for the mainstream party to lose potential votes to the niche party (Abou-Chadi, 2014; p.5-6). For instance, subjects such as “the environment” carries high degree of issue ownership by the green parties (Abou-Chadi, 2014; p.5-6). It means that the electorate would think the issues related with the environment would be better handled by the green parties. Therefore, mainstream parties should choose the issues to be politicized wisely (Abou-Chadi, 2014; p.5-6).

On one hand, green parties’ issue ownership (on the competence dimension) of the environment issue is much higher than the radical right

parties' issue ownership of immigration and green parties use the politicization of their issue to their advantage more than radical right parties (Abou-Chadi, 2014, p :5).

On the other hand, accomplishments of radical right parties encourage mainstream parties (particularly the moderate right) to change their locus toward “a cultural protectionist profile”; whereas success of the green parties urge established parties to “de-emphasize the environment” issue, particularly the established parties more to the right; “right-wing parties and electoral losers change their immigration policy agendas more strongly in response to radical right success than left-of-center parties”; and therefore success of niche party does not always cause “the politicization of their promoted issues” (Abou-Chadi, 2014, p.17).

Another facet of political opportunity structure is related with the structure of the electoral system. It has a potential impact on the possibility of the success of the extreme right parties, especially it has been claimed that “proportional representation systems” are conducive to new parties' electoral success (Eatwell, 2017, p.412). On the contrary, election thresholds (e.g. 5 %) render it more difficult for small parties to persuade voters for their potential success (Eatwell, 2017, p.413).

The mediatization thesis claims that the media is flooded with “negative representation of ‘other’ ” and it openly backs the extreme right as well as plays an important role in “legitimizing” or “delegitimizing” issues and parties (Eatwell, 2017, p.413-414). It functions as an “agenda setter” for the extreme right and its “focus on personality” aids “leader-oriented parties” (Eatwell, 2017, p.414). The media also create the opportunity through programs like talk shows, interviews to question “mainstream politicians”, particularly on “broken promises and corruption” (Eatwell, 2017, p.414).

The national tradition thesis asserts that extreme right parties can gain electoral success if they find a way to legitimize themselves as “part of the national tradition” (Eatwell, 2017, p.414). If they have affiliation with political streams such as fascism or Nazism, they cannot achieve this legitimization (Eatwell, 2017, p.415).

According to **the programmatic thesis**, electoral support for extreme right parties does not necessarily related with the party program. Those parties do have ideology or a solid party program but issue-based politics increasingly become more effective in getting support and extremist parties are very good at “exploiting specific issues”, particularly when they establish a “broad party programmatic ‘direction’ which can be picked up by even the least politically sophisticated” (Eatwell, 2017, p.416). Thus, “issue-based politics” has a potential for success among “unsophisticated voters” (Eatwell, 2017, p.417).

Additionally, extreme right parties incline to develop an “ambivalent economic program” which appeal to both “supporters of free market” and the ones who seek “state protection” (Eatwell, 2017, p.417).

The charismatic leader thesis suggests that “party democracy is in decline” and electorate feel “de-alignment” (Eatwell, 2017, p.417) from the established parties. With the help of the media, the “emergence of charismatic leaders” proved to be useful in the success of the extreme right (Eatwell, 2017, p.417). These “charismatic leaders” have both the ability to impress voters by telling the political message in an easy way and “hold the party together” (Eatwell, 2017, pp.417-418).

In this chapter, first theoretical and conceptual approaches to populism, as well as core concepts and arguments of populism have been studied. Subsequently, description and ideological content of radical right-wing populism have been given.

Afterwards, supply and demand side theories on the root causes of the ascent of radical right and more specifically on the radical right populist parties have been summarized.

At this point, after reviewing the above mentioned concepts and theories, it can be articulated that answering one of the research question of this thesis, finding the reasons of hostility of right wing populist parties towards climate action, require to embrace a comprehensive approach and take relevant parts of several of the mentioned theories into consideration and also necessitate to apply them to the case of the AfD.

In the next chapter, the concept of anthropogenic climate change and its impacts on the environment will be explained briefly, because it will be favorable to demonstrate the concepts that constitute the source of populist radical right-wing parties' skepticism/denialism. Later, international efforts to tackle climate change as well as fundamental components of the climate and energy policies of the EU and Germany will be examined due to the negative attention they get from the AfD.

CHAPTER 3

CLIMATE CHANGE AND CLIMATE ACTION

In this chapter, first the concept of anthropogenic²⁵ climate change and its impacts will be briefly explained. Later, some major international arrangements aiming at mitigating and adapting to climate change will be highlighted in order to better expose what radical right-wing populist parties are opposing to. Since this party family demonstrates animosity against multilateralism and international cooperation (Schaller& Carius, 2019), in case they gather more momentum in the future, implementation of climate policies and thus, collective action will eventually be affected by their approach.

Within this context, international arrangements against climate change: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement will be addressed.

Then, in order to demonstrate the points contested by the European radical right-wing populist parties, specifically by the AfD, key features of climate and energy policies of the EU and Germany will be reviewed.

3.1. Anthropogenic climate change

Throughout the planet serious impacts of climate change and environmental degradation, such as extreme heat and drought, melting mountain glaciers, floods, rise in sea levels, have been experienced for the last couple of years²⁶. European continent has been no exception to this end

²⁵ Anthropogenic means “Resulting from or produced by human activities” (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2018)

²⁶ For further information please see: Cuddy, A. (2018, August 3). Eight ways the heatwave has affected Europe. *Euronews*. Retrieved from: <https://www.euronews.com/2018/08/03/eight-ways-the-heatwave-has-affected-europe> and Henley, J. (2019, June 25). Europe heatwave: record high of 45C expected in France. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/25/highs-of-45c-expected-in-france-as-heatwave-scorches-europ>

(European Commission, n.d.-e). Severe heat waves caused the loss of several lives throughout Europe and a prolonged drought had been experienced (NASA, 2018). There were devastating forest fires in Greece, Portugal, Sweden; crop failures in Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Scandinavia, the Netherlands and the Baltics and mountain glaciers were melted extensively²⁷. In July 2019, heatwaves impacted daily lives of millions of people throughout Europe²⁸.

Some groups in society still do not connect those serious consequences of climate change with human activities. Although, there is an international consensus²⁹ (Cook et al., 2016) in the scientific community that there is anthropogenic climate change which is a result of “anthropogenic emissions”³⁰, there are also denialists³¹ who refuse to accept findings of environmental/climate science and the connection between human activities and global warming (Björnberg, K.E., Karlsson, M., Gilek, M. & Hansson, S.O., 2017).

But here, details of the opinions of denialists/skeptics of climate change in the scientific community will not be reflected and only the assessments of

²⁷ For further information please see: Irfan, U. (2019, June 28). 113 degrees in France: why Europe is so vulnerable to extreme heat. *Vox*. Retrieved from: <https://www.vox.com/world/2019/6/26/18744518/heat-wave-2019-europe-france-germany-spain>

²⁸ For further information please see: Hook, L. (2019, August 5). Global temperatures match record levels in July. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ft.com/content/70f290de-9bd8-11e9-9c06-a4640c9feebb>

²⁹ In their study Cook et. al. (2016) demonstrated that, among climate scientists there is a scientific consensus on anthropogenic global warming with a range of 90 %- 100 % depending on the exact question, timing and sampling methodology.

³⁰ Anthropogenic emissions are emissions of “greenhouse gases (GHGs), precursors of GHGs and aerosols caused by human activities. These activities include the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, land use and land-use changes, livestock production, fertilization, waste management and industrial processes” (IPCC, 2018)

³¹ In their research, Björnberg et. al. (2017) analyzed “161 scientific articles on environmental and climate science denial published in peer reviewed international journals in the last 25 years” and try to answer questions such as: who writes about environmental science denial, when the articles are published, the geographical scope of the denialist articles, what is being denied and who denies.

international community as to the association between emissions of GHGs³² and global warming/climate change and consequences of it, will be underlined.

3.2 Climate change and its impacts on the environment

According to the EU's Earth Observation Program, Copernicus, for the last four years (2015-2018), monthly global average surface air temperature has been increasing in all months of the year and those four years have been the four warmest on record (Copernicus, 2019). June 2019 has been the warmest June ever recorded and the global average temperature³³ for July 2019³⁴ was higher with a small margin than that of July 2016³⁵ which was previously the record-breaking warmest month on record (Copernicus, 2019).

Scholars find out that current 30-year period has been 1°C warmer than the pre-industrial levels³⁶ (Copernicus, 2019) and they expect the records in high temperatures will be continuing in the future due to GHG emissions (Hook, 2019).

When compared with 1990, GHG emissions are more than 50 percent higher today (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], n.d) and between 2000 and 2010 “emissions grew more quickly than in each of the three previous decades” (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], n.d.). “In 2013, the daily level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere surpassed 400

³² GHGs are: carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆) and sodium trifluoride (NF₃) (Eurostat, 2019b).

³³ The average temperature of July 2019 was 1.2°C above the pre-industrial level (Copernicus, 2019).

³⁴ Scholars find the new record of July 2019 noteworthy because the previous record in 2016 was affected by the warming climatic cycle of El Niño (Hook, 2019).

³⁵ Record-breaking heatwave of July 2016 was experienced after an El Niño event. Climate change is not the cause of El Niño, on the contrary, El Niño “often produces some of the hottest years on record because of the vast amount of heat that rises from Pacific waters into the overlying atmosphere. Major El Niño events—such as 1972-73, 1982-83, 1997-98, and 2015-16—have provoked some of the great floods, droughts, forest fires, and coral bleaching events of the past half-century” (Carlowicz & Schollaert, 2017).

³⁶ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) takes 1850-1900 as the baseline years for pre-industrial levels (IPCC, 2018).

parts per million for the first time in human history. The last time levels were that high was about three to five million years ago, during the Pliocene era” (National Aeronautics and Space Administration [NASA], n.d.).

A recent study by World Weather Attribution group, conducting analysis on the linkage between climate change and weather events found that, in most parts of Europe without human induced climate change, it would be unlikely to reach such high temperatures and the temperatures would be 1.5 to 3°C cooler in an unchanged climate (World Weather Attribution [WWA], 2019).³⁷ The group indicates that they analyzed every heatwave since 2003 and found all of them have been impacted by climate change with a degree varying due to several factors such as location and intensity (WWA, 2019).

According to United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), “from 1880 to 2012, average global temperature increased by 0.85°C”, “oceans have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, and sea level has risen (UNEP, n.d.). “From 1901 to 2010, the global average sea level rose by 19 cm as oceans expanded” (UNEP, n.d.). “The Arctic’s sea ice extent has shrunk in every successive decade since 1979” (UNEP, n.d.). UNEP states that climate change impacts:

the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as heat waves, droughts, floods and tropical cyclones, aggravating water management problems, reducing agricultural production and food security, increasing health risks, damaging critical infrastructure and interrupting the provision of basic services such as water and sanitation, education, energy and transport (UNEP, n.d.).

The UNDP estimates hundreds of billions of dollars’ worth of annual average economic losses from climate related disasters (UNDP, n.d.).

After describing the association between anthropogenic GHG emissions and global warming/climate change and reviewing the effects of climate change on the environment, in the third part of this chapter, climate action will be described and major international efforts to tackle climate change as well as the climate and energy policies of the EU and Germany will be summarized to

³⁷ For the full report please see: <https://www.worldweatherattribution.org/wp-content/uploads/July2019heatwave.pdf>

better interpret the adverse points raised by radical right wing populist parties and specifically the AfD.

3.3. International efforts to tackle climate change

Considering severe humanitarian and economic consequences of climate change, the existence of skeptics and denialists constitute a huge threat to mitigation efforts against climate change as well as domestic and international climate action, since climate policies require strong political will, collective response, transformation of economies and more investment. Within this framework, it is crucial to understand what the radical right-wing populists are defying and what is international action against climate change. Thus, in this part, for the sake of the research purposes of this thesis, international mitigation and adaptation efforts to fight with climate change will be illustrated without going into much detail.

According to NASA (n.d.) responding to climate change contains a two faceted approach:

- “Reducing emissions of and stabilizing the levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (“mitigation”);
- Adapting to the climate change already in the pipeline (“adaptation”).

Mitigation efforts encompass, reduction of heat-trapping GHGs into the atmosphere, either by diminishing sources (for example, the burning of fossil fuels for electricity, heat or transport) of these gases or enhancing the “sinks” that accumulate and store these gases (such as the oceans, forests and soil) (NASA, n.d.).

The main objectives of mitigation efforts are to abstain from human intervention to the climate system (NASA, n.d.), and “stabilize greenhouse gas levels in a timeframe sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to

climate change, ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner”³⁸ (NASA, n.d.).

On the other hand, adaptation efforts contain “adjusting to actual or expected future climate” (NASA, n.d.). The objective is “to reduce our vulnerability to the harmful effects of climate change (like sea-level encroachment, more intense extreme weather events or food insecurity)” (NASA, n.d.).

Throughout this thesis, to reflect all these “mitigation” and “adaptation” efforts, the terms “climate action” and “climate policy” are used interchangeably. To be more specific, the approach of Schaller and Carius is followed and the term climate policy is taken as “political actions which aim to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions or improve carbon sinks” such as carbon trading and taxation laws, climate targets, various types of energy policy such as renewable energy subsidies and targets and energy efficiency laws (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.13).

Within this backdrop, the relevant major international efforts aim at achieving both mitigation and adaptation efforts would be addressed below.

3.3.1. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change³⁹.

The main international treaty on fighting climate change is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It was agreed in 1992, in Rio de Janeiro and its objective is to preclude perils of human activities on the global climate system. The Convention entered into force on March 21, 1994 (United Nations Climate Change [UNCC], n.d.-c). 197 countries are party to the Convention (UNCC, n.d.-c).

³⁸ For further information please see: United Nations Climate Change (n.d.-c). What is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change? Retrieved from: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-convention/what-is-the-united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change>

³⁹ United Nations (1992). United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Retrieved from: https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf

In 1994, at the time the UNFCCC was entered into force, there was less scientific evidence regarding the connection between human activities and climate change. So, first time in history, with UNFCCC, it was “recognized that there was a problem” (UNCC, n.d.-c).

Within the framework of the Convention, parties are required to diminish GHG emissions, collaborate on technology and research as well as encourage protection of sinks (UNCC, n.d.-c).

The Convention foresees “common but differentiated responsibilities” for the parties by “taking into account their respective development priorities, goals and special circumstances, in order to reduce GHG emissions” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, [MFA], n.d.). Developed countries were regarded as “the source of most past and current greenhouse gas emissions” and expected to take more responsibility to curb emissions at home (UNCC, n.d.-c).

3.3.2. The Kyoto Protocol⁴⁰

UNFCCC was a crucial step to solve global warming issue but GHG emission levels continued to rise globally, therefore a binding commitment was required to take more action (European Commission, n.d.-c). Parties to the UNFCCC come together to negotiate an international agreement (European Commission, n.d.-c). On 11 December 1997, after two and a half years of negotiations, Kyoto Protocol was adopted and has entered into force on 16 February 2005 (European Commission, n.d.-c). The Protocol has been ratified by 192 of the UNFCCC Parties, but since most of the key emitters are not party (China and the US⁴¹) to the Protocol, it covers only 12% of global emissions (European Commission, n.d.-c).

⁴⁰ United Nations (1998). *Kyoto Protocol*. Retrieved from: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf>

⁴¹ The US, under the administration of George W. Bush, announced its withdrawal from the treaty in 2001 (Baker, 2017).

In 2012 (after the end of the First Commitment Period), at the 18th Conference of the Parties, held in Doha, Qatar, participating countries undertaken new emission reduction targets for Second Commitment Period (2012-2020) (COP23). Thus, until 2020, the Kyoto Protocol will remain to be legally binding (European Commission, n.d.-c).

The Protocol mandates “developed countries to reduce their GHG emissions below levels specified for each of them in the Treaty” (MFA, n.d.). Two commitment periods have been foreseen by the parties. In the first period, between 2008 to 2012, “industrialized countries committed to reduce emissions by an average of 5% below 1990 levels”; in the second period, between 2013-2020, “parties who joined this period committed to reduce emissions by at least 18% below 1990 levels” (European Commission, n.d.-c).

3.3.3. The Paris Agreement⁴²

In December 2015, all UNFCCC Parties adopted the Paris Agreement which is the “first-ever universal, legally binding global climate agreement” (European Commission, n.d.-c). It is a one step forward than the Kyoto Protocol and designed to replace it (European Commission, n.d.-c). It was entered into force on November 4, 2016 and has been signed by 196 countries⁴³ and the EU and ratified by 185⁴⁴ (UNCC, n.d.-b).

It aims to decrease the amount of GHG emissions that contribute to global warming and foresees, 30-year period “temperature targets” with an

⁴² United Nations (2015). *Paris Agreement*. Retrieved from: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

⁴³ On June 1, 2017, Donald Trump, the President of the US announced that his administration is planning to withdraw the US (The second country responsible from global carbon emissions [Global Carbon Atlas, 2019]) from the Paris Climate Agreement. He stipulated that the Agreement has undesirable effects on job growth, prevents manufacturing, causes serious declines in natural gas, steel, coal mining, and cement industries. Trump Administration is of the opinion that the agreement is putting unjust standards on the US while compared with developing countries like China and India (White House, 2017). For the full statement please see: (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-paris-climate-accord/>)

⁴⁴ For status of ratification of the Paris Agreement please check: <https://unfccc.int/process/the-paris-agreement/status-of-ratification>

objective “to keep the increase in global average temperature below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels; and to aim to limit the increase to 1.5 °C” (Copernicus, 2019). It also aims at developed countries assist developing countries in their mitigation and adaptation obligations by providing "climate finance"⁴⁵.

3.3.4. Climate and Energy Policies of the EU

Since, the success of international climate policy depends on multilateral cooperation and global action, the EU's efforts as a global player is crucial to this end, being aware of this fact it has been spending serious efforts to reduce its carbon footprint and alleviate climate change (Schaller & Carius, 2019). Against this backdrop, the EU and all its members are party to the Paris Agreement (UNCC, n.d.-b).

Because the US announced its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in June 2017, the efforts spent by the EU has become more crucial and the EU proceeded its endeavors in climate action and still remained to be the champion of ambitious emission targets, approved several legislations on climate and energy fields (Schaller & Carius, 2019).

The challenge the EU encounters at this juncture is, while these ambitious targets are still regarded as inadequate to meet the objectives specified in the Paris Agreement, governments of the EU member states are having hard time in forming climate policy due to the discontent in their countries and administering progressive policies become harder because of the adverse stance of right wing populist parties (Schaller & Carius, 2019).

Within this context, being aware of the complexity and intertwined nature of the EU's energy and climate strategies/policies⁴⁶, in this section of Chapter 3, only some of the EU's energy and climate policies that are more

⁴⁵ US \$100 billion funding a year by 2020, to support mitigation and adaptation efforts of developing countries (UNCC, n.d.-a). For further information on climate finance please check: <https://unfccc.int/topics/climate-finance/the-big-picture/climate-finance-in-the-negotiations>

⁴⁶ More information on EU Energy Strategy please check : <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/energy-strategy-and-energy-union> and more information on EU Climate Action is available at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/index_en

relevant to the subject of this thesis will be expressed in order to demonstrate what policies, European populist right wing parties, specifically the AfD, are attacking to.

In the **EU's 2020 package** (a set of binding legislation adopted in 2007 and enacted in 2009, by the EU leaders to ensure the EU meets its climate and energy targets for the year 2020) (European Commission, n.d.-a) there are three objectives:

- 20% cut in GHG emissions from 1990 levels,
- obtaining 20% of EU energy from renewables,
- 20% improvement in energy efficiency (European Commission, n.d.-a).

On the other hand, EU's key targets foreseen by **2030 climate and energy framework** ⁴⁷ for the period from 2021 to 2030 includes:

- at least 40% cuts in GHG emissions from 1990 levels,
- obtaining at least 32% of EU energy from renewables,
- minimum 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency (European

Commission, n.d.-b).

On 28 November 2018, European Commission presented a long-term strategic vision for a climate-neutral economy (an economy with net-zero GHG emissions) by 2050 (European Commission, 2018).

To meet the above-mentioned targets, the EU implements various policies including **Emissions Trading System (ETS)** ⁴⁸. ETS is the primary instrument for reducing GHG emissions from large-scale facilities in the power and industry sectors, as well as the aviation sector (European Commission, n.d.-d). "The ETS covers around 45% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions" and in 2020, the target for the emissions from these sectors to be 21% lower than in 2005", for the period after 2020 "ETS sectors will have to cut emissions by 43% compared to 2005 (European Commission, n.d.-d).

⁴⁷ The European Council adopted the framework in October 2014. In 2018, the targets for renewables and energy efficiency were revised upwards (European Commission, n.d.-b).

⁴⁸For further information on EU ETS please see https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/ets_handbook_en.pdf

It operates in 31 countries (all 28 EU members as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), includes more than 11,000 power plants and factories, and has been world's first (established in 2005) and biggest major carbon market (accounts for over three-quarters of international carbon trading) (European Commission, n.d.-d).

The EU ETS foresees a “cap-and-trade” mechanism. The EU determines a “cap” on the amount of GHG to be emitted each year, within one calendar year, companies need to keep European Emission Allowance (EUA) for every tonne of CO₂ they emit (Appunn & Sherman, 2018).

In the system, a price for CO₂ emissions is determined, “companies have to hold allowances corresponding to their CO₂ emissions, making power production from burning coal and other fossil fuels more expensive and clean power sources more attractive” (Appunn & Sherman, 2018). Concurrently, firms are encouraged to be more energy efficient and the system gives them an opportunity to sell their emissions permits on the secondary market (Appunn & Sherman, 2018).

The EU ETS “sets an overall limit on all CO₂ emissions from power stations, energy-intensive industries (e.g. oil refineries, steelworks, and producers of iron, aluminum, cement, paper, and glass) and civil aviation. Extra-EU flights are not included in the system’s scope; only those between and within countries in the EU and European Economic Area must comply with the program” (Appunn & Sherman, 2018).

Companies receive or purchase permits as well as trade them. (Appunn & Sherman, 2018). Companies have to pay a fine of 100 euros per excess tonne, if they happen to emit more CO₂ than their allowances (Appunn & Sherman, 2018).

Similarly, companies can purchase “credits from emission-saving projects under the Kyoto Protocol’s Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) in developing countries”, in place of EU ETS allowances (Appunn & Sherman, 2018). This program aims at having a mechanism to slash emissions in the most cost-effective way (Appunn & Sherman, 2018).

The sectors that does not exist in the ETS (55% of total EU emissions) such as agriculture, waste, housing, transport (excluding aviation) fall within “national emission reduction targets” (European Commission, n.d.-d). Under this "**effort-sharing decision**", members of the EU have undertaken “binding annual targets until 2020 for cutting emissions in these sectors (compared to 2005), collectively to deliver a reduction of around 10 % (European Commission, n.d.-h). After 2020, non-ETS sectors will need to lower emissions by 30% compared to 2005 levels (European Commission, n.d.-h). Since there are serious regional differences among the member states of the EU, contribution of each member in terms of reduction goals has been determined on the basis of gross domestic product per capita (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Natural Conservation and Nuclear Safety, [BMU], n.d.-b).

On the other hand, under the **Renewable Energy Directive**, by 2020, EU member states assumed “binding national targets for raising the share of renewables in their energy consumption” (European Commission, n.d.-i).

3.3.5. Climate and Energy Policies of Germany

After reviewing major components of the EU’s energy and climate policy above, at this point Germany’s climate policy will be assessed. As stated above, Germany has been known as a champion of environmental protection and ambitious climate policies and those policies have been controversial and caused serious public debates due to their effects on the distribution of wealth and the burden they put on the state budget (Buck & Storbeck, 2019).

Protection of environment has a long history in Germany. Its tradition of “romantic environmentalism” is dating back to nineteenth century (Lees, 1995, p.8, as cited in Lees, 2005, p.236) and there is great amount of “post-materialist” value orientation among younger German electorate (Inglehart, 1990, p.163, as cited in Lees, 2005, p.236). Moreover, Germany has internationally been regarded as “an environmental leader”, particularly in climate protection (Hillebrand, 2015, p. 373). It has undertaken a leadership

role in international environmental policy at many international conferences (Lees, 2005, p.236).

Germany has determined its current ambitious climate targets in 2007 by the Integrated Energy and Climate Program and since then all governments have implemented policies to achieve those targets (BMU, n.d.-a).

On the other hand, in November 2016, Germany adopted Climate Action Plan for 2050 (BMU, 2016).

Germany's objective is cutting GHG by 40 % until 2020, by 55 % until 2030, by 70 % until 2040 and 80 to 95 % by 2050 compared to 1990 levels (BMU, 2018, p.24).

It aims to increase the share of renewables in final energy consumption to 18 % by 2020, 30% by 2030, 45% by 2040 and 60 % by 2050 (BMU, 2018, p.24).

It also targets to decrease primary energy consumption by 20 % until 2020 and 50 % until 2050 compared with 2008 (BMU, 2018, p.24).

In the Action Plan for 2050, GHG emission reduction targets (by 2030 compared with 1990), were also determined for the sectors of agriculture (31-34 % reduction), buildings (66-67 % reduction), energy (61-62 % reduction), industry (49-51 % reduction) and transport (40-42 % reduction) for the first time (BMU, 2018, p.25). Land use and forestry have also been included in it, not with foreseen targets but with measures to maintain and improve the CO₂ storage potential of forests (BMU, 2018, p. 25).

By 2018, Germany had achieved a reduction of 30,8 % on 1990 emission levels⁴⁹ (Amelang, Wehrmann & Wettengel, 2019). This makes a 4.5 % decline in emissions compared to 2017, “after a period of stagnation between 2014 and 2017” (Amelang et. al., 2019). Although there is a decrease in emission levels, the government estimated the emissions reductions to remain at the 32 % level compared to 1990 and revised the 2020 emission

⁴⁹ The Federal Environment Agency (UBA) explains this decline with the “reduced emissions in the energy industries sector where higher CO₂ prices (EU ETS) increased costs for coal” and the retirement of power plants. Moreover, higher oil prices and warmer weather cut heating oil use. (Amelang et.al., 2019)

reduction goal, stated that “it would take steps to close the current gap “as much as possible” and reach the target “as soon as possible” (Amelang et. al., 2019).

One of the main controversial agenda items on the German public debate as regards to climate and energy is Germany’s “coal phase out” plans. The Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment (the “coal commission”) presented its non-binding report on 3 July 2019 and announced that in order to reach the determined GHG emission reduction targets, Germany needs to phase out coal and brown coal (lignite)⁵⁰ entirely at the latest by 2038 or if the supply or the conditions of the industry allow, by 2035 (Schulz, 2019). German government is planning to adopt a “climate protection law” until the end of 2019, that will encompass the strategy laid out by the “coal commission” (Schulz, 2019). This will have serious impacts on the economy and labor market where the coal plants are located.

According to the phasing out strategy Germany is planning to disconnect 24 large coal units by 2022 (Schulz, 2019). The traditional coal-mining German states (North Rhine-Westphalia, Brandenburg, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt) will be particularly affected from the plan (Schulz, 2019). If the strategy of the coal commission accepted by the government, those states will receive financial aid over a period of 20 years, €1.3 billion per year to convert their industry from mining (Schulz, 2019). The Commission has estimated that 60.000 jobs are directly or indirectly dependent on coal and therefore will be impacted by the government’s decision (Schulz, 2019).

Another consequence of the coal phase out will be on consumers because of the rising electricity prices. The commission’s report stated a further

⁵⁰ Hard coal and lignite are carbon intensive and cheap fossil fuels and they have a share of 35.3 % in German power production (compared to 35.2% from renewables, 11.7% from nuclear and 12.8% from natural gas in 2018) (Appunn, 2019a). “As of December 2018, Germany doesn’t have any domestic hard coal mining left, coal is imported instead” (Appunn, 2019a). But it is the primary producer of brown coal (lignite) which is more carbon rich than hard coal (Appunn, 2019a). The Lusatian district in Brandenburg and Saxony, the Rhenish district in North Rhine- Westphalia, and the Central German district in Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt are the three operational brown coal mining districts left in Germany (Appunn, 2019a). Most of the coal is used in power stations that are close to the mines (Appunn, 2019a).

€2 billion a year is needed to relieve the burden of rising electricity prices on private individuals and companies from 2023 (Schulz, 2019).

In the past, Germany had a similar public debate on phasing out of nuclear energy in the long run and eventually with the convincing effect of nuclear disasters⁵¹ on the public opinion, Germany have put its plans into action to rule out nuclear energy from its energy mix.

In 2002, the coalition government of Social Democrats (SPD) and the Green party, led by Gerhard Schröder, enacted a law to phase out nuclear energy gradually (Kerstine, 2018). In 2010, the government of CDU/CSU and Free Democrats (FDP) wanted to reverse the law and extend the operating times of nuclear plants by 8 to 14 years (Staudenmaier, 2017). But in March 2011, after the Fukushima accident in Japan, Germany announced, all the nuclear plants will be shut down by 2022 (Staudenmaier, 2017). In June 2011, Germany terminated operations of 8 of the country's 17 reactors (Staudenmaier, 2017).

Another controversial agenda item in Germany, is the driving bans on older diesel cars in cities with low air quality. The impact of diesel cars on air pollution has become a contentious issue after “the Dieselgate”⁵² in 2015. Volkswagen acknowledged to use a software to cheat emission tests and the company paid \$27 billion in penalties and fines (Bensch, 2018). In 2018, environmental NGOs went to court in various states to push the state governments to impose bans in cities where air pollution is a serious problem (Appunn, 2019b). Then, the highest federal administrative court of the state of Baden-Württemberg has decided that “cities with air pollution levels above the admissible EU limit have to introduce driving bans if other measures to bring

⁵¹ Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima

More information on nuclear power accidents is available at: Union of Concerned Scientists (n.d.). A Brief History of Nuclear Accidents Worldwide. Retrieved from: <https://www.ucsusa.org/nuclear-power/nuclear-power-accidents/history-nuclear-accidents>

⁵² For further information on Dieselgate please see : Amelang, S. & Wehrmann, B. (2019, July 2). "Dieselgate"- a timeline of Germany's car emissions fraud scandal. *Clean Energy Wire*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cleanenergywire.org/factsheets/dieselgate-timeline-germanys-car-emissions-fraud-scandal>

down nitrogen oxide (NO_x) levels bear no satisfying results” (Appunn, 2019b; Zsiros & Embling, 2019).

After decisions of several state courts, Angela Merkel’s government encountered the possibility of bans on diesel cars in more than 50 cities and to prevent a potential backlash⁵³ decided to pass a federal emissions legislation that allow a softer response and foresees driving bans “in cities where nitrogen oxide levels exceed 50 µg/m³” (Appunn, 2019b).

On the passed federal emissions law of the government, another court in Mannheim, stated that “recent changes to the federal emissions law could be used to “de facto soften or undermine limits” which are binding under EU law” (Appunn, 2019b).

At the beginning of this chapter, the concept of anthropogenic climate change, its impacts on the environment and international efforts to tackle climate change have been briefly explained. Later, climate and energy policies of the EU and Germany that attract the negative attention of right-wing populists have been demonstrated.

In Chapter 4, first the literature on the political polarization of the climate change issue will be reviewed and the research explaining the linkage between radical right-wing populism and climate science skepticism/denialism and hostility towards climate action will be elaborated.

⁵³ For more information on government response on court bans please check: Angela Merkel aims to ward off diesel car ban in Germany. (2018, October 22). *Deutsche Welle*. Retrieved from: <https://www.dw.com/en/angela-merkel-aims-to-ward-off-diesel-car-ban-in-germany/a-45978487>

CHAPTER 4

RADICAL RIGHT-WING POPULISM AND CLIMATE ACTION

In this chapter, initially, the literature on the relation between ideological position of a political party and its viewpoint on climate science/change and climate action will be explained. Although, this thesis mainly concentrates on Europe, some research pertinent to other parts of the world will also be mentioned. Consequently, some literature explaining the relationship between populist radical right and climate change will be underscored, but most importantly a very recent research by Schaller and Carius (2019) which examined national election programs, public statements by party leaders/spokespersons, press releases and voting behavior of 21 European right wing populist parties in the European Parliament, will be emphasized.

4.1. Discussions on the association between ideology and position on climate change

Research demonstrate that there is an association between the ideological position of a political party and its stance on climate science/change and climate action. It has been shown by various scholars' work that party polarization on politics of global warming and anthropogenic climate change is pervasive worldwide. Here, because of the limited scope of this thesis, only few of them will be pointed out.

For instance, Guber focuses on the case of the US and refers to the cross-sectional polls administered by the Gallup Organization. Gallup polls show that "partisan identification" (Guber, 2013, p. 93) among the Democrats and the Republicans has proved to be significant cause of concern for the environment within the American public. The political disagreement on climate change in the US is among Liberals and Democrats on the one side and

Conservatives and Republicans on the other. (In another study, McCright and Dunlap (2016) also find that Liberals and Democrats show greater concern about climate change than Conservatives and Republicans).

According to Guber (2013), polarization on global warming and environment seems to be more explicit than other issues on the public agenda. This may be related with issue-specific events or “political climate” tightened by partisan enmities among the elites (Guber, 2013, p.108). But public positions are formed and maintained through more complicated process (Conover & Feldman, 1984, as cited in Guber 2013, p.108)

Communications by the elites and their way of putting certain issues in place is crucial in public’s reaction (Guber, 2013). If they stand by the ideological lines instead of uniting, public response will also be ideological (Zaller, 1992, as cited in Guber 2013).

Efforts by prominent figures such as Al Gore (with the documentary “An Inconvenient Truth”⁵⁴) to attract the attention of the media and the public, increase the issue salience, also caused strong political opposition (Guber, 2013, p.108). “A partisan approach” on climate change might have a positive effect to attract supporters but pursuing partisan strategies can also cause controversy in fear of triggering opposition (Guber 2013, p.108).

In another research McCright and Dunlap (2016) used the results of Eurobarometer survey data on the publics of 25 EU countries before the 2008 global financial crisis, the 2009 ‘climategate’⁵⁵ controversy and COP-15 in Copenhagen, and demonstrate an increase in organized climate change denial

⁵⁴ A documentary on science of global warming and former Vice President Al Gore’s experiences as well as gives the message that “global warming is real, man-made, and its effects will be cataclysmic if we don’t act now” (Al Gore, n.d.). For more information please see: <https://www.algore.com/library/an-inconvenient-truth-dvd>

⁵⁵ In 2009, hackers stole thousands of emails and other documents from the University of East Anglia’s Climatic Research Unit and argued “scientists had been deliberately manipulating data to exaggerate evidence of climate change”. For further information please see: ‘Climategate’: 10 years on, what’s changed? (2019, July 10). *BBC News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/science-environment-48925015/climategate-10-years-on-what-s-changed>

campaigns in the EU, as regards to left–right ideological divide on climate change views (McCright & Dunlap, 2016, p.339).

According to the results of the research there is a “significant ideological divide in citizens’ climate change views in Western European countries”, people with “right” ideology are “less likely than those on the left to believe that anthropogenic climate change is occurring, perceive climate change to be a serious problem, think climate change can be dealt with, express a personal willingness to pay to deal with climate change, and support policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions” (McCright & Dunlap, 2016, p.348). The root cause of this skepticism in the citizens on the “right” against climate change and climate change related policies, is likely to be associated with their perception that those policies will “limit private property rights, increase governmental intervention into markets, and further erode national sovereignty” (McCright & Dunlap, 2016, p.350).

In contrast, the research could not find an ideological divide on climate change views “among general publics of former Communist countries” and in those countries “citizens on the right, report greater personal willingness to pay to fight climate change than do citizens on the left” (McCright & Dunlap, 2016, p.350-351). This controversy is related with “the low political salience of climate change and the differing meaning of left–right identification in these countries” (McCright & Dunlap, 2016, p.350). On the subject, in another study, Grant and Tilley, have also confirmed that salience of environmental issues in post-communist Europe is lesser (2019, p.500). Chaisty and Whitefield (2015), defines this situation as the “post-Communist effect”.

“Since the 2008 global financial crisis, and the ‘Climategate’ controversy and conflictual Copenhagen COP-15 of late 2009, climate change likely has become more politicized in the EU (Clements, 2012a; Carter, 2014; Carter and Clements, 2015; Capstick et al., 2015 as cited in McCright & Dunlap, 2016, p.351).

According to McCright and Dunlap’s research, females, younger and more educated people are more inclined to believe in the existence of

anthropogenic climate change, perceived the situation serious and support measures to be taken more than male and older people (2016, p.350).

In another research, Farstad (2018) analyzed party manifestos from 18 OECD countries. On the relation between left-right ideology of political parties with their climate change salience, she suggests that variance in parties' salience as regards to climate change policies is more related to party ideology rather than by parties' "economic and policy preferences, size and strategic incentives and incumbency constraints and points towards the partisan (as opposed to the valence) nature of the climate change issue" (Farstad, 2018, p.705).

She showed that "right-wing parties generally have lower levels of climate change salience" but when moving to the center, there is "higher level of salience" than "their neighboring party family to the left" (Farstad, 2018, p.703).

She argues there is variations within and between "political party families on each side of the political spectrum" (Farstad, 2018, p. 703).

Climate change issue presents a challenge for a political party, because the policies related to climate change may require altruistic measures like market interventions or restrictions on property rights (Farstad, 2018, p.700). Additionally, "decarbonizing the global economy" require more fundamental "interventions" into the markets and lives of people than that of "addressing traditional environmental problems" (Farstad, 2018, p.700). Those interventions' impacts could be beneficial globally or in the long run; but could have shortcomings for the national economy in the short term (Farstad, 2018). Therefore, they would be more difficult to be justified before the citizens.

She also points out to the works of various political psychologists that "conservatives are more likely to express system justification tendencies" (Feygina, Jost & Goldsmith, 2010; Fielding, Head, Laffan, Western & Hoegh-Guldberg, 2012, as cited in Farstad, 2018, p.700) which are more apparent in the case of climate change, as it entails more "changes to the status quo than addressing other environmental problems" (Farstad, 2018, p.700). Therefore, it

would be more difficult for right-wing parties to be affirmative to the collective action to address climate change (Farstad, 2018, p.700).

According to Farstad (2018), mainstream parties both on the left and the right do not consider climate change as a primary issue, but they integrated it into their party programs with variations.

After going through various scholars' research on political polarization on climate change, next section of Chapter 4 will have a close look at the literature on the conceptual linkage between radical right-wing populism and its hostility towards climate science and climate action. This will take a step forward in connecting the dots among the various concepts and theories that have been scrutinized so far.

4.2. The conceptual linkage between radical right-wing populism and hostility towards climate science and climate action

Lockwood argues that there is sufficient research to suggest that there is a relationship between right wing populist parties and being antagonistic to the climate agenda with variations (Lockwood, 2018). He introduces two approaches which explains the hostility of right-wing parties and movements towards climate action: structuralist explanation and the ideological content of the radical right (Lockwood, 2018). He posits that the structuralist approach which tries to describe the reasons of right wing populists' hostility to the climate agenda with "economic and political marginalization" "amongst left-behind by globalization and technological change", is very limited and needs further explanation and thus, ideological approach to populism will be more complementary to this end (Lockwood, 2018, p.713).

Most affected sectors from the climate policies and from "technical change, globalization and de-unionization" (Bornschiefer & Kriesi, 2012; Ford & Goodwin, 2014; Rodrik, 2017 as cited in Lockwood 2018, p.719) are the most carbon intensive ones such as "manufacturing, heavy industry, mining (especially coal)" (Lockwood, 2018, p.719) and they harbor constituency with right wing populist tendency.

Workers of more carbon intensive sectors are less willing to undertake the price of climate protection measures and do not favor global cooperation to reduce emissions (Bechtel et al., 2017, as cited in Lockwood 2018, p.719).

Living standards, financial difficulties of the “left behind” might also explain the hostility against environmental taxes, thus climate science and policies (Lockwood, 2018). But there is a shortcoming of this structuralist approach. Since manual workers and self-employed have varying economic interests and coming from distinctive political affiliations (Ivarsflaten, 2005, Ford & Goodwin, 2014, as cited in Lockwood 2018), structural explanation will not be sufficient to explicate their inclination towards right-wing parties. There are places where workers are well-paid and protected from the effects of globalization, but still they accommodate strong support towards right wing populism instead of left-wing populism. Lockwood underlines that menace to be unemployed in carbon intensive industries emanate from “technical change and globalization”, and the share of workers employed in fossil fuel industries is so miniscule that will not impact on the “positioning of right-wing populist parties and movements on climate change” (Lockwood, 2018, p.721). At this point, values and ideology might be relevant (Norris & Inglehart, 2019).

Therefore, a more comprehensive explanation utilizing ideational approach, combining populism’s nationalism, authoritarianism and anti-elitism components that help us to comprehend the hostility of the people towards “corrupt-illegitimate liberal, cosmopolitan elite” might be helpful (Lockwood, 2018, p.726). Lockwood argues that main targets of populists are immigration and (in Europe) the EU but “the climate change agenda fits in well as a collateral damage” (Lockwood, 2018, p.726) and climate change and policy inhabit a “symbolic place” within the context of enmity between “the people” and “the cosmopolitan elite” (Lockwood, 2018, p.726). He also claims populists’ tendency to believe conspiracy theories can also be an aspect of

climate skepticism⁵⁶ (Lockwood, 2018, p.726; Lewis, Boseley & Duncan, 2019).

There are also other studies demonstrating the link between climate-change skepticism and conservatism in Australia, Germany, Sweden, UK, and the US (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014; Campbell & Kay, 2014; Capstick & Pidgeon, 2014; Carvalho, 2007; Jaspal, Nerlich, & van Vuuren, 2016; Kaiser & Rhomberg, 2016; McCright & Dunlap, 2011; Painter & Gavin, 2016 as cited in Forchtner et. al., 2018, p.590). The main argument of those research is, far-right actors are mostly climate skeptic due to populist tendencies and/or the existence of the people is threatened by “globalist forces” (Forchtner et. al., 2018, p.591).

There is another research specifically focusing on radical right non-party actors in Germany. In their research, Forchtner et al. (2018) examine communications (from magazines and blogs) of different German radical-right non-party actors (radical-right populist, extreme right and Neo-Nazis).

They argue that the protection of nature is an important issue for Germany’s far right since the nineteenth century and “being green has emerged as a matter of national identity in Germany” (Uekötter, 2014, p.2 as cited in Forchtner et al., 2018). In the past, Germany’s National Socialists also encompass “sacredness of the national landscape” for the people (Forchtner et al., 2018, p.590).

One explanation about the reaction of radical right actors is, they do not reject the science altogether but show “discontent against the mainstream scientists who contribute the project of the corrupt elite and harm the general will of the pure people” (Mudde, 2007, p.22f; Forchtner et al., 2018, p.596).

Far-right ideology, similar to conservative climate-change skepticism, accuse the media with mispresenting information on climate change, blame “mainstream as being alarmist and close to a religious cult”, assert that climate change policies create economic damage and they are “money making scams”

⁵⁶ The results of the YouGov-Cambridge Globalism Project’s survey published by the Guardian reveals that populists are more inclined to believe “manmade global warming was a hoax” (Lewis et. al., 2019).

(Forchtner et al., 2018, p.600). “Concern with the Volk [people], its sovereignty and well-being coming under threat from globalist climate policies” shows the collectivist feature of far-right thinking (Forchtner et al., 2018, p.600).

In a more comprehensive and recent research on climate agendas of right wing populist parties in Europe, Schaller and Carius (2019) examined official national election programs of 21 European right wing populist parties⁵⁷, public statements by their party leaders/spokespersons, press releases, their voting behavior in the European Parliament for the terms between 2009-2018 and news resources to specify their views on climate change.

They find all of the right-wing populist parties they studied, have some kind of perspective on climate change with some variation (Schaller & Carius, 2019). Most of those parties are against energy transition and climate policies, but some of them have a kind of ‘green patriotism’ and support environmental protection, but not climate action (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.IV). Some others are in favor of “renewable energy installment” for energy independence and clean air (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.IV).

They maintain that since right-wing populist parties are antagonistic against policies supporting international cooperation and multilateralism, increasing influence of right-wing populist parties at national and European level will have serious impacts on progress and implementation of climate policies and environmental conservation. Additionally, centralist parties’ possible shifting to nationalist approaches or climate-skeptic policies will put the implementation of the Paris Agreement and other international

⁵⁷ Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs / Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ); Dansk Folkeparti / Danish People’s Party (DF); Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond / Conservative People’s Party of Estonia (EKRE); Alternative für Deutschland / Alternative for Germany (AfD); United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP); Partij voor de Vrijheid / Party for Freedom (PVV); Sverigedemokraterna / Sweden Democrats (SD); Svoboda a přímá demokracie – Tomio Okamura / Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD); National Rally (former National Front) (RN); Chrysi Avgi / Golden Dawn (XA); Lega Nord (Lega); Tvarka ir teisingumas / Order and Justice (TT); Progress Party (PP); Vlaams Belang / Flemish Interest (VB); Bulgarsko Natsionalno Dvizhenie / Bulgarian National Movement (VMRO); Prawo i Sprawiedliwość / Law and Justice (PiS); Slovenská národná strana / Slovak National Party (SNS); Schweizerische Volkspartei / Swiss People’s Party (SVP); Perussuomalaiset / Finns Party (PS); Fidesz; Nacionālā Apvienība / National Alliance (NA) (Schaller & Carius 2019, p.11)

arrangements under jeopardy (Schaller & Carius, 2019). Therefore, Schaller and Carius (2019) argue, understanding the reasoning behind and variance across populist movements on arguments, climate change frames, voting behavior, would be significant in designing inclusive policies as responses.

4.3. Communication frames used by right-wing populist parties

After perusing over the conceptual association between radical right-wing populism and its hostility towards climate science and action, now in order to better understand their discourse, frames used by radical right-wing populist parties while they are presenting their arguments to their target audience will be assessed.

Considering the core elements and main arguments of populists, in their analysis, Kyle and Gultchin classifies “populist frames”⁵⁸ used in “us vs. them conflict” in three categories: cultural populism, socio-economic populism and anti-establishment populism (2018, p.21).

According to them in “cultural populism”, the people are “the native members of the nation state”; the others are non-natives, criminals, ethnic and religious minorities and cosmopolitan elites” and key themes used are “emphasis on religious traditionalism, law and order, national sovereignty and migrants as enemies” (Kyle & Gultchin, 2018, p.21).

As for, “socio-economic populism”, the people are “hardworking, honest members of the working class, which may transcend national boundaries”; the others are “big business, capital owners, foreign or imperial forces that prop up an international capitalist system” and key themes are “anti-capitalism, working class solidarity, foreign business interests as enemies, often joined with Anti-Americanism” (Kyle & Gultchin, 2018, p.21-22).

In “anti-establishment” populism, the people are “hardworking, honest victims of a state, run by special interests”; the others are “political elites who represent the prior regime” and “purging the state from corruption and strong

⁵⁸ The term “framing” means “communicative processes of sense-making in which some aspects of reality are emphasized, and others are de-emphasized” (Schäfer & O’Neill, 2017, as cited in Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.13).

leadership to promote reforms” are the key themes (Kyle & Gultchin, 2018, p.21).

On the communication frames on climate change used by populists, Schaller and Carius pinpoint that “all climate change communication is framed and appeals to values and interests of the target group” and “the framing used by politicians and journalists to describe climate change and policy triggers certain cognitive processes which shape the audiences’ responses. The way an issue is presented is often done so “with the intention of making it appear either more or less acceptable to the audience” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.13).

They distinguished four all-embracing frames used to support populist arguments on climate action which are “scientific dissent”, “homeland (“Heimat”) and nature”, “economic decline” and “national independence” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.14). By using such types of frames, “a moral or emotional dimension” and “invisible values” are included into the debate (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.14).

“The scientific dissent frame” questions the main argument that there is human-induced climate change. By questioning this, parties using this frame “delegitimize most climate policies” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.14).

“The national independence frame” is employed with the argument to “defend or restore the people’s sovereignty” that is jeopardized by international agreements. “It appeals to an ‘imagined community’ of the people overruled by external elites” (Mudde, 2004, as cited in Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.14).

4.4. Variations in right-wing populist parties’ approach to climate change/action

Far-right ideology vocalize anxieties over the environment with varieties of climate change skepticism. Rahmstorf introduced three typologies as regards to climate change skepticism: trend skepticism (refusal of climate change completely), attribution skepticism (refusal of climate change’s anthropogenic cause), impact skepticism (believing in changing climate is not bad) (Rahmstorf, 2004, as cited in Forchtner et al., 2018, p.590). Van Rensburg

makes an addition to Rahmstorf's differentiation (2015, as cited in Forchtner et al., 2018, p.590): evidence skepticism (inclusive of Rahmstorf's three typologies), process skepticism (as regards to knowledge generation and decision-making processes) and response skepticism (policy responses).

Those variants in skepticism reflect themselves in the discourse of populist parties and facilitate making differentiation of their stance on climate action.

Within this context, Schaller and Carius, classified radical right populist parties in terms of their approach to climate change under three titles: Denialist/Skeptical; Disengaged/Cautious; Affirmative parties (2019, p.11).

4.4.1. Denialist/skeptical right-wing populist parties

“Denialist/Skeptical” parties approach the scientific consensus on human-induced climate change with suspicion or openly refuse evidence beyond reasonable doubt. (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.10).

Some of the explicitly denialist parties claim that their people are “victims of secret plans by leading political actors, using similar storylines to those known as conspiracy theories”. Some maintain that “anthropogenic climate change is an invented theory used to draw (financial) resources out of the public, for example by applying additional taxes” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.10).

Good examples for this denialist/skeptical group are: Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ); Danish People's Party (DF); Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE); Alternative for Germany (AfD); United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP); Party for Freedom (PVV) of the Netherlands and Sweden Democrats (SD) (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.11).

4.4.2. Disengaged/cautious right-wing populist parties

“Disengaged/Cautious” parties do not have a position on climate change or ascribe little significance to the subject. This approach may be related with their past as “single-issue parties, the relative lack of focus on

climate change in respective domestic public debates or to their own internal division” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.11). Those parties underline ambiguity “around the impacts of emissions in the atmosphere and the effects of climate policy” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.11).

According to the findings of Schaller and Carius , there are 11 right-wing populist parties in this group. Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD) of the Czech Republic; National Rally (former National Front) (RN) of France; Golden Dawn (XA) of Greece; Lega Nord (Lega) of Italy; Order and Justice (TT) of Lithuania; Progress Party (PP) of Norway; Flemish Interest (VB) of Belgium; Bulgarian National Movement (VMRO); Law and Justice (PiS) party of Poland; Slovak National Party (SNS) and Swiss People’s Party (SVP) (2019, p.11).

4.4.3. Affirmative right-wing populist parties

“Affirmative” parties favor the scientific mainstream and acknowledge the hazard of climate change to both to their own countries and the world. Only, Finns Party (PS); Fidesz of Hungary and National Alliance (NA) of Latvia are in this group (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.11).

4.4.4. Right-wing populist parties supporting energy transition and renewable energy

Some of the right-wing populist parties endorse energy transition (irrespective of their opinions on climate change) and underscore the advantages of renewable energy (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.20). They argue renewable energy resources will bring energy independence and economic benefits as well as they will have positive effects on quality of life (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.20). Here, all these arguments are once again framed with the concepts of homeland and nature, and national independence (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.20)

4.5. Right-wing populist parties' criticism on energy transition policies and climate action

As stated by Schaller and Carius (2019) populist radical-right parties' criticism over energy transition policies and climate action policies are assembled on four points. They are considered to be “expensive, unjust, harmful to the environment or not worthwhile” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.14). Apart from these four main arguments another less notable but used argument by the right-wing populist parties is related with human health. Some parties⁵⁹ might argue, for instance, infrasonic waves can come from wind power turbines, and this might impact human health negatively (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.17).

4.5.1. Policies that are economically harmful and expensive

First one is, climate action is “economically harmful” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.14). The parties advocating this argument, suggest “renewable support schemes, efficiency laws, emissions trading or carbon taxes) harm the economy and the competitiveness of national industries” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.14). The AfD is a prominent example of a populist party using this argument (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.14). “Climate protection measures, especially “uncompetitive” renewable energies, are assumed to drive up energy prices” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.14). They frame their argument with “economic decline, national independence, and occasionally scientific dissent” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.14).

4.5.2. Policies that are unjust and socially unfair

Second argument is, climate action is “socially unfair”. Some of the parties claim that climate policy damages social justice⁶⁰ (Schaller & Carius,

⁵⁹ Finns Party used this argument (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.17).

⁶⁰ The Gilets Jaunes (Yellow Vests) revolts is a very good example to illustrate “social justice argument” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p. 16). It is a mass citizens' protest movement began in

2019, p.15). By using the economic decline frame, they argue “emission reduction policies would lead to higher energy prices and cost people their jobs” and “some right-wing populist parties disproportionately emphasize rising electricity prices for ‘the common people’ ” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.15). Another resorted argument in terms of social justice is, “subsidies for renewable energies are expensive and unfair” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.15).

4.5.3. Policies that are harmful to the environment

Third argument on climate action is, “environmentally harmful” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.17). Parties show opposition to “very specific climate policy measures such as increasing wind and solar power among other renewable energy sources, which would impact the national environment (homeland and nature frame) (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.17). For instance, new turbines are seen to destroy the traditional landscape and harm local bird species (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.17). Solar panels are often criticized for occupying land and, when put on rooftops, changing the typical imagery of settlements” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.17). Parties following this argument do not interested in effects of industrial activities or other energy sources (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.17). They generally favor nuclear energy (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.17). As long as the landscape is unharmed, they might accept other renewable resources (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p. 17).

4.5.4. Policies that are useless/not worthwhile

Fourth argument is climate action is “not worthwhile” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p. 17). Advocates of this argument depict climate policy as useless, “either when a party questions the relation between greenhouse gas

November of 2018 in France, against a planned rise in the tax on diesel and petrol, which France President Emmanuel Macron argued would aid the country’s transition to green energy (Chrisafis, 2018). The protests turned into a wider anti-government movement and regarded as a backlash for climate policy and widely used by right wing groups in Europe (Chrisafis, 2018). The protests gradually got violent and illustrated climate policies might cause widespread anger when relevant measures are not included in wider redistribution policies and social reform programs (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p. 16).

emissions and temperatures (scientific uncertainty frame) or when it considers national abatement futile (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p. 17). “Some arguments used to support the latter include the alleged insignificance of national reductions when compared to the apparent inaction of other major polluters such as China, or in view of potential carbon leakage effects” (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.17).

In Chapter 4, the literature on ideological polarization on anthropogenic climate change and climate action has been reviewed and some of the literature explaining the relationship between radical right-wing populism and climate change have been explained. Consequently, the details of the research by Schaller and Carius (2019) on the climate agendas of European right-wing populist parties have been given. Frames used by European right-wing populist parties, variations in their skeptic approaches have been explored and discerned within the framework developed by Schaller and Carius (2019). Additionally, major arguments of European right-wing populist parties on climate action have been inspected. Within this context, the first research question of this thesis, “why and how radical right-wing populist parties are against climate action?” has been addressed.

Next chapter will examine the AfD as a case of populist radical right-wing party and the remaining of the research questions will be answered by zooming into its history and ideological foundations, its party manifesto, statements by the party members, posts in its social media accounts as well as by using the concepts and theories introduced in the previous chapters.

CHAPTER 5

CASE OF THE AfD AND CLIMATE POLICY

In this chapter, the history and ideological foundations on which the AfD was established will be explained to better understand its approach as a populist party to climate action. Later, findings of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue regarding anti-environmentalism appearing more frequently on the AfD's social media accounts will be reviewed, some of the party members' statements on climate change and climate action will be highlighted and various allegations regarding the AfD's affiliation with certain interest groups known for climate science denial will be underlined.

Next, manifesto of the AfD will be scrutinized and its position on energy and climate policies will be explained.

Thus, in this chapter the remaining research questions of this thesis regarding the position of the AfD on climate science and action as well as the reasons of its position will be addressed.

5.1. The AfD as a populist radical right-wing party

The Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland -AfD) is one of the six political parties (others are Christian Democratic Union (CDU)/Christian Socialist Union (CSU); Free Democratic Party (FDP); the Social Democratic Party (SPD); Alliance '90/the Greens (Bündnis '90/die Grünen); the Left Party (Die Linke)) represented in German parliament (Bundestag) after the general elections on 24 September 2017 (Bundestag, 2017).

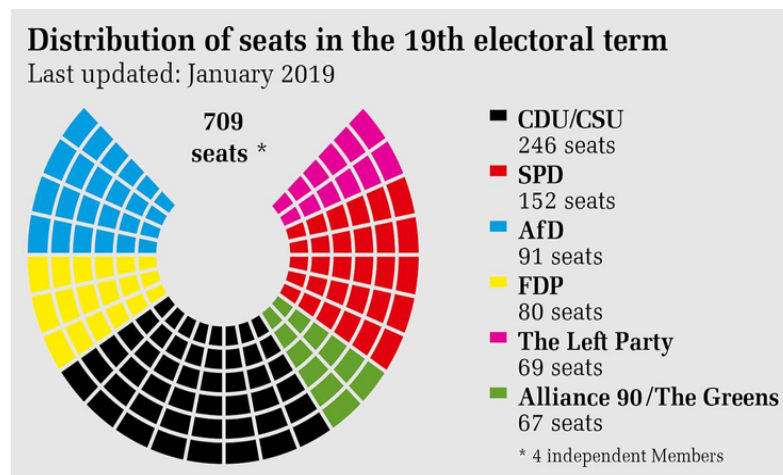


Figure 1- Source: Deutscher Bundestag.

The AfD is known for its anti-immigration and anti-Islam position and populist approach in German politics⁶¹. Voss argues that the AfD is a clear example of far-right populism (Lewandosky et al., 2016, as cited in Voss 2018, p.11). Norris and Inglehart categorize the AfD as an “authoritarian populist right party” (2019, p.478). Hansen and Olsen stipulate that “during the 2017 election campaign the AfD ... completed its transformation from an anti-EU (or EU-skeptical) party to a populist radical right party prioritizing nativism (2019, p. 4). They note the arguments of some scholars that “the AfD’s deepening ties with the Pegida⁶² movement since 2015 show the AfD’s transition from anti-EU party to a populist radical right party emphasizing nativism and anti-immigrant sentiment (Druxes and Simpson, 2016; Grabow, 2016; Patton, 2017, as cited in Hansen & Olsen, 2019, p.3).

⁶¹ In this thesis the AfD has been taken as a radical right wing populist party. A study by Arzheimer (2015) with a different perspective and arguing the AfD is located on a position at the far right of the German party system but it is neither populist nor belonging to the family of radical right parties, Arzheimer, K. (2015). The AfD: Finally, a Successful Right-Wing Populist Eurosceptic Party for Germany. *West European Politics* 38 (3), pp.535-556. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2015.1004230>

⁶² "Patriotische Europäer Gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes" (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West) started as a protest against “dilution of German identity through immigrants” in Dresden on October 20, 2014. Pegida demands: “a points-based immigration system, tougher deportation measures, “zero tolerance” for immigrants that commit crimes, and the “protection of the Judeo-Christian western culture” (Knight, 2017).

It began its political course “as a single-issue Eurosceptic movement” (Grimm, 2015, p.272) by opposition to single currency emanating from “ordoliberal economic doctrine” (Grimm, 2015, p.272).

It was established on 6 February 2013, just before the general elections in Germany by some of the members of Christian Democratic Union⁶³ (CDU), frustrated with the party leadership’s policies dealing with the Euro Zone crisis⁶⁴ (Saalfeld & Schoen, 2015, p. 106). At the time, in its manifesto, “Germany’s withdrawal from the Euro and return to national currencies” were demanded and there were no detailed policy recommendations on other areas (Saalfeld & Schoen, 2015, p.106).

The AfD challenged the bailout measures for Eurozone countries in crisis (Kim, 2018, p.2), is a true believer in free market (Kim, 2018, p.2). It has a firm and absolute trust in market and competition (Kim, 2018, p.8), has also anti-interventionist views on economic and social policies (Kim, 2018, p.2). Its focus on “free market” distinguishes the AfD from other populist radical right parties of Europe which incline to advocate protectionist positions (and could be regarded as economically leftist) (Decker, 2018, p. 203).

The AfD still asks for putting an end to the “Euro” and for a referendum for “Germany’s continued membership of the single currency area” (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.17).

It advocates partially terminating some of social insurance programs (Kim, 2018, p.2) and although it supports the maintenance of a minimum wage system in its basic doctrine in 2016 and in its manifesto for federal parliament elections in 2017 (Kim, 2018, p.9), its leaders announced on various occasions that they are against the minimum wage system (Kim, 2018, pp.8-9). The AfD

⁶³ For further information on Euro Zone crisis please check: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-13856580>
Between 2005-2009 there were CDU/CSU - SPD coalition government and between 2009-2013 there was the CDU/CSU - FDP coalition government under the leadership of Chancellor Angela Merkel (Bundesregierung, n.d.).

⁶⁴ During the Euro Crisis, Germany (with the concern that financial crisis in southern European countries could cause the demise of the Eurozone and destroy other economies in Europe) accepted to establish “the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF)” and fund the countries in crisis, including Greece (Kim, 2018, p.12).

wants to reform income tax and cancel some of the taxes that promote income redistribution (e.g. inheritance taxes, property taxes) (Kim, 2018, p.2).

It “opposes the idea to transform the EU into a centralized federal state” but supports the idea of “an economic union based on shared interests, and consisting of sovereign, but loosely connected nation states” (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.17).

The party, like other European right-wing populist parties, request “more direct democratic participation on the basis of ... ‘Swiss model’ ” (Decker, 2018, p.203) which foresees voting of the people on laws made by the Parliament (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.8).

Its negative stance on immigration directly reflected in its manifesto. It advocates “the complete closure of external EU borders” (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.58), implementing strict controls along the borders of Germany at which irregular immigration occurs (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.59), establishing “shelter and asylum centers in safe countries in the regions where migration originates from” (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.58) to prevent immigrants with low qualifications (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.62) from reaching Germany. It highlights its commitment to the “predominance of German culture” (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.46) and refuse Islam as a component of German society and argues that “its expansion and the ever-increasing number of Muslims in the country are ... a danger to” German state, society, and German values (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.48).

Another feature of the AfD is, the significance it attributes to traditional family structure “as a significant and fundamental unit of society”. It argues that feminists “favors women with a career above mothers and housewives” and criticizes this approach (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.40).

In 2016, the AfD, applauded the election of US President Donald Trump (Scholz, 2017) and Britain’s decision to exit the EU (Neuerer, 2016).

In national election of 2013⁶⁵, just months after its foundation, the AfD won 4.7 % of the national vote and in Hessian state elections it remained at the 4.1 % level and could not reach the 5 % threshold (Kim, 2018, p. 3). But since 2014, German voters have elected the party to every state parliament in state elections (Kim, 2018, p.4) and the European Parliament. Beginning with the European Parliament election in May 2014, the AfD won 7.1% of votes and got 7 parliament seats (European Parliament, 2014). A while later, the party won around 10% of votes in state parliament elections in Brandenburg, Sachsen and Thuringia which were states of former East Germany (Kim, 2018, p.3).

Following a power struggle in mid-2015, party leader Bernd Lucke was replaced by Frauke Petry. The party embraced a more anti-immigrant, anti-Islam and nationalist agenda (Arzheimer & Berning, 2019; Patton, 2018, p.56; Art, 2018, p.82) that proved to be beneficial for the AfD's success during the refugee crisis in 2015 (Arzheimer & Berning, 2019, p.3).

In 2015, the AfD won seats in Hamburg and Bremen state parliaments and extended its scope over northern states (Kim, 2018, p.4). During 2016 and 2017, the AfD won nine state elections and got seats in all state parliaments (Kim, 2018, p.4). "The party won an average of 17.4% of votes across five elections, more than double the average it had won before" with the impact of the refugee crisis (Kim, 2018, p.4). Later, the AfD showed an impressive performance and "won 24.3% of the votes in Sachsen-Anhalt and 20.8% of the votes in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern" (Kim, 2018, p.4).

Later, before the 2017 Bundestag election, Frauke Petry tried to direct the party towards a more "pragmatic direction by which it would distance itself from racism and ethnic nationalism" and "follow a more 'realistic political strategy' in which the AfD as a 'bourgeois catch-all party' might join governments and implement its policies" (Patton, 2017, as cited in Patton, 2018, p.56). She was not successful in her endeavors to change the course of

⁶⁵ In the 2013 national election at the eastern German states it was better off and could be able to obtain 5.8 % of the votes (Saalfeld & Schoen, 2015, p.106) but it was not sufficient to carry the party to the Bundestag.

the party and after the Bundestag election, she left the AfD (Patton, 2018; Art, 2018, p.83).

In 2017 Bundestag elections, the AfD has won 12.6 % of the vote and entered the Parliament for the first time (Bundestag, 2017). It has now the third largest parliamentary group with 92 of the 709 seats (Bundestag, 2017) and is the largest opposition party in the Bundestag (Art, 2018, p.84).

In European parliament elections took place between 23-26 May 2019, it has won 11% of the votes and increased the number of its seats to 11 at the Parliament (European Parliament, 2019b)⁶⁶.

There are many studies on the characteristics of voters of the AfD (e.g. Eiermann⁶⁷, 2017; Kim⁶⁸, 2018; Voss⁶⁹ 2018) but here in this part, the focus will be on a recent study by Hansen and Olsen (2019). Their study evaluates the results of the 2017 Federal Elections in Germany and demonstrate who voted for the AfD and why. According to their findings:

- Between 2014 - 2017 the AfD transformed into a populist radical right party from an anti-EU but still mainstream conservative party (Hansen and Olsen, 2019, p.15). It spotlighted “anti-immigrant/nativist themes in its campaigns, manifestos, and public statements” (Hansen and Olsen, 2019, p.15).
- The Party’s anti-EU stance was not a determinant factor in choice of the voters in the 2017 federal election compared with “anti-immigrant attitudes” (Hansen and Olsen, 2019, p.15). The dominant factor was the “anti-immigrant sentiment” (Hansen and Olsen, 2019, p.15).

⁶⁶ In the previous European parliament elections held between 22-25 May 2014, the AfD got 7.1 % of the votes in Germany and had 7 seats at the European parliament (European Parliament, 2014).

⁶⁷ Eiermann suggests that the AfD “has de facto become a mainstream party” and “its mass appeal is undeniable” (2017, p. 6).

⁶⁸ Kim claims that the AfD attracts voters from across various social classes, but mainly appeals to “lower socio-economic groups like blue collar workers and unemployed” (2018, p.1).

⁶⁹ Voss’s “Labour Market Dualisation and Protest Voting” theory has been explained in detail at Chapter 3.

- Most of the votes come from protest votes (Hansen and Olsen, 2019, p.15).
- The AfD attracted voters from “across demographic groups regardless of gender, education, employment status, and union membership” (Hansen and Olsen, 2019, p.15) differing from some previous research claiming “the AfD voters have lower levels of union membership and education and are primarily male” (Hansen and Olsen, 2019, p.15).
- The voters of the AfD are “from the ranks of previous non-voters and previous voters for all other parties across the demographic spectrum but upset with one issue – the Merkel government’s handling of the refugee issue” (Hansen and Olsen, 2019, p.15).
- The AfD voters in 2017 were not driven by “anxieties about globalization and were not particularly concerned about their own financial situation: these voters were therefore not a unique group of losers of globalization as was sometimes portrayed in the media” (Hansen and Olsen, 2019, p.15).
- Supporters of the AfD voters “were in the mainstream – i.e., did not differ statistically from all other voters – in terms of their attitude towards efforts to reduce inequality and the role of the welfare state” (Hansen and Olsen, 2019, p.15).
- In 2017 elections, the voters of the AfD were not satisfied with the way in which politics is practiced in Germany and thus the situation of democracy (Hansen and Olsen, 2019, p.14).

5.2. Denial of anthropogenic climate change and the AfD as an anti-environment Party

In the first section of Chapter 5, the history and ideological foundations of the AfD have been explained to better understand it as a radical right-wing populist party. In the second section of Chapter 5, the AfD’s position on environment, climate change and climate action will be analyzed.

The AfD broadly uses social media, use blogs and special magazines for advertising and publicity (Siri, 2018, p :143). It has constantly tried to part “ ‘its’ media channels from established networks” (Siri, 2018, p :143). It uses the term “ ‘Lügenpresse’ (mendacious press) ” since 2017, make a “discursive move to de-legitimize media coverage” and “separate the core base from national discourses” (Siri, 2018, p :143).

In 2013, when the party was established climate change barely mentioned in its social media channels (Farand, 2019). In 2017, the AfD entered the Bundestag with mainly on anti-Muslim and anti-immigration strategies (Arzheimer & Berning, 2019). But the negative sentiment against immigration and immigrants declined in time. Arzheimer and Berning argue that “attitudes towards immigration and immigrants are still relatively positive in Germany, and the salience of the issue has declined recently” (2019, p. 8). Decker posits even after the number of refugees declined in Germany, the AfD “will have plenty of thematic opportunities in its disposal” (2018, p.214).

Therefore, the AfD had encompassed climate science denial as a new campaign tactic (Farand, 2019) and used it for the European Parliament elections and for the state elections in 2018 and 2019.

Within this context, it can be argued that issues emanating from German climate and energy policies which are highly controversial on the agenda of German public, such as phasing out of coal by 2038, bans on diesel vehicles⁷⁰ in some cities due to high level of emissions, proposal to impose a carbon tax by the German Environment Minister Svenja Schulze⁷¹, and the impacts of the heatwaves experienced in summer months of 2018 and 2019

⁷⁰ The AfD seized the opportunity to present the “diesel car ban” issue in its EU election campaign (Zsiros & Embling, 2019). It used billboards with “save diesel” message (Zsiros & Embling, 2019). The party claims that the bans would damage car industry in Germany and harm the less well off (Zsiros & Embling, 2019). Because of the uncertainty on the future scope of the bans people prefer to switch to cars with petrol engines (Zsiros & Embling, 2019).

⁷¹ Environment Minister of Germany, Svenja Schulze from the SPD, proposed three set of studies “on possible carbon tax schemes” in July 2019. The schemes foresee “an initial €35 (\$39.50) tax on each metric ton of CO₂, to be increased to €180 by 2030”. For further information on the carbon tax discussion in Germany please see: German environment minister proposes carbon tax (2019, July 5). *Deutsche Welle*. Retrieved from <https://www.dw.com/en/german-environment-minister-proposes-carbon-tax/a-4949376>

(Hotko, Müller & Traufetter, 2019) contributed considerably to the increase in the issue salience of climate change and encourage the AfD to embrace the subject.

On the inclusion of the environment and climate change into the AfD's discourse, Jörg Meuthen, the spokesman of the AfD told that they would be "foolish to not take up the subject" and added "as a politician, you have to tackle the subjects people care about" (Hotko et. al., 2019).

After the emergence of the "Fridays for Future" movement inspired by the teenage activist Greta Thunberg, the AfD's focus on climate change has seen a significant surge (Kahya, 2019).

5.2.1. Fridays for Future Movement

At this point, the "Fridays for Future Movement" deserves a closer look due to the attention it receives from the AfD.

The movement was initiated by a 16-year-old Greta Thunberg from Sweden, who started to skip school in August 2018 (Deutsche Welle, 2019). Thousands of students have been walking out of school on Fridays, following Thunberg and attending protests across the world, demanding global leaders take faster action on climate change (Carrington, 2019). It has been estimated that more than 1.4 million young people around the world have taken part in school strikes for climate action in 2,233 cities and towns in 128 countries (Carrington, 2019). Therefore, it can be argued that this movement has been contributed to increase the "issue salience" of climate change in an extensive level.

The protesters claim that policymakers of our day are not successful enough to implement adequate policies to avoid serious consequences of climate action and they will be gone by the time the severe impacts of climate change arise and young of our day will be the ones who have to deal with those consequences in the future (Waldholz, 2019). The protests attracted widespread media attention due to their argument of "older generations are failing them" (Waldholz, 2019).

In Germany, protesters accuse the government of failing to catch up with the targets set up by the Paris Agreement and ask for a “a rapid exit from coal” and tell “phasing-out by 2038 is too slow” (Waldholz, 2019).

The protests have caused an intense debate in Germany in terms of students’ skipping school and whether they should be punished for it. The debate is also a good demonstrator of German public’s standpoint on climate change issue.

Surveys have shown that the German public is divided over the subject. While some welcome the involvement of young people to politics, some others find it irresponsible of them to miss school (Waldholz, 2019).

In February 2019, a survey by WDR found that responses varied by party (Waldholz, 2019). Strong support comes from the majority of Left, Green and Social Democratic voters and strong opposition comes from majority of the AfD and FDP (Waldholz, 2019). Yet, CDU voters demonstrated the strongest opposition with 66 % (Waldholz, 2019).

Another survey by the Spiegel magazine found 51 % of respondents supported the protests while 42 % of respondents were against them and respondents under 30 were 64 % in favor of the protests (Waldholz, 2019). The support for the protests in West Germany was higher (54 %) than that of the states of the former East (41% support) (Waldholz, 2019).

5.2.2. Usage of anti-environment discourse in statements by the AfD members and on social media accounts of the AfD

According to the findings of a study by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), the AfD stated climate change 75 times in 2016 (from April) (Baynes, 2019) and it was mentioned fewer than 300 times on social media channels between 2017-2018 (Kahya, 2019). Between May 2018 to May 2019, climate change has been mentioned 930 times, particularly in the form of “anti-Thunberg rhetoric” in the AfD’s Facebook posts (Baynes, 2019). Thunberg was mentioned in 384 posts by the AfD accounts in March 2019 and 243 times in April 2019 according to ISD data (Baynes, 2019).

Jakob Guhl, an ISD researcher, argued that the AfD's denialist stance on anthropogenic climate change has been appearing on its social media pages since 2016, but it has become more apparent recently due to the party's decision "to communicate it more frequently" (Connolly, 2019).

The AfD candidates for the EU parliament elections, convoked Greta Thunberg to "seek treatment for her 'psychosis' and compared her to Nazi youth" (Kahya, 2019; Baynes, 2019). She has been repeatedly accused of being "the leader of a climate movement cult" on AfD's Facebook page and terms such as "CO2Kult" (CO2 cult), "Klimawandelpanik" (climate change panic) and "Klimagehirnwäsche" (climate brain washing) have been recurrently appeared on the party's social media accounts (Connolly, 2019).

The environmental affairs spokesman for the AfD, Karsten Hilse, classified anthropogenic climate change as "heresy" last year in Bundestag (Kahya, 2019). He asked Germany "to leave the Paris Agreement, overturn the country's ambitious German Renewable Energy Sources Act (EEG)", "get people to stop asking what can be done about man-made climate change in favor of questioning whether it's a gigantic hoax put forth by politicians and journalists" (Chase, 2018).

Chairman of the AfD and member of the European Parliament (since May 2019) Jörg Meuthen portrayed climate change as "a replacement religion of all left green world parties and patronisers" and has assaulted green politics many times (Farand, 2019). He denounces people supporting climate action, categorize them as "CO2 believing disciples and call them "Greta hype" (Farand, 2019).

Maximilian Krah, member of the European Parliament (since May 2019) from the AfD, also smeared Thunberg 10 times in his tweets from December 2018 to April 2019, labeled her movement "as a 'psychosis' and the consequences of a post-Catholic age" (Farand, 2019). He paralleled "climate change to homeopathy, claimed the EU could soon declare the latter a science" (Farand, 2019).

Guido Reil, a coal miner and a member of the European Parliament from the AfD since May 2019, argued “carbon dioxide is good for plants and that it is having no impact on the climate” (Farand, 2019).

Member of the Bundestag from the AfD, Frank Pasemann said in a tweet that Greta “...is not a ‘woman of the year’ but at best a teenager with autistic prehistory who is burned by her ‘advisers’ and by willing MSM as a new icon for the ‘climate church’ ” (Kahya, 2019).

5.2.3 Allegations regarding the AfD’s affiliation with various interest groups

Although academically underexamined there are several allegations on the AfD’s connections with the European Institute for Climate and Energy (EIKE), the Heartland Institute and the US Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT)’s European branch (Kahya 2019; Hotko et. al., 2019) that to a degree it has been deemed important to elaborate.

The purpose of noting these allegations within the context of this thesis is giving information on the discussions taking place on the alleged affiliation of the AfD with certain groups known for climate science denial.

According to the allegations, EIKE, a German-based think-tank known for its climate science denial and its association with the Heartland Institute, has been supporting the anti-climate campaign efforts by the AfD (Farand, 2019; Hotko et. al., 2019). EIKE’s vice president Michael Limburg⁷² is an advisor to Karsten Hilse, the environmental affairs spokesman for the AfD (Kahya, 2019; Hotko et. al., 2019).

On the other hand, the Heartland Institute⁷³ is a US-based think-tank, co-sponsoring and co-hosting a climate conference with the EIKE and one of the pioneers of denialists of the scientific evidence for anthropogenic climate

⁷² Limburg was a former AfD candidate and a member of the party’s climate and energy working group (Kahya, 2019).

⁷³ Previously, it has been claimed to receive funding from American oil company ExxonMobil (Baynes, 2019).

change and also claimed “to have historic ties to the fossil industry”⁷⁴ (Kahya, 2019).

Apart from EIKE’s alleged affiliations with the Heartland Institute, EIKE president Holger Thuss, is claimed to have connection with an American climate-sceptic and conservative think tank, the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT)’s European branch, CFACT Europe (Kahya, 2019; Hotko et. al., 2019).

It was co-founded by EIKE’s Thuss and CFACT Europe had previously called itself as a ‘founding member’ of EIKE (Kahya, 2019).

CFACT and the Heartland are both accused of receiving money from business circles in the United States, including major fossil fuel companies like ExxonMobil and the foundations run by the Koch brothers and Mercer family (Kahya, 2019).

EIKE is not required to reveal its donors under German transparency law but according to allegations, the AfD has been criticized for accepting support from foreign actors, “including a well-funded leafleting campaign courtesy of a mysterious PR firm in Switzerland” (Kahya, 2019).

5.2.4 Position of the AfD on Energy and Climate Policies of Germany

In the previous parts of Chapter 5, history and ideological foundations of the AfD have been explained. Later, findings of the ISD as regards to the anti-environmentalist posts on the AfD’s social media accounts and some of the party members’ statements on climate change and climate action have been reviewed.

In this section, manifesto of the AfD will be inspected and its position on the existence of anthropogenic climate change as well as its stance on energy and climate policies of Germany will be explained.

⁷⁴ More information on the allegations: Goldenberg, S. (2012, February 15). Leak exposes how Heartland Institute works to undermine climate science. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/feb/15/leak-exposes-heartland-institute-climate>

In its manifesto, the AfD fundamentally refuses scientific consensus on anthropogenic climate change, discredits the IPCC's findings on human induced global warming and argues that CO₂ is not a harmful substance for nature. On the contrary, the AfD claims, it is a natural and beneficial substance. It maintains that warm periods have been experienced throughout history. In its party manifesto, the AfD claims that:

Climate changes have occurred as long as the earth exists. The "German Climate Protection Policy" is based on hypothetical climate models, which in turn are based on computer generated simulations of the IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change). Carbon dioxide (CO₂), however, is not a harmful substance, but part and parcel of life (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.78).

The IPCC attempts to prove a correlation between anthropogenic CO₂ emissions and global warming that will result in catastrophic consequences for mankind. This claim is based on computer models that, however, are not backed by quantitative data and measured observations. Ever since the earth has had an atmosphere, cold and warm periods have alternated. Today we live in a warm period with temperatures similar to those during the Middle Ages and the Roman warm period. The IPCC models cannot explain these climate changes (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.78).

During the 20th century, the global mean temperature rose by about 0.8 °C. Contrary to IPCC projections, however, *no further rise has been recorded since the end of the 1990s, although CO₂ emissions have increased faster than ever* (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.78).

The IPCC and the German government conveniently omit the positive influence of CO₂ on plant growth and world nutrition. The more CO₂ there is in the air, the more plant growth will be." (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.78).

It also accuses the German Government of misleading the German public about "decarbonization" and of constraining personal and economic freedoms as well as causing unnecessary economic burdens on German society. In its party manifesto, the AfD suggests that:

Using the slogan "Climate-Neutral Germany 2050", to be brought about by "decarbonization", the German government is misrepresenting a situation of rising CO₂ emissions for a "Great Transformation" of German society, with the consequence of massive restrictions on personal and economic liberties. The planned compulsory reduction of CO₂ emissions by more than 85% would impact industrial locations and imply a reduced standard of living. In order to achieve this reduction, our hitherto guaranteed power supply

will be compromised and become increasingly more expensive, while heat generation via fossil fuels is to be reduced to practically zero (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.78).

Therefore, the AfD supports the “Protection of the Environment” but negates the “German Climate Protection Policy” and plans for “decarbonization” and the “Transformation of Society”. We want to end the perception of CO₂ as an exclusively harmful substance and set a stop to Germany’s maverick policy in the reduction of CO₂ emissions (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.78).

We will place no financial burdens on CO₂ emissions. Climate protection organizations will no longer be sponsored (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.78).

The AfD renounces all climate action policies and it criticizes German Renewable Energy Sources Act (EEG) and it asserts that renewable energy generators are harmful for the environment, animals and for the landscapes. It also argues that the EEG risks power supply due to unpredictable weather conditions, and sometimes it causes over production as well as it is a divergence from free market economy and is similar to a “state directed” model. The party also states that the EEG is an instrument to take away money from the people and the economy and directing it to a small group that benefits the subsidies (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.84) and demand the complete annulment of the EEG since it is “unconstitutional” and against EU legislation. The AfD makes a commitment to end the energy tax and ensure a relief for the consumers. The Manifesto of the AfD posits that:

Any successful energy policy must have three aims. Power supply must be guaranteed, affordable and environmentally compatible. This triad was always adhered to in the German power supply but is abandoned by the German Renewable Energy Act (EEG) (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.78).

The EEG and the transition to renewable energy jeopardize power supply. They raise energy prices, due to technical factors, while wind turbines present eyesores in cultural landscapes and pose an often-fatal risk to birds (AfD Manifesto, 2017, pp.78-79)

Power generated via wind and sun fluctuates between zero and full capacity. The installed capacity by these volatile energy generators has to date already reached more than 80 Gigawatts and should thus be sufficient to comprehensively supply power to Germany as a whole, even with full capacity consumption. In reality,

however, the average output of these renewable energy generators has hovered around a fraction of their rated output, on many days amounting to just single digit percentages. For this reason alone, renewable energy generators are no viable replacement for conventional large power stations. Further to this, they necessitate a massive expansion of the electric grid systems, which in turn will result in an immense additional investment. The growing number of volatile power generators also jeopardizes grid stability. Correspondingly, the number of stabilizing grid interventions to prevent large scale power blackouts has risen significantly (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.79).

The EEG is akin to a state-directed economy and a departure from German social market economy. “Climate protection” serves as a justification for massive state subsidization of generators that would not be economically viable otherwise. This is achieved via forced public consumption by priority power feed-in and a twenty-year guarantee on feed-in remuneration. The cost of these subsidies currently amounts to 27 billion Euro per annum and is transferred to the consumer via the EEG apportionment on electricity costs. In the past ten years, the price of electric power has already doubled, and an end to this rise in prices is not on the horizon. The consequence is a gigantic redistribution of wealth from population and enterprises to a few subsidies’ receivers (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.79).

Despite an ever-increasing number of renewable energy generators, CO2 emission levels have remained constant since 2000, largely due to the abrupt abandoning of the nuclear energy supply. The erection of renewable energy generators converts large tracts of land, including forests, into industrial areas – with all the detrimental effects on nature and the human population. The same scenario applies to the expansion of the high-voltage grid. Thus, the installation of additional renewable energy generators is finding its limits (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.79).

Already today, strong and expansive winds result in an over-supply of electrical power on cloudless days, which cannot be used. The opposite meteorological conditions lead to an inadequate electrical power supply that can only be compensated for via conventional power generation. Utilization of excess power would only be possible with large expensive power storage units. However, these do not exist. Consequently, without large power storage facilities, the transition to renewable energy is impossible; with large power storage facilities, it becomes unaffordable (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.79).

In the meantime, valid legal opinion considers the EEG unconstitutional and in violation of European legislation. In particular, it has been pointed out that the EEG levy is charged to the power client without a legal basis. The opinion is that the only legal funding instrument is taxation. Also, the EEG does not stipulate any obligation

for the end-consumer to pay the EEG levy (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.79).

The AfD thus advocates the complete abolishment of the EEG. It should not be a taboo to question the extent of existing subsidy obligations resulting from the EEG. The AfD will not give preference to either source of energy. We intend to terminate priority power feed-ins across-the-board. We reject quota and auction models that only serve the implementation of state-directed economic goals of current German energy policy. Grid costs borne by users should correspond to the level of consumption. We will abolish the energy tax thus provide immediate financial relief to power consumers. Our aim is to bring the German power supply system back to a standard of technology that guarantees a safe, affordable and environment-friendly power supply. The AfD wants the EEG, a government act rated as unconstitutional and in violation of European law, to be investigated by the German Federal Constitutional Court (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.80).

The AfD accuses the Government of restraining or concealing the real financial burden to implement the “German Energy Saving Regulations” (EnEV) which foresees transforming buildings to ensure energy savings through insulation/replacing insulation. It claims that citizens will bear the additional costs from this transformation, the costs of buildings and as a result rents will increase, and the insulations will not be effective. The party contends that insulations will harm the buildings, residents and the environment. The AfD believes the necessity to the cancelling of both the EnEV and the EEWärmeG without their replacement. The AfD in its Manifesto argues that:

The combustion of natural gas, oil and coal generates about 80% of globally consumed primary energy and emits the CO₂ that is held responsible as the main factor in anthropogenic climate change. A substantial portion of this energy is utilized to heat and to cool buildings. If decarbonization is supposed to reduce CO₂ emission by 85% until 2050, buildings will require suitable insulation in accordance with the “German Energy Saving Regulations” (EnEV). The required residual heat is to be generated as far as possible by renewable energy sources in accordance with the “Renewable Energy Heat Act” (EEWärmeG) (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.80).

As in the case of EEG and “Transition to Renewable Energy”, government and profiteers downplay or hide the financial commitments required to realize these measures. In this case, the calculated costs run into more than 3.000 billion Euro. Building owners and tenants are expected to bear these additional expenses. As substantiated by experts, the expected effects will only be achieved for

a small number of revamped and newly-insulated buildings, which previously had a very poor thermal insulation. In addition, insulation works often cause extensive damage to buildings, mostly as a consequence of inadequate air circulation, but also by moisture penetration as well as algal and fungal growth on the outer walls. The facades of historic and listed buildings will be destroyed. Commonly used insulating materials manufactured from polystyrene (rigid foam) also increase the fire risk (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.80).

A measurable reduction in energy consumption is, however, hardly achieved. Often the opposite is the case, as solar heat cannot warm up the building mass due to good insulation. Renewable energies have no long-term competitive edge over heat or cold generated from fossil and nuclear fuel sources either. Over the years, consistently invoked scenarios of shortages have quietly been laid to rest. High-tech heating and cooling systems – e.g. condensing boiler technology and combined heat and power generation – leave little room for renewable energies. This includes the utilization of heat from the soil and air via heat pumps, and solar thermal energy (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.80).

“Nanny state” governance that patronizes owners of buildings and individual units as well as tenants, forcing them to implement insulation and measures to increase energy efficiency in buildings must be ceased. The Energy Saving Ordinance (EnEV) and Renewable Energy Heat Act (EEWärmeG) regulations lead to a rapid increase in building costs and serve as a convenient excuse for luxury renovations. As a consequence, rent for many units is out of reach for middle- and lower-income earners. This is another reason why the AfD advocates the abolishment without replacement of both the EnEV and the EEWärmeG regulation (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.81).

The AfD claims “mandatory blending of biofuels” with conventional fuels cause their price to increase and biofuels compete with food production in terms of allocation of fields. It demands the termination of the subsidization of biofuels by a quota system. Those points appeared in its Manifesto as follows:

In 2014, renewable energy delivered approximately 11 % of the primary energy consumed in Germany. Approximately 7 %, or two-thirds thereof, was produced from biomass. 3.3 % of the biomass was used in heat production, 3.3 % in power production, and 0.8 % for the production of biofuels (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.81).

The thermal energy from biomass is used for heating purposes as well as for processes in industry. The electric power generated from biomass is heavily subsidized through the EEG. The costs of electric power production from biogas plants are the highest, with up to 215 Euro per megawatt hour. The operation of such facilities often pollutes the environment in rural areas. Biofuels are produced in

industrial plants and subsidized indirectly through a quota system. In 2014, the mandatory blending increased the price of diesel and petrol by about 0.4 cents per litre. Due to the low efficiency of photosynthesis of less than one percent, the usage of agricultural land for bio-energy is inappropriately large. Thus, bio-energy crops compete with food production. Instead, it is more reasonable to use biological waste for the production of bio-energy (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.81).

By abolishing the EEG, the AfD wants to terminate subsidies and priority feed-in of electric power from biogas plants. The subsidization of biofuels by a quota system has to be abolished (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.81).

The AfD asks the Government to better examine pros and cons of “fracking” and consider using this technology if the risks are tolerable. It requests the Government to withdraw the “fracking law” and inform the citizens of the real risks and political and economic benefits of it. Those demands were stated at the AfD’s Manifesto as follows:

Hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as “fracking”, is a process to exploit underground energy sources. It involves risks, but also opens up new opportunities for energy supply. We are in favor of exploring this technology and the benefits and risks of fracking under the existing strict German environmental and mining laws. If the risks are manageable, we want to develop fracking and explore possible locations. Therefore, the AfD advocates withdrawing the restrictive “Fracking Law”, introduced in the German Federal Parliament in April 2015 (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.81).

The German people have to be informed objectively about the economic and political benefits of fracking in comparison to its real risks. The AfD rejects the commercial use of fracking for oil and gas production at new locations as long as energy supply in Germany is ensured otherwise. The final decision about the use of fracking at suitable locations has ultimately to be made by the affected local residents (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.81).

The AfD holds that quitting nuclear energy entirely was a rush and economically harmful decision and importing nuclear energy from other countries is neither safe nor practical for Germany. The party opposes the centralized, permanent storage of nuclear waste and suggests further research to be made on nuclear technology and other sources of energy. The AfD claims that:

The hasty decisions to opt out of nuclear energy taken in 2002 and 2011 were economically damaging and not objectively justified. As long as the power supply at the place and at the time of demand is not secured, the AfD wants to allow a lifetime extension of still operating nuclear power plants on a transitional basis. The import of electric power from insecure foreign nuclear power plants is neither sensible for Germany as a business location, nor does it help to reduce the risks posed by nuclear power in general (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.82).

Radioactive residues should be stored decentralized, accessible and catalogued in secure repositories where access is possible at any time in order to recycle them when technical progress permits. We regard a central permanent repository at a location which is hardly accessible in future as a wrong concept (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.82).

We again want to allow research on nuclear energy, and reactor and power plant technologies. It is obvious that the necessary safety standards have to be observed. However, the use of nuclear energy is not an end in itself, and its future replacement is conceivable. Therefore, all other sources of energy should be vigorously explored (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.82).

The AfD argues that humanity should not fall into a disadvantageous position while spending efforts to protect the environment and conserve the nature. But still the party believes the necessity of taking precautions to protect the natural resources and prevent every kind of pollution for the sake of future generations. The Manifesto of the AfD suggests that:

We believe that we have a responsibility towards future generations. We want to conserve an unspoilt and diverse environment. A healthy environment is the basis for human life and future generations. However, nature conservation should not be to the detriment of mankind (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.84).

Sea and land areas must be set aside where nature is allowed to evolve entirely on its own. These untouched areas secure the survival of many rare plant and animal species (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.84).

The AfD is committed to the protection of the environment and the conservation of nature. It considers humans not as aliens and intruders but values them as helpful agents in an integrated action plan. We are guided by the vision that a healthy environment and a diversity of species constitute the livelihood of mankind and future generations. Therefore, precautions have to be taken to protect resources such as soil, water, air, landscape, fauna and flora from exploitation. Priorities of the AfD's environmental policy are, therefore, to minimize the consumption of uncultivated land, reduce

soil and water pollution, and improve the quality of air. In addition, measures are to be taken to curb noise-pollution (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.85).

The AfD gives a special importance to the wind turbines and argues that they are doing more harm than good and asks for their exceptional usage. The issue of wind turbines emerged in the Manifesto as follows:

We oppose any further proliferation of wind turbines in Germany. The damage outweighs the benefits. Wind turbines should be erected on an exception basis only in places where no harm will be caused to humans, wildlife, and the landscape. Local residents are to be consulted in a referendum on the future location of wind turbines (AfD Manifesto, 2017, p.85).

Thus, in the first two parts of Chapter 5, some of the outstanding research questions of this thesis have been answered. It has been demonstrated that the AfD has a denialist approach in terms of anthropogenic climate change and it is against climate action. By taking reference the study of the ISD, it has been shown that although climate change has occasionally emerged on its social media channels before, the frequency of appearance of climate change has been significantly increased since May 2018, mostly in the form of “anti-Thunberg rhetoric”. Through scrutinizing the party manifesto of the AfD, it has been explicated how the party is against climate action.

Here, in the next part of this chapter the remainder of the research questions will be addressed.

5.3. Reasons of the AfD’s anti-climate action approach

In the first two parts of Chapter 5, specifications of the AfD as a populist radical right-wing party were highlighted and the AfD’s denialism in climate science/human induced climate change and its hostility towards climate policies were demonstrated. Considering all the points, concepts and theories introduced until now, the third part of Chapter 5 will reflect on the reasons of the AfD’s anti-climate action approach.

At this point, the questions to be posed are: What are the reasons of the AfD’s opposition to climate action that embrace mitigation and adaptation

policies? Does its opposition come from populism's ideology? or does it adopt an anti-climate action approach because of the increased issue salience of the environment on the agenda of the German public? or does this approach only emanate from pragmatic reasons to get more votes? or for instance, to counter the Greens in terms of party competition? Here in this final part of Chapter 5, possible answers to these questions will be addressed.

But first, after examining all the points, concepts and theories throughout this thesis, the author believes understanding the negative stance employed by the radical right populist parties against climate action, specifically the AfD, requires a comprehensive approach that ponders on more than one descriptive theory/approach and entails considering the shifts in the salience of issues on the public agenda on an election- to-election basis.

In this framework, here, the possible explanations on the AfD's anti-climate action approach will be categorized under three headings. The first category is related with populism's ideology and carries one of the most explanatory potential. The second one, and also the other most elucidatory category, is linked with the high issue salience of the environment and climate change in the public debate. Finally, the third one is associated with the AfD's desire to influence people's voting choices through concerns stemming from economic interests and the party's aspiration to give direction and content to their grievances through cultural-nativist narratives.

Since the AfD is a populist radical right-wing party, the reasons originating from the intrinsic features of populism itself will be focused first.

As seen in the previous chapters, populists attack the established structure of power by claiming to represent the interests of the "pure people" against the "corrupt elite" (Mudde, 2004, 543). They use a "legitimizing framework" as well as a political style and mood (Canovan, 1999). Thus, right-wing populist parties unite issues regarding climate change and energy politics with populist right wing discourse to influence electorate (Fraune & Knodt, 2018).

As mentioned in chapter 2, isolationism is a natural predisposition of populism (Taggart, 2000, p.96) and issues originating out of heartland are

“secondary concerns” or “not concerns” at all (Taggart, 2000, p.96) due to the inward looking nature of populism (Taggart, 2000, 96). Therefore, concerns regarding “global” issues like the “global warming” or “global climate change” would be of “secondary concern” even though its consequences are felt on the individual level.

Radical right populist parties detest “internationalism and cosmopolitanism” (Taggart, 2000, p.96). With their anti-intellectual disposition (Laclau, 1977 as cited in Wejnert, 2014) they blame elites for prioritizing internationalism against national interests as well as valuing their self-interests more than “the people” (Rydgren, 2007, p.242). According to populists, intellectuals and elites are distant from the people and they are incompetent (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015, p.6), thus, people do not need “experts/scientists” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.4) who argue human induced climate change does exist. By demonizing intellectuals, experts, scientists and politicians who adopts climate action policies they harness support from the people who share a grievance and establish solidarity against “enemies” (Taggart, 2000, p.94).

Populists criticize “the elites” especially for accepting the undertakings of international climate action regulations and claim they are disregarding or not giving priority to national interests. For instance, instead of giving precedence to national sovereignty through “energy self-sufficiency” (Forchtner & Kølvrå, 2015), they accept the EU’s climate or energy policies. This means people’s interests are not properly represented, since “European integration is established on elite agreements premised on permissive consensus”, “instead of representative politics” (Taggart, 2004, p.269).

Populists believe “elite” groups politicians, intellectuals are collaborating as part of a conspiracy, covertly working together to advance their interests (Taggart, 2004, p.105; Lockwood, 2018, p.726). Those conspiracy theories function as a mobilizer to influence disappointed sectors of society (Taggart, 2004, p.105). Therefore, they argue global warming is a hoax (Lewis, Boseley & Duncan 2019) and anthropogenic climate change was

invented to transfer money (e.g. through taxes) from people's pockets (Schaller & Carius, 2019, p.10) to the elites'.

Along with the "elites", "the dangerous others" or "other elite enemies" (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p.4) also get their share from populists' aggression. In Western Europe, those "others" could be regarded as the "communists" (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015, p.6). In the case of environmentalism or climate action, those "others" could be "the leftists" with post-materialistic values, for example the Greens who "force their values on the people backed by the elites" (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015, p.6). Therefore, by opposing climate change, populist parties show their anti-socialist standpoint in their warnings against climate policies and accuse the left of utilizing these policies in reinforcing its agenda (Forchtner et al., 2018, p.601). On this point, Ignazi, highlights that "radical right anti-environmentalism can be understood as a materialist reaction against left-wing/green post-materialism" (1992, as cited in Gemenis et al, 2012, p. 19).

Among the explanations originating from populism's ideology, populism's anti-leftist/anti-green post-materialism standpoint carries the most illuminating potential. The increased salience of the climate issue and the environment as well as increasing influence of the Greens along with the AfD in German politics after the federal elections in 2017, gives the AfD a reason to take "the environment" issue to demonstrate its "anti-leftist" position and to counter the Greens. Increased frequency of "anti-Thunberg rhetoric" on the AfD's Facebook posts after the emergence of "Fridays for Future Movement" since 2018 (Kahya, 2019; Baynes, 2019); the statement of the Chairman of the AfD, Jörg Meuthen describing climate change as "a replacement religion of all left green world parties and patronizers" (Farand, 2019) and his assaults to green politics (Farand, 2019) are clear demonstrators of this "anti-leftist" position and the AfD's endeavor to counter the Greens.

The second explicatory category clarifying the reasons of the AfD's climate action approach, other than the reasons stemming from the fundamental features of populism's ideology, is linked with the high issue salience of the environment and climate change on the public agenda. The

increased salience of those issues gives the members of the AfD pragmatic reasons to adopt the environment issue in their discourse and policies to the extent that they incorporate their position on this issue to the party manifesto in detail.

Since the radical right-wing parties' "niche" is immigration (Abou-Chadi, 2014; Wolinetz & Zaslove, 2018) and they have the ownership of their specific issues (Meyer & Miller, 2015), the AfD have lost some of its arsenal when the number of immigrants went down in Germany and the salience of the issue declined (Arzheimer & Berning, 2019). Because, the AfD aims to establish itself as a leading voice of the opposition by the time of the 2021 parliamentary election (Eiermann, Mounk & Gultchin, 2017) it needed a new campaign strategy. As explained on Chapter 2, normally, the environment is the "niche" of the green parties (Meyer & Miller, 2015; Wolinetz & Zaslove, 2018) but since parties cannot liberally decide the issues they choose to underscore and "issue emphasis on the agenda varies from election to election" (Meyer & Miller, 2015, p.267), the AfD recourses to the issues "on the party system agenda" (Green-Pedersen & Monteresen, 2010, as cited in Abou-Chadi 2014, p.3) and get forced to utilize "the environment" issue from its own perspective. "Enemies" of "the people" differs every time and the AfD will decide "which one to use according to the salience of the issue in every-day experience of the voter" (Rodrik, 2018, p.24).

In the European Parliament elections took place between 23-26 May 2019, both right-wing populist parties⁷⁵ and greens parties⁷⁶ increased the number of their seats compared to the previous European elections. The results

⁷⁵ Identity and Democracy Group (IDD) consisting of National Rally, Lega Nord and the AfD has gained 73 of 751 seats. Other radical right populist parties including the Brexit Party scattered across other groups in the European Parliament. The IDD replaced Europe of Nations and Freedom Group which had 36 of 749 seats in the previous parliament (European Parliament, 2019a). Retrieved from: <https://election-results.eu/tools/comparative-tool/>

⁷⁶ In 2014 elections the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance got 52 of 749 seats; and in 2019 elections, they win 74 of 751 seats (European Parliament, 2019a). They won 25 seats in Germany, 12 in France, 11 in the United Kingdom, 3 in Belgium, Czechia, Netherlands respectively, 2 in each of Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, Spain, Sweden; and 1 in Latvia, Luxembourg, Portugal respectively. Retrieved from: <https://election-results.eu/tools/comparative-tool/>

underlined the competition between the “environmentalists” and “anti-environmentalists” throughout Europe.

Moreover, agenda items emanating from German climate and energy policies which are highly debated, such as phasing out of coal by 2038, shut down of nuclear plants by 2022, bans on diesel vehicles in some cities due to high level of emissions, proposal to impose a carbon tax by the German Environment Minister Svenja Schulze and also the impacts of the heatwaves experienced during the summer months of 2018 and 2019 (Hotko et. al., 2019) contributed considerably to the increase in the issue salience of climate change and encourage political parties to embrace the subject. The attendance of millions of people (Carrington, 2019) to the “Fridays for Future” movement have also made the issue of climate change a “non-negligible” one.

Furthermore, the recent debate on Germany’s keeping its “balanced budget”⁷⁷ strategy, “schwarze null” or black zero, that it run since 2014 or begin a new phase to ensure “green zero”⁷⁸ (Buck & Storbeck, 2019) reinforced the position of climate policies on the public’s agenda. The cost of climate change plans is estimated to amount additional 30 billion euros and it could require borrowing and terminating Germany’s “black zero” policy (Buck & Storbeck, 2019). Therefore, climate change and climate policy are unlikely to disappear from Germany’s public debate in the near future and the issue salience of climate/environment will continue to exist.

As mentioned above, on the inclusion of the environment and climate change into the AfD’s discourse, members of the AfD argued they would be “foolish to not take up the subject” and politicians “have to tackle the subjects people care about” (Hotko et. al., 2019). Since, the increase in salience of an issue simultaneously cause strong political opposition (Guber, 2013, p.108), the AfD’s intention to employ “the environment” issue from a negative

⁷⁷ Government spending on welfare, defense, new infrastructure without new borrowing (Buck & Storbeck, 2019)

⁷⁸ Climate neutrality that requires spending billions of euros on climate policies (Buck & Storbeck, 2019).

perspective is quite understandable. Additionally, there is research⁷⁹ that the environment should not be regarded as a valence issue which assumes there is a consensus on “the desired policy outcome” (Gemenis et al., 2012, p.18). Contrary to the previous assumptions, West European electorates might be less pro-environmental (Gemenis et al., 2012, p.18) and being anti-environmentalist would not be necessarily counterproductive for the political parties, when “the concept of environmentalism is operationalized appropriately (Dryzek, 1997, as cited in Gemenis et al., 2012, p.18)⁸⁰.

Accordingly, the AfD announced a new declaration and sustained its denialist, anti-climate action sentiment for the regional elections on September 1, 2019, in the eastern German states of Saxony and Brandenburg (Eriksen, 2019), which have traditionally coal mining districts.

Obviously, the AfD policy makers are very well aware of the fact that the danger of closure of factories and plants (Norris & Inglehart, 2019), (such as in the case of coal phase out plan) will potentially create conservative/traditionalist reactions⁸¹ (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). The increased salience of the environment issue facilitates creating reactions and mobilizing people through the “tipping points” (Norris & Inglehart, 2019) by for example, opposing to coal phase out strategy or the bans on diesel cars. Since younger cohorts generally contend with participating in protest politics and older

⁷⁹ By examining national and European election manifestos of 13 parties in Western Europe, Gemenis et al. display, “anti-environmentalism” is conspicuous in the discourse of radical right parties and its frame reflects “some of the classic ideological components of the radical right: opposition to immigration, nationalism, welfare chauvinism and Euroscepticism” (Gemenis et al., 2012, p.19). They find out that anti-environmentalist stances are prevalent among parties that are marked as “extreme right”, “radical” or “populist” and those radical right parties have integrated anti-environmentalism “within the main ideological tenets of their party family” (Gemenis et al., 2012, p.3)

⁸⁰ Some scholars argue, anti-environmentalism is conducive to the electoral success of the radical right and although due to their “ideological extremism”, radical right parties lack the “capacity to directly influence policy (through coalition governments)” (Ivarsflaten (2008), as cited in Gemenis et al., 2012, p. 19), though, they might be able to influence “the dynamics of domestic competition by increasing the salience of the issues they focus on” (Mudde 2007, as cited in Gemenis et al., 2012).

⁸¹ Considering the danger coming from a potential backlash from the older, in affected regions from the coal phase out, the coal commission has proposed an “adjustment fund and compensation for pension deficits” for workers aged 58 (Schulz, 2019).

cohorts tend to participate in classical political behavior such as voting (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p.33) a discourse involving anti-climate elements will have more chance of influencing potential voters.

Finally, the third category explaining the AfD's anti-climate action position is associated with the party's desire to influence people's voting choices through concerns stemming from economic interests and its aspiration to give direction and content to their grievances through cultural-nativist narratives (Rodrik, 2018, p.25).

In this context, the AfD's anti-climate stance within the perspective of the economic interests approach, is related with skepticism in the citizens on the right that climate change and climate change related policies will limit private property rights and increase government intervention into markets and further erode national sovereignty (McCright & Dunlap, 2016, p. 350). Those points have been raised throughout the manifesto of the AfD and utilized by the party effectively. Since, from the supply side, climate change issue presents a challenge for a political party, because the policies related to it may require measures like market intervention, restrictions on property rights (Farstad, 2018, p.700), the AfD's disapproval of such policies can be explained with its commitment to "the free market". Within the third category clarifying the reasons of the party's anti-climate approach, the AfD's pledge to a free market without interventions has been the most informative one.

Although Hansen and Olsen argued that in 2017 federal elections, the AfD voters were not driven by "anxieties about globalization and were not particularly concerned about their own financial situation...[and]...were therefore not a unique group of losers of globalization as was sometimes portrayed in the media" (2019, p. 15), it is still possible for the party to choose an anti-climate action approach to resonate with the party's base with the hope of mobilizing economic concerns and distributional struggles (Rodrik, 2018, p.24). The fact that issues related with economic liberties and economic considerations (e.g. emphasis given to "restrictions on economic liberties", "financial burdens on CO₂ emissions", "affordable power supply, "rising energy prices", "subsidies in the energy sector", "German social market

economy”) have been underlined throughout the manifesto of the AfD proves this argument.

Again, in terms of economic interests, growing sense of relative deprivation compared to others unites the citizens (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018, p.181). Because, “fearing to lose out relative to others in society in a world of rising prosperity and to lose a chance of upward mobility” is relevant to both the poorest at the bottom but also to e.g. full-time workers, parts of middle class and young voters (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018, p.182), highlighting economic concerns within the perspective of climate policy could prove to be beneficial, since “the economy should always be at the service of the nation” (Mudde, 2007, pp. 136-137). Additionally, exploiting a representational vacuum in a dualized labor market in the case of Germany, by reframing economic issues (Voss, 2018, p.14) in an anti-climate action stance might attract the attention of voters.

Since the sectors most affected from climate policies are most carbon intensive ones such as manufacturing, heavy industry and mining, they have a potential for right wing populist constituency (Lockwood, 2018, p.719) and the workers in those more carbon intensive sectors are less willing to undertake the price of climate protection measures (Bechtel et. al., 2017, as cited in Lockwood, 2018, p. 719). Thus, the AfD has pragmatic reasons to employ and underscore anti-climate action approach.

Another possible explanation falling within this category, is the reverse post material thesis. It also presents a potential explanation regarding the AfD’s anti-climate policy choice. People affected from the economic disadvantages of policies like e.g. diesel car ban (e.g. changing the existing older diesel car with a new, more expensive one with a petroleum tank) or the high price of electricity (e.g. because of transformation of the energy production systems into renewables) or shutting down nuclear energy plants (e.g. since nuclear energy ensures power supply and efficiency as well as affordable energy prices) , will find “post-materialist” agenda irrelevant to their material concerns (Eatwell, 2017, p.409) and get influenced by the anti-environmentalist

approach of the AfD. Therefore, the party would bring those issues in the foreground.

Even when the underlying causes of voting for populist parties are economic, there could still be a cultural or nativist aspect of it (Rodrik, 2018, p.25). Narratives used by populist leaders and relative salience of available cleavages determine the direction and content to grievances (Rodrik, 2018, p.25). Hence, choosing an anti-environmentalist stance by underlying “national energy independence” for instance, through supporting nuclear energy can be a reason to give the direction and content to grievances.

Other than those three main categories, there is another promising explanation regarding the utilization of anti-climate approach by the AfD is related with protest voting thesis. As Hansen and Olsen’s study demonstrated, in the 2017 federal elections in Germany, most of the votes for the AfD come from the protest votes and voters were from “ranks of previous non-voters and previous voters for all other parties across the demographic spectrum” disappointed by the Merkel government’s handling of the refugee crisis (2019, p.15). Therefore, at the time, the AfD became the “vehicle for expressing discontent with the mainstream” (Eatwell, 2017, p.407). Then again, by utilizing anti-climate action approach, the AfD would be using climate policy as a “vehicle” for conveying dissatisfaction, mobilizing protest votes but this time through showing discontent against the climate policies implemented by the EU and the Merkel government.

After reviewing possible explanations as to the reasons of the AfD’s anti-climate perspective, it is worth mentioning Lockwood’s argument that, “climate change agenda fits in well as a collateral damage, and climate change policy inhabit a “symbolic place” within enmity between people and cosmopolitan elite” (Lockwood, 2018, p. 726). With all the points presented above throughout the thesis, it can be argued that, Lockwood’s argument emphasizing the ideological aspect of populism in explaining its anti-climate approach is not sufficient to clarify the connection between the two.

Therefore, understanding the negative stance towards climate action employed by the radical right populist parties, specifically the AfD, requires a comprehensive approach that deliberates on more than one descriptive theory/approach and necessitates considering the shifts in the salience of issues on the public agenda on an election- to-election basis.

In this chapter, first, the history and fundamental policies of the AfD have been told. Later, how the AfD presents its denialist approach on human induced climate change and its anti-climate action viewpoint have been examined by reviewing some of the statements made by the AfD members, posts on the party's social media accounts as well as its party manifesto. The allegations about its affiliation with various denialist interest groups have also been mentioned to elaborate another likely aspect of its stance on climate policy. Finally, the possible reasons of its anti-climate action approach have been explained.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed at examining the radical right-wing populist parties approaches towards climate science and the reasons they oppose climate science and climate action and demonstrating the case of the AfD for that matter.

The research questions of this thesis have been as follows: “why and how radical right-wing populist parties are against climate action?”, as a case “what is the position of the AfD on climate policies?”, “is the AfD skeptic/denialist about anthropogenic climate change?”, “is it against climate action?”, if yes, “has it always been anti-climate action?”, “how the AfD is against climate action?”, “what are the reasons of its opposition to climate policies?”, “does its opposition come from populism’s ideology?” or “does it adopt an anti-climate action approach because of the increased issue salience of the environment in the agenda of the German public?” or “does this approach emanate from pragmatic reasons to get more votes? or for instance, to counter the Greens in terms of party competition?”

In order to understand why and how radical right-wing populist parties oppose climate action, in Chapter 2, first conceptual and theoretical approaches to populism have been explained and ideological content of radical right-wing populism has been examined. Then, the core elements of populism, “the people”, “the elites”, “the others”, “the will of the people”, “the leader”, “the heartland” have been presented. Various scholar’s work presenting the interaction of those core elements in the populist discourse have been reviewed. Later, common characteristics of radical right-wing populist parties: nativism and authoritarianism have been displayed. In the last part of Chapter 2, to get a better understanding on the root causes of the success of populist radical wing parties, some of the supply and demand side theories have been

illustrated. It has been suggested that comprehending the root causes of the success of populist radical right-wing parties will be beneficial to explain their climate science skepticism/denialism and/or hostility towards climate action as their policy choice. By doing that, the objective of this thesis has been contributing to the literature in explaining the motives of this party family in their antagonism against climate action. Although it is not sufficient to take only one of the theories to comprehend the adoption of climate skeptic or denialist approach or hostility against climate action by the populist radical right, it has been argued that demand side theories carry more potential than supply side theories to clarify this inclination.

Under the framework of demand side theories, this research has reviewed vast amount of literature. The single-issue thesis and “niche parties” in party competition have been explained in detail along with social breakdown and economic interest thesis due to their relevance to the research questions of this thesis. After going through demand side theories on electoral success of radical right-wing populists, supply side theories have been examined.

To better grasp populists’ logic and understand what they are opposing to, in Chapter 3 the concept of anthropogenic climate change and international efforts to tackle climate change have been explained.

In Chapter 4, discussions on the relationship between ideology and climate change/action have been presented. Works of several scholars that gave particular emphasis to radical right’s climate science denialism and climate action antagonism have been displayed. After reviewing the literature, it has been seen that there is limited amount of comprehensive research on specifically the motivation of European populist radical right-wing parties’ negative approach on climate action and the literature has many shortcomings in explaining this party group’s policy choices. Consequently, in the last part of Chapter 4, communication frames and their usage in identifying the populist right wing parties’ variations as well as their major arguments on energy transition policies and climate action have been shown to illustrate how they are opposing climate action.

Chapter 5 has concentrated on the AfD in Germany, as a case for a populist radical right-wing party and examined the party to understand its policy choices on climate science denialism and hostility to climate action. After demonstrating its history and its characteristics as a radical right-wing populist party, the focus has been on its anti-environment stance in detail by highlighting the statements made by party members, the posts on its social media accounts and its party manifesto.

Finally, at the end of Chapter 5 the reasons of the AfD's anti-climate action approach have been explained by using various concepts and theories stated throughout this thesis. It has been argued that understanding the negative position employed by the radical right populist parties, specifically the AfD, requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account more than one descriptive theory/approach and necessitates considering the changes in the salience of issues on the public agenda and on an election- to-election basis.

Therefore, all of the research questions of this thesis have been addressed. The reasons of radical right-wing populist parties' anti-climate approach have been explained and the ways in which they present this negative stance have been shown. It has been demonstrated that the AfD is a radical right-wing populist party which denies climate science and has an anti-climate action approach (Schaller & Carius, 2019). It has been shown that its position vis-à-vis climate science and action has been changed over time and its tone has become more sharper with the increasing salience of the issue.

It has been suggested that to better understand its hostility to climate action it is required to contemplate on more than one theory/approach and to evaluate the issues on the public agenda on an election-to-election basis. Additionally, it has been argued that so far, the AfD's negative stance against climate science/action comes from its populist ideology and mainly its anti-left disposition and the increased salience of the environment issue along with the decrease in the salience of its "niche", "anti-immigration issue". It has been maintained that the AfD also has pragmatic reasons to use issues of the environment and climate action in its discourse to counter the Greens as the issue owner of the environment.

In light of the augmented issue salience of the environment and climate action, it can be argued that as long as those issues remain on the public agenda, the AfD is not expected to change its current position in the near future. If true, its alleged affiliations with interest groups known for their climate science denial gives another reason for not to be hopeful to this end.

If the AfD's antagonistic approach towards climate action is merely an opportunistic strategy for getting more votes by exploiting the negative reaction in the conservative/traditionalist circles, arising from the environment's increasing issue salience, time will show whether it is possible for the AfD to change its tactics and soften its position in case of more popularization of climate action.

Due to its responsibility in GHG emissions and its leadership role in international efforts to tackle climate change, existence of a political party with augmented influence and anti-climate action approach in Germany would pose a serious threat against collective international action.

It is obvious that hostile position of the AfD vis-à-vis climate science and action is not a coincidence but a very deliberate policy choice. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the case of the AfD in terms of climate policy from various perspectives for potential backlash against international efforts in the future when the impacts of climate change will be more severely felt than today.

To this end, considering their simultaneous success in European Parliament elections of May 2019, one interesting perspective that could immensely contribute to the literature could be comparing and contrasting the AfD with the German Greens that was not addressed here, because of the limited space in this thesis.

Within this context, to reflect on the points raised throughout this thesis, it can be claimed that in light of the increasing influence of right-wing populism, it is crucial to understand the reasons of right-wing populism's negative stance towards climate science and hostility towards climate action to develop strategies that can cope with a possible backlash against climate action in the future.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - TÜRKÇE ÖZET/TURKISH SUMMARY

AB ekonomisinin itici gücü ve 2008’de yaşanan Avro krizi sonrasında AB’nin zayıf ekonomilerine yapılan mali yardımın ana yüklenicisi olan Almanya, büyük göçmen nüfusuyla popülist siyaset için elverişli bir zemin haline gelmiştir. Böyle bir siyasi ortamda Avro Krizi sonrasında ortaya çıkan Almanya için Alternatif Partisi (AfD), Alman siyasetindeki sağ popülist parti olarak hem eyalet seçimlerinde hem de federal ve Avrupa düzeyindeki seçimlerde başarı elde etmiştir. AfD iklim değişikliği politikalarına yönelik düşmanca bir dil benimsemiş, iklim bilimi inkarcılığını söylemine katmış, iddialı iklim politikası hedefleri ve çevreci enerji dönüşüm projeleri ile bilinen ve uluslararası alanda “çevre öncüsü” olarak tanınan Almanya’da konunun siyasi olarak kutuplaşmasına yol açmıştır.

Bu tez, temel olarak şu sorulara yanıt bulmaya çalışmaktadır: Radikal sağ popülist partiler iklim değişikliği politikalarına (iklim değişikliğinin çevre üzerinde yarattığı etkileri hafifletmeye ve bu etkilere uyum sağlanmasına yönelik politikalar) neden ve nasıl karşı çıkmaktadırlar? Bir vaka çalışması olarak radikal sağ popülist bir parti olan AfD’nin iklim değişikliği politikaları konusundaki pozisyonu nedir? AfD’nin insan faaliyetlerinin neden olduğu iklim değişikliği kavramına yaklaşımı nedir? Bu konuda şüpheli midir/inkarcı mıdır? İklim değişikliği politikalarına karşı mıdır? Eğer karşıysa partinin bakış açısı hep bu şekilde miydi? AfD iklim politikalarına yönelik karşıtlığını/düşmanca yaklaşımını ne şekilde ortaya koymaktadır? Partinin iklim politikalarına yönelik karşıtlığının nedenleri nelerdir? Bu karşıtlık

popülist ideolojiden mi kaynaklanmaktadır? Partinin çevre konusunu sahiplenmesinin nedeni Alman kamuoyu nezdinde konunun görünürlüğünün artması mıdır? AfD'nin bu yaklaşımı sergilemesi oy oranını artırabilmek için pragmatik sebeplerden mi kaynaklanmaktadır yoksa örneğin parti rekabeti bağlamında Alman Yeşiller Partisi'ni dengelemeyi mi amaçlamaktadır? Bu soruların cevaplanması maksadıyla tez altı ana başlığa ayrılmıştır.

Giriş kısmını takip eden ikinci bölümde radikal sağ popülist partilerin iklim değişikliği konusundaki tutumu ve iklim değişikliğine yönelik politikalarının daha iyi tahlil edilebilmesini teminen öncelikle popülizm ideolojisine yönelik teorik ve kavramsal yaklaşımlar, popülizmin tanımı ve ana unsurları, radikal sağ popülizminin tanımı ve ideolojik içeriği, radikal sağ popülizmin başarısına ilişkin talep ve arz yönlü teoriler ele alınmıştır.

Popülizm farklı coğrafyalarda, farklı dönemlerde çeşitli kavramları tanımlamak için kullanılmıştır. Dolayısıyla genel kabul görmüş bir tanım bulunmamaktadır. Ancak son dönemde farklı uzmanlar tarafından bu kavramı anlamaya ve tanımlamaya yönelik farklı sistematik yaklaşımlar geliştirilmiştir.

En çok atıfta bulunulan tanımlarından birine göre popülizm, toplumu yozlaşmamış “halk” ve yozlaşmış “seçkinler” olarak iki homojen ve birbirine karşıt gruba ayıran ve politikanın halkın genel iradesinin bir ifadesi olması gerektiğini savunan esnek bir ideolojidir (Mudde, 2004, s:543).

Popülistler siyasi olarak sağ veya solda yer almalarına bakılmaksızın kendilerini, halkın kendini yönetme hakkını bölgesel, ulusal ve ulus üstü profesyonel siyasi ve idari sınıflardan (seçkinlerden) ve “diğer seçkin düşmanlardan” geri almaya çalışan gerçek demokratlar olarak tanımlamaktadırlar (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, s:4).

Popülistler ayrıca, belirli toplumsal grupları “kötü göstererek” (ötekileştirerek) toplumda belli konularda aynı tür tepkileri paylaşan gruplar arasında dayanışma oluşturmaktadırlar (Taggart, 2000, s:94).

Diğer taraftan popülistler, “uluslararası ve kozmopolit” nitelik kazanmış (Taggart, 2000, s:96), ortaklaşa girişimlerden rahatsızlık duymaktadırlar. “Soyutlanma” ve “anavatan”a ait olmayan konuların ikinci plana atılması popülizmin doğasından kaynaklanmaktadır (Taggart, 2000, s:96).

Popülistlere göre seçkinler, “halktan kopuk ve kifayetsiz” olan siyasiler, bürokratlar, medya, entelektüeller vb.’dir (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015, s:6).

Popülistlerin diğer bir özelliği komplo teorilerine yönelik yatkınlıklarıdır (Taggart, 2004, s:105). Siyasiler, sektör öncüleri, entelektüeller (örneğin bilim insanları) gibi gruplardan müteşekkil seçkinlerin bir komplonun parçası olarak, kendi menfaatlerini savunmak amacıyla birlikte hareket ettiklerini iddia etmektedirler (Taggart, 2004, s:105). Bahse konu komplo teorileri toplumun çeşitli konularda hayal kırıklığına uğramış kesimlerini harekete geçirme işlevini yerine getirmektedir (Taggart, 2004, s:105).

Buraya kadar anlatılanlar, popülizmin sağ veya sol ideolojiden bağımsız özelliklerini ortaya koymaktadır. Radikal sağ popülizmde ise sayılanlara ilave olarak yerli halkın yabancılardan üstün tutulmasına öncelik verilmekte ve otoriter yaklaşıma eğilim gösterilmektedir (Mudde, 2017, s:4).

Bazı uzmanlar radikal sağ popülizmden bahsedilebilmesi için seçkinlerce baskı altına alınan halkın, farklı kimliğe ve değer yargılarına sahip ve seçkinlerce kayırılan “diğerleri” tarafından tehdit altında olduğunun iddia edilmesi gerektiğini öne sürmektedir (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015, s:4-5). Popülist radikal sağ yaklaşıma göre bahse konu “diğerleri”ni, ait oldukları toplumdan kimlik, davranış ve inançlar açısından farklılık gösteren “göçmenler, bölgesel azınlıklar, geleneksel olmayan yaşam tarzına sahip olanlar veya sol görüşe sahip kişiler vb.” teşkil etmektedir (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015, s:6).

Yukarıda anlatılan kavramlar çerçevesinde, tezin ikinci bölümünde radikal sağın ve radikal sağ popülist partilerin seçim başarısını açıklamaya yönelik talep ve arz yönlü teorilere ayrıntılarıyla yer verilmiştir (Eatwell, 2017).

Üçüncü bölümde ise, radikal sağ popülist partilerin şüpheli/inkârcı yaklaşımına maruz kalan, insan faaliyetlerinin neden olduğu iklim değişikliği kavramının tanımı, çevre üzerindeki etkileri ile radikal sağ popülist partilerin büyük bir kısmının uygulanmasına şüpheli yaklaştığı ya da karşı çıktığı iklim değişikliğinin çevre ve insan yaşamı üzerindeki etkilerini hafifletmeye ve bu etkilere uyum sağlamaya yönelik uluslararası girişimlerden bahsedilmiştir. Bu

kapsamda, Birleşmiş Milletler İklim Değişikliği Çerçeve Sözleşmesi, Kyoto Protokolü, Paris Anlaşması, Avrupa Birliği'nin iklim değişikliği ile mücadele politikaları ve enerji politikası ile çevre korumacılığı alanında iddialı politikaları ile bilinen Almanya'nın iklim değişikliği ve enerji politikalarının bazı unsurları anlatılmıştır.

İnsan faaliyetleri kaynaklı sera gazlarının salınımı sonucunda atmosferin önceki durumuna kıyasla daha fazla ısınması ile dünyanın iklim dengesinde meydana gelen değişiklikler “iklim değişikliği” olarak tanımlanmaktadır (UNEP). İklim değişikliğinin etkileri özellikle son yıllarda alışılmışın dışında yaşanan çevresel olaylar ve hava olayları ile kendini göstermekte, insan yaşamını doğrudan etkilemektedir (UNEP). Aşırı sıcakların neden olduğu kuraklık, dağ zirvelerinde yer alan buzulların erimesi, deniz seviyesinde artış, tarımsal ürünlerin verimliliğinde azalma iklim değişikliğinin etkilerinden bazılarıdır (UNEP).

Bilim ve siyaset çevrelerinde yer alan bazı gruplar iklim değişikliğinin insan kaynaklı faaliyetlerden kaynaklanmadığını ileri sürseler dahi uluslararası alanda iklim değişikliğinin insan faaliyetleri sonucunda salınan sera gazlarından kaynakladığı hakkında bir fikir birliğine varıldığı kabul edilmektedir (Cook ve diğerleri, 2016). Bilimsel olarak kanıtlandığı üzere geçtiğimiz 30 yıllık dönemde hava sıcaklığı sanayileşme öncesi dönemdeki seviyenin bir derece üzerinde seyretmiştir (Copernicus, 2019). Sera gazı salınımindaki artış ile bu eğilimin devam edeceği tahmin edilmektedir (Hook, 2019).

Birleşmiş Milletler Çevre Programı raporuna göre 1880-2012 döneminde ortalama hava sıcaklığı 0,85 santigrat derece artmış, 1901-2010 arası dönemde deniz seviyesi 19 santimetre yükselmiş, Kuzey Kutup bölgesinde yer alan buzullar 1979'dan bu yana her on yılda bir daha hızlı erimıştır (UNEP). Yapılan hesaplamalara göre gelecek yıllarda bu durumun ortaya çıkaracağı ekonomik maliyet milyar dolarla ölçülmektedir (UNDP).

İnsan kaynaklı iklim değişikliğini yavaşlatmak ve durdurmak amacıyla uluslararası alanda ciddi girişimlerde bulunmaktadır. Bunların başında 1992 tarihinde Rio de Janeiro'da akdedilen ve 21 Mart 1994 tarihinde yürürlüğe

giren Birleşmiş Milletler İklim Değişikliği Çerçeve Sözleşmesi (UNFCCC) gelmektedir. UNFCCC, tarihte ilk defa insan faaliyetlerinin iklim değişikliğine neden olduğu düşüncesini ortaya koyarak bir “sorun” olduğuna işaret etmiştir (UNCC). Sözleşme temel olarak, ortak ancak farklılaştırılmış sorumlulukların var olduğunu ifade etmektedir (MFA). Gelişmiş ülkelerin iklim değişikliğine daha fazla etki ettikleri gerçeğinden hareketle bu ülkelerin daha fazla sorumluluk üstlenmeleri kayıt altına alınmıştır (UNCC).

Bu konudaki niyet beyanının somut uluslararası yükümlülük olarak yeniden düzenlenmesi 1997 yılında akdedilen Kyoto Protokolü ile söz konusu olmuştur. UNFCCC’ye taraf olan 197 ülke tarafından imzalanan Protokol, en çok sera gazı salınımı gerçekleştiren ABD ve Çin gibi ülkeler tarafından uygulamaya geçirilmediği için etkisi sınırlı kalmıştır. 2020 yılına kadar yürürlükte kalacak olan Kyoto Protokolü kapsamındaki başlıca amaç taraf devletlerin anlaşmada öngörülen sınırlar dahilinde sera gazı salınımlarını düşürmeleri ve 1990 seviyesinin en az %5 ila %18 altına çekmeleridir (European Commission, n.d.-c).

Bu alandaki en son ve en önemli gelişme 2015 yılında UNFCCC’e taraf olan ülkeler tarafından akdedilen Paris Anlaşmasıdır. İlk evrensel ve yasal olarak bağlayıcı olan küresel iklim anlaşması olarak kabul edilen Paris Anlaşması kapsamında, sanayileşme öncesi dönemin 2 santigrat derece altında ve her şekilde 1,5 santigrat derece ile sınırlı kalacak şekilde 30 yıllık bir dönem için “sıcaklık hedefleri” belirlenmiştir (Copernicus, 2019).

Bu alanda önem taşıyan uluslararası anlaşma ve sözleşmelerin birçoğuna taraf olan Avrupa Birliğinin iklim değişikliği ile mücadele hedefleri 2007 yılında kabul edilen ve 2009 yılında yürürlüğe konulan 2020 paketinde ele alınmıştır. Bu çerçevede Birlik; sera gazı salınımını 1990 seviyesinin %20’sine tekabül edecek şekilde kılmayı, Birliğin enerji ihtiyacının %20’sini yenilenebilir enerji kaynaklarından elde etmeyi, enerji verimliliğini % 20 oranında artırmayı hedefleri arasında görmektedir (European Commission, n.d.-a). 2030 paketinde ise bu hedeflerini sırasıyla %40 (sera gazı hedefi), %32 (yenilenebilir enerji payı) ve %32,5 (verimliliğin artırılması) olarak güncellemiştir (European Commission, n.d.-b).

AB'nin anılan hedefleri gerekleřtirmesinde “Salınım Ticareti Sistemi” buyk nem tařıyan bir mekanizmadır. Sınırlama ve kotaların ticareti esasına dayanan bu sistemde sera gazı salınımına neden olan iřletmeler AB tarafından konulan tavan kısıtlamalarına uyarak sera gazı salınımı iin hak satın almaktadır (Appunn & Sherman, 2018). Bir borsa gibi iřleyen sistemde řirketler kullanmadıkları haklarını satarken, bu haklara ihtiya duyan řirketler sera gazı salınım hakkı satın almaktadır (Appunn & Sherman, 2018). Haklarını ihlal etmeleri halinde ise ceza ile karřı karřıya kalabilmektedirler. Bu erevede yrtlen ticari deėiř-tokuřlar tavan kısıtlaması ile sınırlıdır (Appunn & Sherman, 2018).

AB kapsamında Almanya'nın evre politikası 2007 yılında yrrlėe konulmuř olan “Btnleřik Enerji ve İklim Programı” ile somutlařmaya bařlamıřtır. Bu programın geliřmiř rneėi olan ve 2016 yılında yrrlėe konulan “2050 İklim Eylem Planı” sera gazı salınımını 2020-2040 dneminde 1990 yılındaki seviyenin nemli lde altına ekmeyi hedeflemektedir. Bu erevede, sera gazı salınımında 2020 yılından bařlayarak 10'ar yıllık dnemler itibarıyla sırasıyla %40; %55; %70 ve %80-95 dřř hedeflenmektedir (BMU, 2018, s:24). Sera gazı salınımının azaltılmasına ynelik bu ama yenilenebilir enerji kaynaklarının kullanımının artırılması hedefi ile eř zamanlı yrtlmektedir. Bu temelde, yenilenebilir enerji kaynaklarında saėlanması hedeflenen artıř, aynı yıllar iin sırasıyla %18; %30; %45 ve %60 olarak ngrlmektedir (BMU, 2018, s:24).

Bu hedeflere ulařılabilmesi iin Almanya tarafından ngrlen en nemli politikalardan biri kamuoyunda ok tartıřılan enerji retiminde tař kmr ve linyit (kahverengi kmr) kullanımına 2038 yılına kadar ařamalı olarak son verilmesidir. Bu geiř srecinin, ilgili sektrleri olumsuz ynde etkileyeceėi; doėrudan veya dolaylı olarak 60.000 iřinin bu durumdan olumsuz řekilde etkileneceėi ve elektrik retiminin daha pahalı hale gelerek son kullanıcıları olumsuz etkileyeceėi ifade edilmektedir (Schulz, 2019).

Almanya'da kmr tketiminden vazgeilmesi gibi ok tartıřma yaratan diėer bir konu 2022 yılına kadar nkleer enerji kullanımının terk edilmesi (Staudenmaier, 2017) ve zararlı gazların salınım oranlarının tehlikeli

boyutlara ulaştığı şehirlerde dizel arabaların kullanımının yasaklanmasıdır (Appunn, 2019).

En son yer verilen üç konu Almanya siyasi gündeminde büyük yankı uyandırmış, ciddi siyasi tartışmaları beraberinde getirmiş ve popülist radikal sağ bir parti olan AfD'nin seçim kampanyalarında yer bulmuştur.

Dördüncü bölümde radikal sağ popülizm ile iklim bilimi ve iklim değişikliği politikaları arasındaki kavramsal ilişki, birey ve parti ideolojisi ile iklim değişikliği arasındaki ilişkiyi açıklamaya yönelik tartışmalar, popülist radikal sağ partiler tarafından kullanılan söylem kalıpları üzerinde durulduktan sonra söz konusu partilerin iklim değişikliğine ve iklim politikalarına ilişkin söylemlerinin farklı türleri incelenmiştir. Avrupa'daki popülist radikal sağ partiler üzerine yapılan çalışmalara atıfta bulunularak anılan partiler: inkârcı/şüpheciler; bağlantısız/temkinliler; tasdikçiler; yenilenebilir enerji türlerine geçişi destekleyenler (Schaller & Carius, 2019) olmak üzere dört gruba ayrılmıştır. Dördüncü bölümde en son olarak popülist radikal sağ partilerin enerji dönüşüm politikaları ve iklim değişikliği politikalarıyla ilgili eleştirilerine yer verilmiş, bu çerçevede kullandıkları dil incelenmiştir. Söz konusu partilerin, iklim değişikliği politikaları hakkında “iktisadi olarak zararlı ve pahalı”, “hakkaniyete uygun olmayan ve toplumsal olarak adaletsiz”, “çevreye zararlı”, “işe yaramaz/değmeyecek” politikalarıdır (Schaller & Carius, 2019) şeklinde iddiaları dile getirdiklerini tespit etmiş incelemeler hakkında bilgi verilmiştir.

Çalışmanın beşinci bölümünde bir vaka çalışması olarak AfD ve söz konusu partinin insan faaliyetlerinin neden olduğu iklim değişikliği ve iklim değişikliği politikaları konusundaki yaklaşımı ele alınmıştır. Anılan bölümde ilk olarak, popülist radikal sağ bir parti olan AfD'nin kuruluşu, tarihçesi ve parti ideolojisi, iktisadi ve siyasi konulardaki yaklaşımları ile partiye oy veren seçmenlerin özellikleri irdelenmiştir. Daha sonra, AfD'nin insan faaliyetlerinin neden olduğu iklim değişikliği kavramına yönelik “inkârcı” yaklaşımı (Schaller & Carius, 2019) ve “çevre karşıtı” bir parti olarak özellikleri tetkik edilmiştir. Partinin “çevre karşıtlığı” sosyal medya hesapları üzerinden yapılan paylaşımlar, parti üyelerinin açıklamaları, partinin iklim bilimi inkarcılığı ile

bilinen menfaat gruplarıyla olan ilişkisi hakkındaki iddialar ve parti manifestosu çerçevesinde incelenmiştir. Bu bölümde tüm dünyada çevre ve iklim değişikliği konusunun görünürlüğünün artmasına yol açan ve AfD'nin büyük tepkisini çeken “Gelecek için Cumalar Hareketi” ve “Greta Thunberg”e ayrıca yer verilmiş, adı geçen protesto hareketinin Alman kamuoyunda nasıl değerlendirildiğine ilişkin anket çalışmalarının sonuçlarına da atıfta bulunulmuştur. Bölümün sonunda AfD'nin iklim bilimi inkarcılığı ve iklim değişikliği politikalarına yönelik karşıtlığı (Schaller & Carius, 2019) tez boyunca değinilen hususlar, kavramlar ve teoriler ışığında açıklanmıştır.

AfD, Almanya'da faaliyet gösteren altı büyük siyasi parti içinde yer almakta olup, 24 Eylül 2017 tarihinde gerçekleştirilen genel seçimler sonrasında federal meclise girmiştir (Bundestag, 2017). Parti göçmen ve İslam karşıtlığı ile anılmakta, Alman kültürünün üstünlüğünü savunmaktadır (AfD Manifesto, 2017). 2013 yılında parti olarak örgütlenmesinden önce Avrupa'da ortak para biriminin kullanılmasına muhalefet eden bir hareket olarak ortaya çıkan AfD'nin (Grimm, 2015; Kim, 2018), Almanya'nun Avrupa tek para sistemine dahil olmasına karşı çıktığı, serbest piyasa ekonomisini desteklediği ve devlet müdahalesine karşı çıkan bir yaklaşım sergilediği görülmektedir (AfD Manifesto, 2017). Serbest piyasa ekonomisinin güçlendirilmesine yönelik yaptığı vurgu ile AfD, ekonomik bakımdan korumacı tavır takınan Avrupa'daki diğer aşırı sağcı popülist partilerden ayrılmaktadır (Decker, 2018, s: 203).

AfD, AB'nin merkezi federal bir yapıya dönüşmesinin engellenmesi, göçmen politikalarının sıkılaştırılması, geleneksel Alman aile yapısının korunması gibi politikaları savunmaktadır (AfD Manifesto, 2017). Parti yetkilileri, Brexit'i desteklediklerini açıklamışlar (Neuerer, 2016), 2016 yılında ABD Başkanlık seçimlerinde Donald Trump'ın seçilmesini memnuniyetle karşıladıklarını ifade etmişlerdir (Scholz, 2017).

2017 federal meclis seçimlerinde AfD, %12,6 oy oranı ile Alman Parlamentosuna girmiştir. 709 sandalyeli federal parlamentoda 92 milletvekili bulunan AfD, parlamentonun üçüncü büyük parti grubuna sahiptir (Bundestag, 2017).

Partiye 2017 federal meclis seçimlerinde oy veren seçmenlerin niteliklerini araştıran bir çalışmada (Hansen ve Olsen, 2019, s:15) seçmenlerin oy davranışlarında belirleyici olan faktörlerin partinin “göçmen karşıtı tutumu” ile “Merkel Hükümeti”nin mülteci krizini ele alış biçimine duyulan tepki olduğu belirlenmiş, AfD’ye giden oyların büyük oranda toplumun hemen her kesiminden tepki oyları niteliğini taşıdığı tespit edilmiştir.

Almanya’daki göçmen sayısının azalmasıyla birlikte, İslam karşıtlığı ve göçmen karşıtlığı konularının görünürlüğünün azalması (Arzheimer & Berning, 2019) ve çevre ile iklim değişikliğine ilişkin konuların gündemde daha fazla yer almaya başlaması, AfD’nin, insanın neden olduğu iklim değişikliğinin varlığı konusundaki inkarcılığını (Schaller & Carius, 2019) ve iklim değişikliği politikalarına yönelik olumsuz tutumunu daha çok işlemesine neden olmuş, bahsedilen konular parti ve parti üyelerinin söylemlerinde daha belirgin hale gelmiştir.

AfD’nin iklim değişikliği konusunu gündeme getirme sıklığı 2018 yılında Greta Thunberg tarafından başlatılan “Gelecek için Cumalar Hareketi” ile artmıştır (Kahya, 2019). Her cuma günü gerçekleştirilen bu eylemlerde göstericiler okula gitmeyerek protesto gösterilerine katılmakta ve iklim değişikliği konusundaki farkındalığı artırmaya çalışmaktadır (Carrington, 2019). Söz konusu eylemlere 128 ülkede 1.4 milyonun üzerinde gencin katılmasının (Carrington, 2019) çevre ve iklim değişikliği konularının görünürlüğünü önemli derecede arttırdığı iddia edilebilir.

Alman kamuoyunun gençlerin okul saatlerinde gösterilere katılması konusunda bölündüğü, yapılan anket çalışmalarında Hristiyan Demokrat Parti (CDU), AfD ve Özgür Demokrat Parti (FDP) seçmenlerinin eylemlere karşı çıktığı; Sol Parti, Yeşiller ve Sosyal Demokratlara oy veren seçmenlerin ise gösterileri desteklediğinin tespit edildiği görülmektedir (Waldholz, 2019).

AfD’nin anılan gösteri yürüyüşlerine ve yürüyüşlere öncülük eden Greta Thunberg’e karşı geliştirdiği “Thunberg karşıtı” söylem ile iklim değişikliği ve politikaları hakkındaki diğer söylemleri parti üyelerinin açıklamaları ile partinin sosyal medya hesaplarında geniş yer bulmaktadır (Kahya, 2019; Baynes, 2019).

Parti üyeleri iklim değişikliğinin var olduğunu iddia etmenin esasen bir “beyin yıkama” olduğunu (Connolly, 2019); iklim değişikliği argümanları ile bir panik havası yaratılmaya çalışıldığını (Connolly, 2019); Paris Anlaşmasından hemen çıkılması ve Alman Yenilenebilir Enerji Kanununun yürürlükten kaldırılması gerektiğini (Connolly, 2019); iklim değişikliği konusunun yeşil politikaları ve yeşil politika destekçilerini bir araya getiren yeni bir din haline geldiğini (Farand, 2019) ve karbon dioksitin bitkiler için faydalı olduğunu ve iklim üzerinde etkisi olmadığını ileri sürmektedir (Farand, 2019).

AfD’nin iklim değişikliği politikalarına ilişkin tutumunun anlaşılmasında iklim bilimi karşıtlığı ile bilinen bazı çıkar grupları (Avrupa İklim ve Enerji Enstitüsü, CFACT Avrupa Birimi ve Heartland Enstitüsü) ile yakın ilişki içinde olduğu hakkındaki iddialara kısaca yer verilmesinde de yarar görülmüştür (Kahya 2019; Hotko ve diğerleri, 2019).

Parti manifestosu incelendiğinde, AfD’nin Almanya’nın halihazırda uyguladığı ve uygulanmasını hedeflediği enerji ve iklim politikalarına karşı çıktığı; insan faaliyetleri neticesinde meydana gelen küresel ısınma ve küresel ısınma kaynaklı iklim değişikliğini inkar ettiği; iklim değişikliğinin varlığı iddiasının “İklim Değişikliği Uluslararası Panelinin” oluşturduğu bilgisayar programları temelinde kurgulanan varsayımlara dayandığını ve bu kurguların sayısal verilere ve gözlemlere dayanmadığını; yirminci yüzyıl boyunca küresel ortalama sıcaklığın 0.8 santigrat derece arttığını ancak 1990 yılından bu yana küresel ortalama hava sıcaklığında bir artış yaşanmadığını; karbondioksit salınımının ise her zamankinden daha hızlı arttığını; Alman hükümetinin sera gazının bitkiler ve küresel beslenme üzerindeki olumlu etkisini görmezden geldiğini iddia ettiği görülmektedir (AfD Manifesto, 2017).

Söz konusu manifestoda ayrıca, Almanya’nın 2050 yılına ait iklim hedeflerinin kişisel ve ekonomik bağımsızlığa önemli seviyede zarar vereceği ve hayat standartlarının düşmesine neden olacağı; Alman Yenilenebilir Enerji Kaynakları Yasasının halkın cebinden para alarak sübvansiyonlardan yararlanan küçük bir menfaat grubuna aktaracağı; bu Kanunun Alman Anayasasına ve AB mevzuatına aykırı olduğu; yenilenebilir enerjinin

konvansiyonel enerji kaynakları ile karşılaştırıldığında sürdürülebilir olmadığı; bu dönüşümün enerji fiyatlarında artışa neden olacağı; bu dönüşüm ile birlikte verilmesi gereken sübvansiyonların sadece belli başlı şirketler ve çıkar grupları için yararlı olacağı gibi hususlara yer verildiği görülmektedir (AfD Manifesto, 2017).

Yukarıda sayılanların dışında ayrıca, AfD “Alman Enerji Tasarruf Yönetmeliği”ne de karşı çıkarak binaların enerji tasarrufu için elden geçirilmesinde bu dönüşümün masraflarının bireyler tarafından üstlenildiğini; bu faaliyetlerin bina sakinlerine ve binalara zarar vermekle kalmayıp çevreye de zarar verdiğini; hükümetin ve bu dönüşümden kar edecek olan çevrelerin bu faaliyetlerden kaynaklanacak gerçek masrafları gizlediğini; bu yöntemlerle binalarda enerji tasarrufunun sağlanamayacağını dile getirmektedir (AfD Manifesto, 2017).

Öte yandan, AfD nükleer enerjiden vazgeçilerek yenilenebilir enerji kaynaklarının daha fazla kullanılması hakkındaki kararın alelacele verildiğini ve ekonomik bakımından zarar verici nitelik arz ettiğini; bu kararın Almanya’nın enerji güvenliğini tehlikeye soktuğunu; reaktörler üzerinde çalışmaların sürdürülerek bu teknolojinin daha güvenli hale getirilmesi gerektiğini, nükleer atıkların sürekli olarak ve tek bir merkezde depolanmasını doğru bulmadıklarını ve dışardan nükleer enerji ithal etmenin Almanya için güvenli ve pratik olmayan bir yöntem olduğunu vurgulamaktadır (AfD Manifesto, 2017).

AfD manifestosunda ayrıca biyoyakıtların kullanımına ilişkin konulara yer verilerek, tarımsal arazilerin biyoyakıt üretiminde kullanılacak hammaddelerin ekilmesine ayrılmasının gıda amaçlı üretime ayrılacak alanların azalmasına neden olduğu, biyoyakıtların dizel ve petrolle karıştırılması zorunluluğunun yakıt fiyatlarını arttırdığı; sağlanan sübvansiyonların ekonomik bakımdan kaynak israfına yol açtığı ve biyo enerji imalatında biyo atıkların kullanımının daha uygun olacağı belirtilmektedir (AfD Manifesto, 2017).

Diğer taraftan, AfD manifestosunda çevrenin, insanın gelişimine zarar verecek şekilde korunmasına karşı oldukları; gelecek kuşaklara bozulmamış bir

evre miras bırakmanın önemli olduėu; bu amaçla ender hayvan ve bitki türlerinin korunmasının önem taşıdığı; yenilenebilir enerji kaynaklarının flora ve faunaya zarar verdiği; toprağın, suyun ve havanın korunmasının ve kalitesinin artırılmasının birinci öncelik olması gerektiğı; yenilenebilir enerji teknolojisinin evreye yarardan çok zarar getirdiğı; özellikle rüzgar enerjisinden yararlanmak amacıyla kurulan tesislerin el değmemiş doğaya zarar verdiği hususları ifade edilmektedir (AfD Manifesto, 2017).

AfD’nin yukarıda ayrıntılarına yer verilen iklim değışikliğı inkarcılığı ve iklim değışikliğı politikalarına yönelik olumsuz tutumunun nedenleri üç ana başlık altında sınıflandırılabilir. Söz konusu açıklamalardan ilki popülizmin kendi ideolojisinden kaynaklanmakta ve en açıklayıcı teorilerden biri olma potansiyelini taşımaktadır. Buna göre “soyutlanma” popülizmin doğasından kaynaklanmakta (Taggart, 2000, s:96), iklim değışikliğı gibi “küresel” konular “anavatan” (Taggart, 2000, s:96) kaynaklı olmadıkları için ikinci planda kalmakta ya da radikal sağ popülist siyasetilerin ilgisini çekmemektedirler (Taggart, 2000, s:96).

Radikal sağ popülist partiler “uluslararası ve kozmopolit” nitelik kazanmış konulara karşı büyük tepki duymakta (Taggart, 2000, s:96) entelektüel karşıtı tutumlarıyla (Laclau’dan aktaran Wejnert, 2014) seçkinleri uluslararası konuları ulusal olanların/ulusal menfaatlerin önüne geçirmek ve halkın menfaatlerine değil kendi menfaatlerine öncelik vermekle itham etmektedirler (Rydgren, 2007, s:242). Onlara göre entellektüeller ve seçkinler halktan kopuk ve yetersiz oldukları için (Albertazzi & McDonnel, 2015, s:6), halkın (örneğin insan faaliyetlerinin yol açtığı iklim değışikliğinin var olduğunu iddia eden) “uzmanlara/bilim insanlarına” ihtiyaçları yoktur (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, s:4). Ayrıca, seçkinler uluslararası iklim politikalarını yükümlenerek ulusal menfaatleri göz ardı etmektedir. Popülistler ayrıca komplo teorilerine inanma konusundaki yatkınlıklarıyla (Taggart, 2004, s: 105) iklim değışikliğinin bir aldatmaca olduğunu (Lewis, Boseley & Duncan, 2019), halkın cebinden seçkinlere para aktarımı yapabilmek için icat edilmiş bir komplo olduğunu (Schaller & Carius, 2019, s:10) iddia etmektedir. Bu tür söylemlere, AfD manifestosunda ve parti üyelerinin açıklamalarında da

rastlanmaktadır. Popülizm ideolojisiyle bağlantılı diğer bir açıklamanın, radikal sağ popülistlerin çevre ve iklim değişikliği söylemini kullanarak Yeşiller üzerinden sol karşıtı duruşlarını (Albertazzi & McDonnel, 2015, s:6) vurgulamaya çalışmaları olduğu kabul edilebilir. Alman Yeşiller Partisinin 2017 Parlamento seçimlerinden sonraki dönemde AfD ile eşzamanlı olarak etkisini artırması ve diğer yandan iklim değişikliği konusunun görünürlüğünün artmasıyla birlikte, Yeşiller Partisinin sahipliğinde olduğu kabul edilen çevre konusunun, anılan partiyi dengelemek maksadıyla AfD tarafından benimsenmiş olabileceği iddia edilebilir.

AfD'nin iklim bilimi inkarcılığı ve iklim değişikliği politikalarına yönelik olumsuz tutumuna ilişkin ikinci açıklama dünya ve Almanya gündeminde çevre ve iklim değişikliği konularının görünürlüğünün artmasıdır. Almanya'daki göçmen sayısının eskiye kıyasla daha az olması (Arzheimer & Berning, 2019) nedeniyle AfD'nin konusu kabul edilen göçmen karşıtlığı konusunun etkisi azalmış, bu durum AfD'yi daha önce ele aldığı ana konulardan daha farklı bir konuyu vurgulamaya yöneltmiştir.

Partiler kamuoyu gündeminde halihazırda bulunan konular arasından seçtikleri konular üzerinde yoğunlaşacaklarından (Green-Pedersen & Monteresen'den aktaran Abou-Chadi, 2014, s:3) AfD'nin çevre konusunu benimsediği iddia edilebilir. Gündemde yer alan konular ve dolayısıyla partilerin bu konulara atfettikleri önem, yaptıkları vurgu seçimden seçime farklılık gösterecektir (Meyer & Miller, 2015, s: 267).

AfD bu çerçevede, Almanya'nın uygulamakta olduğu veya gelecekte uygulamayı planladığı iklim ve enerji politikaları kapsamında örneğin kömür kullanımına son verilmesi; nükleer enerji kullanımından vazgeçilmesi, dizel otomobillerin kullanımının zararlı gazların salınım oranının yüksek olduğu şehirlerde kullanımının yasaklanması; olası bir karbon vergisinin konulması gibi konuları sıklıkla vurgulamakta ve bunlara karşı olduğunu açıkça dile getirmektedir.

AfD'nin iklim değişikliği politikalarına yönelik olumsuz duruşu hakkındaki üçüncü olası açıklama “maddi menfaatler teorisi” (Eatwell, 2017, pp.410-411) başlığı altında değerlendirilebilir. Bu yaklaşım çerçevesinde, kıt

kaynaklar üzerinde rekabet eden ve/veya görelî yoksunluktan muzdarip veya iktisadî deęişiklikten korkan kesimlerin (Eatwell, 2017, pp.410-411) radikal saę tarafından yürütölen politikaları destekleyeceęi kabul edilmektedir. Ayrıca iklim deęişiklięi politikalarının özeî mülkiyet hakları üzerinde yaratacaęı sınırlandırmalar ve bu çerçevede devletin piyasalara yapabileceęi olası müdahaleler ön plana çıkartılarak ulusal menfaatlere zarar verileceęi iddia edilmektedir (McCright & Dunlap, 2016, s: 350). Öte yandan, konu AfD özeînde deęerlendirildięinde, iklim deęişiklięi politikaları üzerinden piyasalara müdahale edilmesi ve mülkiyet haklarına sınırlama getirilmesi gibi olasılıkların AfD'nin kuruluşundan beri temel niteliklerinden kabul edilen serbest piyasa yanlısı (Kim, 2018) tutumuyla ters düřtüęü görölmektedir.

İklim politikalarından etkilenme ihtimali en yüksek olan imalat, ağır sanayi ve madencilik gibi üretim sürecinde yoğun olarak sera gazları açığa çıkan sektörlerde radikal saę popölist partilere (Lockwood, 2018, s: 719) yakınlık duyma potansiyeli yüksek olan bir seçmen tabanının varlıęı ve bu seçmenlerin iklim deęişiklięi önlemlerinin bedelini ödeme konusundaki isteksiz yaklaşımları da (Bechtel ve dięerlerinden aktaran Lockwood, 2018, s: 719) AfD'nin iklim deęişiklięi politikaları karřıtı tutumunu açıklamaktadır.

Tüm anlatılan hususlar ışığında popölist radikal saę partilerin ve vaka çalışması olarak AfD'nin iklim deęişiklięi bilimi ve iklim deęişiklięi politikalarına yönelik olumsuz yaklaşımlarının anlaşılmasında birden çok teori ve açıklamanın çok yönlü bir şekilde deęerlendirilmesinin ve kamuoyunda tartışılan konuların görönlüğündeki deęişimler de dikkate alınarak her seçim için ayrı bir deęerlendirme yapılmasının faydalı olacaęı düşünölmektedir.

Popölist radikal saę partilerin Avrupa siyasetinde etkinlięini artırması sebebiyle, anılan partilerin iklim bilimi ve iklim deęişiklięi politikalarına yönelik uluslararası kolektif girişimlere engel olma veya ortaklaşa uygulanması öngörölen politikaların yürürlüğe konması/uygulanması konusunda zorluk çıkarma ihtimallerine karřı, olumsuz tutumlarının nedenlerinin çok iyi tahlil edilmesi gerekmektedir (Schaller & Carius, 2019).

Almanya'nın büyük üretim kapasitesi ve sera gazlarının salınımındaki sorumluluęu kapsamında ve uluslararası arenada "iklim politikaları alanındaki

öncü ülke” konumundan dolayı Almanya özelinde AfD’nin iklim ve enerji politikaları konusundaki yaklaşımının iyi analiz edilmesi, iklim değişikliğinin sonuçlarının daha güçlü bir şekilde hissedileceği önümüzdeki yıllarda uluslararası ortak politikalar önünde engel teşkil etme ihtimaline karşı stratejiler geliştirilmesi bağlamında büyük önem arz etmektedir (Schaller & Carius, 2019).

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