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# In the Name of “Endangered Nations” and “Unsovereign States”? Official Discourses of Radical Right Movement Parties and Social Movement Organizations in Poland and Germany

Justyna Kajta,<sup>1</sup>  Janina Myrczyk<sup>2</sup> and Mateusz Karolak<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Institute of Social Sciences, SWPS University, Warsaw, Poland, <sup>2</sup>Department of Psychology, Medical School Berlin, Germany and <sup>3</sup>Institute of Sociology, University of Wrocław, Poland

**Corresponding author:** Justyna Kajta, email: [jkajta@swps.edu.pl](mailto:jkajta@swps.edu.pl)

## Abstract

The political landscape of the radical right has long been a major discussion point in the political and social sciences. By considering the variety of radical right organizations (movement parties and non-parliamentary organizations) and the particular national and transnational political and discursive opportunity structures, the paper aims at a comparative analysis of the main discursive frames present in political programs and manifestoes of radical right social movement organizations and movement parties in Poland (*Konfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość* and *Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny*) and Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland* and *Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland*). Moreover, based on approaches developed by Cas Mudde and Jens Rydgren, this article analyses how the features presumed essential to the radical right (nativism, authoritarianism and populism) are reflected and interconnected in the official discourses of the selected radical right organizations.

**Keywords:** radical right discourses; frames; party movements; Poland; Germany

Although the radical right has been widely discussed in the political and social sciences for several decades (Mudde 2007), researchers have only recently begun to explore the re-emergence of radical right social movements and their ambiguous links to right-wing parties (Blee and Creasap 2010; Castelli Gattinara and Pirro 2019; Caiani 2017; Minkenberg 2019). Scholars have identified – on the right side of the political spectrum – so-called “movement parties,” (Caiani and Cisař 2018; Pirro and Gattinara 2018), which are defined as “coalitions of political activists who emanate from social movements and try to apply the organizational and strategic practices of social movements in the arena of party competition” (Kitschelt 2006, 280). Paradoxically, movement parties simultaneously strive for electoral success while also employing a non-parliamentary repertoire of actions and mobilizations, allowing them to engage in contentious politics while often maintaining a negative and dismissive approach to institutionalized politics. As Michael Minkenberg has argued, “they do not only challenge governments [...] they challenge all other parties or even the political order in a populist style, rather than merely seeking office or a change in policy” (Minkenberg 2019, 467).

Albeit radical right movement parties and their discursive strategies have received increasing research interest, they are still undertheorized and underexplored, especially in the context of Central Eastern Europe. In this paper we examine whether the discourses of radical right organizations vary depending on, first, the types and aims of the political organization, and second, the opportunity structures particular to the societies in which they operate. Given that the different

genres of political discourse (e.g., bills, laws, party programs, political advertising, political speeches, media interviews, communication in social media, etc.) have different (strategic) functions (cf. Van Dijk 1997), we also assume that the party programs and manifestoes are one of the crucial expressions of the party's official discourse (Eder et al. 2017). Firstly, they demonstrate a party's core norms and values and give salience to issues crucial from the party perspective. Secondly, they are less influenced by day-to-day, short-term events and affairs, unlike political discourse presented by parties and politicians for example in traditional and social media. Thirdly, such documents have at least two different functions, as they are simultaneously aimed (directly and indirectly) at potential voters in order to gain their support, as well as at party members in order to strengthen their identity (Harmel et al. 2018).

Given that the ultimate goal of radical right movement parties is electoral success, it begs the question whether their discourses presented in official programs and manifestoes differ in comparison to radical right social movements that might have different aims and ambiguous relationships to political parties. The typology of party-movement interactions proposed by Manuela Caiani and Ondřej Císar (2018) shows as many as nine possible types of relations between the radical right social movements and political parties, including – among others – cooperation, agenda appropriation, agenda setting and competition, mutual rejection, and no interaction at all. Moreover, the increasing presence of radical right organizations in parliamentary politics is often linked to the ongoing mainstreaming of the radical right, although the ultimate result remains unclear. On the one hand, this mainstreaming could result in a smoothing of radical right discourses and a concealment of its radical content – at least in the official documents. On the other hand, certain ideas that were until recently exclusively propagated by the radical right have now become “common sense,” and have been adopted by mainstream politicians, blurring the boundaries between traditional right-wing parties and populist radical right parties (Mudde 2019). Last but not least, we also examine whether and to what extent the shape of the radical right official discourses co-depend on specific national discursive and political opportunity structures.

Against this backdrop, this paper aims to contribute to the emerging research on the discourses of radical right organizations, and applies a cross-country, comparative perspective. The paired comparison strategy (Tarrow 2010) is two-dimensional here: it is both cross-organizational and cross-country. Firstly, we compare discourses employed in official programs and manifestos by two different types of radical right organizations (movements parties and social movement organizations) in order to reveal the issues presented in their political documents. The analysis focuses on the analysis of official discourses of two selected movement parties: the Confederation Liberty and Independence (Konfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość) in Poland and the Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD) in Germany, and two radical right social movement organizations: the National Radical Camp (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny, ONR) in Poland and the Identitarian Movement Germany (Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland, IBD) in Germany. Based on Cas Mudde and Jens Rydgren's definitions of the (populist) radical right (i.e., nativism/ethnonationalist xenophobia, authoritarianism, and populism) are reflected and interconnected in the official discourses of these two types of radical right actors (Mudde 2004; Rydgren 2018). Our first hypothesis was that the discourses vary depending on the type of the organization. We expected that discourses of radical right movement parties are dominated by populist frames (as strategically helpful in attracting potential voters), whereas social movement organizations refer to a more diverse set of frames. Our second hypothesis stated that potential differences in radical right discourses can also arise from a country's context. This is why the analysis focuses on radical right actors active in two countries (Poland and Germany) with substantially different political and discursive opportunity structures for radical right, and with different positions in the European Union. While in Poland the radical right enjoys relatively favorable conditions and right-wing history is perceived as something to be proud of, in Germany a strict *cordon sanitaire* is still in place to marginalize radical right-wing parties and organizations, and positive references to the past are

definitely excluded. However, as mainstreaming the radical right has become a more transnational phenomenon (cf. Feischmidt and Hervik 2015), it can be followed by similarities of topics discussed by radical right-wing actors in different countries. Accordingly, the paper focuses on following research questions:

- What are the similarities and differences between the discourses of radical right movement parties and social movement organizations present in their official programs and manifestoes?
- Which features assumed to be essential for the radical right appear in the official programs and manifestoes of radical right movement parties and organizations?
- How do the examined discourses vary between Poland and Germany, given the differences in political and discursive opportunity structures, as well as in the ongoing processes of radical right mainstreaming?

By comparing the discourses of two types of organizations in two different countries, we are able to find out to what extent convergences and divergences in the discourses of the radical right can be attributed to the type of organization or to the national context (political and discursive opportunity structure). Thus, the paper is also intended to shed light on the potential of radical right discourses to transcend national boundaries in a process described as the “internationalisation of nationalism” (Pankowski 2018).

In the next section, we discuss our conceptual framework within the context of the existing literature on the radical right. After a brief introduction to the investigated organizations and countries, and methodological note, we elaborate on the results of the empirical analysis of the selected political programs and manifestos.

### Nativism, Populism, and Authoritarianism of Radical Right

Studying the radical right, especially from a comparative perspective, requires a clear definition of terms (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2018). In our research, we understand the radical right as centered around the idea of nativism, that is “an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (‘the nation’) and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state” (Mudde 2007, 19). We acknowledge the possible existence of other features commonly attributed to all radical right organizations, such as “authoritarianism” or “populism,” but also consider, depending on the type of organization investigated, that these might or might not be reflected in their discourses and actions (Caiani and Kröll 2017; Minkenberg 2019).

In terms of populism, we refer to Cas Mudde’s widely cited definition, and treat populism as “a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous 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” (Mudde 2004, 543). It is thus relevant to distinguish three elements here: “general people-centrism, general anti-establishment rhetoric, and a claim that politics should express a monist *volonté générale*” (Engler, Pytlas, and Deegan-Krause 2019, 1319; cf. March 2017). In so doing, our analysis is thereby also focused on whose interests the selected organizations represent and whose will matters in these discourses.

The third relevant concept, authoritarianism, is manifested by a “belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely” (Mudde 2007, 23). In the literature, different facets of authoritarianism are considered. One of the most discussed concerns is the psychological aspect of authoritarianism, denoting an authoritarian personality, which distrusts others, makes easy reference to conventional wisdom, and strongly believes in a need for strong leadership (Adorno et al. 1950). However, as the paper focuses on the political actors’ discourses, not personality traits, we follow the concepts depicting the main features of

authoritarianism. Firstly, it is socio-cultural authoritarianism stressing the significance of law and order in relation to morality and values (e.g. traditional, patriarchal family, religion) (Rydgren 2018, 2). Secondly, it is political/state authoritarianism, which “does not necessarily mean an antidemocratic attitude, but neither does it preclude one” (Mudde 2007, 23). Such an authoritarian political culture, based on “a set of rather extreme ideas, of an ideological (political, sometimes religious) nature, that serve as absolute guidelines,” is aimed at propagation and implementation of these ideas (Meloan 2000, 109), and supporting a strong state, with centralized power, and tough law and order. In both it is crucial to elucidate what form of law and order is in fact desired, since many political actors avow their respect for law and order, and it forms the basis of not only the principle of the separation of power, but also democratic institutions as a whole. In the case of the radical right, “[t]he law-and-order doctrine is directed not only against external threats (immigrants and asylum seekers) and criminal elements, but also against critics and political opponents” (Heinisch 2003, 95). Importantly, compared to the concept of a strong state (Mudde 2004), militarism is not an indicator of authoritarianism. Although it is assumed that anti-egalitarianism and a top-down approach to politics are crucial to the authoritarian view of the radical right, “authoritarianism and strong leadership are in tension with movement-type political mobilization ‘from below’” (Minkenberg 2019, 465). This leads to questions about the way in which recent radical right movement parties frame their authoritarianism and how it relates to the nativist and populist frames they employ.

Movement parties as such are not a new phenomenon (Kitschelt 2006). Yet, until recently they have only been researched on the left of the political spectrum (Caiani and Císař 2018). The re-emergence of radical right street-mobilizations (especially around the issue of immigration) has directed scholarly attention towards the interconnections between radical right social movements and political parties, including the hybrid form of the movement party. At present, no consensus exists over what precise features constitute a radical right movement party. Nevertheless, one can distinguish three main threads in the literature: the origins of movement parties in street politics; a repertoire of action that includes measures outside institutional settings; and a specific discourse, different from established mainstream parties, but related to those of social movement organizations. Importantly, despite their existing involvement in the established political system or – in some cases – even being in power, right-wing movement parties present themselves as political outsiders challenging the status quo (Minkenberg 2019).

### The Political and Discursive Opportunity Structure - Contexts of the Analyzed Cases

The capacity of the radical right to mobilize depends on both the political and discursive opportunity structure that surrounds them. The political opportunity structure includes the electoral system, the model of party competition, the composition of government, and the position previously achieved by radical right parties (Caiani 2019). The discursive opportunities, in turn, “may be seen as determining which ideas are considered ‘sensible,’ which constructions of reality are seen as ‘realistic,’ and which claims are held as ‘legitimate’ within a certain polity at a specific time” (Koopmans and Statham 1999a, 228). These chances depend on different types of media organizations selecting, presenting, and interpreting information, which thereby becomes publicly known. As the media landscape has changed through the expansion of internet access, social media, and “alternative media,” the opportunities for the diffusion of radical right discourses has also increased (Ebner 2020). Furthermore, the *resonance* and *legitimacy* of radical right messages depend on the public discourse at a given time, which is shaped to some extent by national political and discursive opportunities, including national mythologies and historical politics. Taking into consideration the importance of political and discursive opportunity structures for radical right actors, the next section briefly presents the different development of the Polish and German national contexts.

## Poland

As in the wider Central Eastern European region, the landscape of the Polish radical right was reshaped after the systemic transition of 1989 and the emergence of new political and discursive opportunity structures. It has been argued that the experiences of real socialist regimes paved the way for a greater acceptance of right-wing discourses and ideologies, including nationalist positions and Catholic fundamentalism (Caiani 2019; Minkenberg 2015). However, earlier historical processes were also crucial, as well as becoming reference points for radical right actors, who treat them as a justification of their arguments (cf. Pankowski 2010). In particular, awareness of two historical aspects is necessary to understand the contemporary shape of nationalist discourse in Poland. Firstly, the most influential time (still resonating in today's organizations) for Polish national movement was between 1918 and 1939 and it was connected with the activity of two main wings of Polish nationalism: National Democracy and National Radicalism (Maj and Maj 2007, 7). Secondly, both the interwar period and activity of National Democracy as well as a time of communism in Poland politicized and strengthened ethno-Catholic vision of Polish identity that translates into strong ties between Polishness and Catholicism (expressed in popular stereotype Pole-Catholic) (cf. Pankowski 2010; Zubrzycki 2014).

Despite favorable context since the 1990s, the Polish radical right remained marginal in parliamentary politics until the 2000s, when a growing dissatisfaction with the results of the post-1989 transformation and the liberal consensus described as “the defeat of Solidarity” (Ost 2005) re-opened a political and discursive space for more radical right and populist claims. The growing legitimacy of radical right actors was encouraged by a cultural and ideological climate that included an intensification of references to national mythologies, religion, a conservative-national vision of society, and increasing presence of conservative and nationalist milieus, represented by illiberal faces of civil society such as cultural clubs, football hooligan clubs, and Catholic organizations (Kotwas and Kubik 2019). Importantly, while ethno-nationalist claims were embedded in the public discourse in Poland before (cf. Pankowski 2010; Zubrzycki 2014), the 2000s and 2010s have widened the radical right political opportunities and thus have produced favorable conditions for expanding their spaces of mobilization and claims dissemination.

Noticeably, illiberal discourses also achieved success in official politics, especially after the parliamentary elections in 2015, when – next to Law and Justice – one of the main winners was the Kukiz'15 movement, which gained 8.81% of the votes cast. Since Kukiz'15 gathered together different milieus, including the National Movement (Ruch Narodowy), it is understood as the first radical right movement party in Poland (Stanley 2018). The victory of the national-conservative Law and Justice in parliamentary elections in 2015 and 2019 in addition to presence of other radical right milieus in parliament and the media have further strengthened the opportunities for illiberal civil society, which can be seen as part of a wider transnational mainstreaming and normalization of populist and nativist politics (Feischmidt and Hervik 2015). The Law and Justice party, which has ruled Poland since 2015, forming the so-called “United Right” together with its coalition partners, simultaneously deployed an exclusionary and populist rhetoric, while also trying to soften its message in order to also target the moderate right-centrist electorate. This ambivalence alongside its cooperation with contemporary and former members of the radical right movement, provided resources and opened a political space for a new radical right movement party known as the Confederation Liberty and Independence (Confederation).

The non-parliamentary ONR – which refers directly (even in its name) to an interwar fascist organization – has both enhanced and taken advantage of these ideological shifts. Marginalized in the 1990s, it became more active in extra-parliamentary politics, beginning to seek out new (also institutionalized) opportunities after 2007 (Płatek and Płucienniczak 2017). The ONR, together with the All Polish-Youth, began to play an important role in the organization of the Independence Day Marches. In 2012, the circles around the Independence March announced the establishment of the National Movement, a nationwide network of patriotic groups and organizations, which in 2014

morphed into a party that clearly fits the definition of a movement party. Since the National Movement was unable to succeed electorally, its representatives became members of parliament through cooperations with other political units. In the 2015 election, it ran on the lists of the anti-systemic Committee Kukiz'15. In 2018, the National Movement, together with the conservative-libertarian KORWiN party, formed the Confederation, which a year later became a political party and obtained 6.81% of the votes in the parliamentary election. Importantly, the ONR withdrew from the National Movement in 2015 in response to its cooperation with Kukiz'15, arguing that such an alliance was a conformist rejection of the movement's ideas. Although the ONR has not been involved officially in party politics since then, it has remained very present in extra-parliamentary activities. It is noteworthy that, even though political and discursive opportunities are currently rather favorable for both the Confederation and the ONR, the similarities between them and Law and Justice constrain their political successes and their influence in the competition over voters.

### Germany

Until recently, the political radical right in Germany after the Second World War was deeply fragmented, with an unusual inconsistency and lack of success in institutionalized politics, as compared to other European countries, including Poland (Steglich 2010). Until the beginnings of the AfD in 2013, no radical right-wing party had established itself as a player at the national level (Decker 2012). Moreover, the underlying societal consensus in Germany against any “heir of National Socialism” (Berbuir, Lewandowsky, and Siri 2015, 160) hampered political opportunities for the radical right. However, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the political radical right-wing scene changed strategies. Two of the most relevant political parties within the radical right began to distance themselves from National Socialism; the Republikaner (Republicans) stopped attacking the system, and the NPD (National Democratic Party of Germany) became a more agile Neonazi movement party (Schulze 2009).

Furthermore, the radical right scene was bolstered as early as the 1970s by the rise of the Neue Rechte (New Right) within the cultural scene of the radical right. Claiming an image separate from National Socialism and the militant subcultural scene (Salzborn 2016), their aim has been to delegitimize established political agents through a cultural revolution from the right (Pfahl-Traughber 2019), while also mediating in direction of the mainstream. The radical right in Germany reveals a network of actors from various fields that publicly attempt to blur the lines between conservatism, radical right, and even Leftism (Pfeiffer 2004; Weiß 2017; Heitmeyer, Freiheit, and Sitzer 2020). Shifting the discourse towards the right might be the central force in the Neue Rechte (Zick, Küpper, and Berghan 2019).

In 2017, the AfD – founded in 2013 – became the first radical right party to be elected to the Bundestag in 60 years. The party addressed voters from German radical right parties by raising similar issues, while successfully distancing themselves from the neo-Nazi scene and an openly racist ideology (Pfahl-Traughber 2019), particularly in official discourse (Kranert 2019). Moving away from an early focus on the EU's bailout of Greece after the financial crisis, from 2016 onwards the AfD prioritized immigration, moving far to the right in the direction of its *völkisch* nationalist *Flügel* (wing) (Bebnowski 2016; Decker and Lewandowsky 2017; Isemann and Walther 2019). Their voters went along and primarily supported the party due to their anti-immigration stance (Arzheimer and Berning 2019). The AfD reaches a significant part of their voters over social media (Schelter et al. 2016), where the party follows a particular polarizing strategy (Darius and Stephany 2020; Conrad 2022). However, pursuing the strategy of the radical right in Germany to revolutionize the system from within, the AfD aims to be part of the bourgeoisie as part of the parliament (Heitmeyer et al. 2020, 62). While becoming more extremist in their agenda and their personnel, the party has reached out even to new voters aiming to appear as “progressive” in official documents and appearances (Doerr 2021). The party has capitalized on the politicization of the issue, which

“contributed to the framing of immigration in ethno-pluralist and security terms and also fuelled Eurosceptic sentiments in a context where it might be expected that the EU itself should have a role in responding to this issue” (Pirro, Taggart, and van Kessel 2018, 380).

In its struggle to “achieve cultural hegemony,” the New Right in Germany has also turned to social movements such as the Identitarian Movement (Identitäre Bewegung) and the Pegida movement (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West) (Salzborn 2016). Pegida demonstrations were most active in 2014 and 2015 (during the so-called refugee crisis), resonating most in Eastern Germany by protesting against immigration and the elite while encouraging *völkisch* nationalism (Vorländer, Herold, and Schäller 2016, 50).

The Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland first emerged in 2012 on Facebook, inspired by the French youth organization Génération Identitaire, which successfully used social media and pop cultural imagery to increase its discursive opportunities (Koopmans and Olzak 2004). Its support for radical right ideology and a homogenous nation makes the IBD the action-oriented faction of the New Right (Pfahl-Traughber 2019). Due to the AfD’s desire not to appear publicly as right-wing extremists, the IBD is officially on the AfD’s incompatibility list (Baecck 2017).

### Methodological Note

As it was mentioned above, the “paired comparison” (Tarrow 2010) has two dimensions in the paper: one related to cross-organizational comparison, the other to cross-country comparison. While focusing on different national contexts, we decided to select the most similar cases of the specific radical right-wing organizations as possible. Therefore, the analysis covers two movements parties: the Confederation Liberty and Independence (Konfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość) in Poland and the Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD) in Germany, and two radical right social movement organizations: the National Radical Camp (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny, ONR) in Poland and the Identitarian Movement Germany (Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland, IBD) in Germany.

In order to investigate closely the discourses presented by the selected movement parties and organizations in their official programs, we conduct the framing analysis of main documents published by the radical right actors (Benford and Snow 2000). As we analyze social movement organizations and peculiar types of political parties, framing analysis – widely used in social movement studies – enables the reconstruction of the discourses deployed. Thus, we look “at how movement actors attempt to challenge dominant definitions of political reality by mobilizing new interpretations – schemata or frames – of contested social relationships, and making them visible in the public sphere” (Koopmans and Statham 1999b, 204). A similar approach was used by Caiani and Kröll (2017) in their analysis of discourses of Italian and German radical right parties and movements, but we use more qualitative, inductive approach. As the political programs present a party’s main purpose and plans, it is worth carefully analyzing what problems, solutions, and motivations are defined by the parties and organizations in question as the most relevant. According to Benford and Snow (2000, 616), framing occurs through three main tasks: one, a diagnosis of problems and the groups/factors that can be blamed for those problems; two, a prognosis involving the articulation of proposed solutions to these problems; and three, motivation as a call for action – here, voting and supporting. It must be underlined that the official programs are of course not the only way that radical right organizations communicate with their supporters, and the shape of the discourse can differ depending on the medium employed (be it social media, statements made by a spokesperson, or those made by an “insubordinate” organization member). Nevertheless, official programs and manifestoes are representative of the entire organization – and not its particular members – and reflect both how a party or movement wants to be perceived by neutral observers and how it wants to present itself to its members. The former is particularly visible in the German radical right’s public distancing from the past and their attempt to appear more bourgeois than militant.

As regards the specific materials studied in the paper, the analysis includes political programs published by the Confederation before the parliamentary elections in 2019, the political program published by the AfD in 2016, the ONR's 2017 ideological declaration, and all claims published on the IBD's website<sup>1</sup> under the section "demands" (which we consider to be equivalent to an official program, as the organization does not have any other written program). Importantly, all manifestoes were published between 2016–2019, so after the so-called migration crisis in 2015 that, at that time, was the main discursive event and was widely debated in both societies, especially in Germany. It is also worth stressing that the documents were published before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and in between the Russian occupation of Crimea (2014) and the regular war in Ukraine (2022). The analyzed programs of the radical right in Poland were created after the right-wing party, Law and Justice, won the parliamentary elections (2015). On the one hand it positively influenced the radical right discursive opportunity structures, but on the other hand required from the radical right-wing organizations to position itself with regards to this influential and mainstream party. The qualitative analysis was conducted in 2020 and early 2021 in three stages. Firstly, inductive coding aimed to identify main frame elements through which the political parties build their official narrative. In order to capture the overall picture, we decided to keep the first stage of analysis as open as possible so as to gain a wider picture of frame elements including their diagnostic, prognostic or motivational functions. Secondly, we grouped the frame elements into main frames and analyzed if and how the selected frames refer to the main components of the radical right – nativism, populism, and authoritarianism – as well as any other ideological frames and political concepts. Thirdly, we compared data on a cross-organizational and cross-country level to see what similarities and differences appeared.

## Between Indicating Threats and Struggling for (Lost) Sovereignty?

### *Movement Parties*

#### *Confederation Liberty and Independence (Confederation)*

The Confederation's program derives from the political programs of the two main actors in the federation – the National Movement and KORWiN. Interestingly, while both parties share a conservative worldview, they present different economic visions, split between, respectively, state interventionism and an ultra-liberal approach. In the joint Confederation program, the ultra-liberal approach is dominant, likely because of the many similarities between the National Movement and the governing party, Law and Justice, as well as other right-wing actors in Polish parliament (*Solidarna Polska*), including a national-conservative rhetoric and an emphasis on state interventionism. Thus, a focus on libertarian solutions to economic problems – alongside clearly anti-EU arguments – might be a strategic choice to attract voters beyond their right-wing base.

Among the main frames presented in the Confederation's program are one, Polish national sovereignty and identity – understood as national culture, art, education, and the traditional family – under threat, and second, a weak and dependent state. The objects of blame are interconnected: a poor educational system, the spread of LGBT ideology, and left-wing politicians. The emphasis on the educational system seems to reflect the more widespread problems of a weak state, including wasteful public spending and inefficient public services:

Successive reforms, continuous changes in the core curriculum, excessive bureaucracy, wasted resources, poor quality of education, and low teachers' salaries. [ ... ] We will defend schools from the invasion of self-proclaimed "sex educators" and LGBT propagandists. We will care for children's right to respect their sensitivity and not be indoctrinated or exposed to content not appropriate for their age. We will ensure that parents have the right to raise their children according to their own values (Konfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość 2019).



As for the answer to these problems, the party refers to its main prognostic frames: protecting the (strong) nation and strengthening the state. The proper education of the people, including the protection of schools from sex education and the influence of LGBT thought, and the “liberation of national culture, science and art from ideologization paid for with public money” are stressed. Moreover, the party demands the decentralization and privatization of the educational system in order to protect families and give parents control over their children’s education. The party seems to believe that the system – influenced by liberals – constitutes a threat to children, while simultaneously silently assuming that the privatization of cultural and educational choices (currently imposed by public institutions) will lead to the restoration of a real national culture as parents educate their kids in a conservative, national spirit. The program also presents an ethnonationalist vision of a society, calling for the repatriation of Poles from former Soviet areas, and at the same time, insisting to counteract the “foreign” immigration.

The party also diagnoses a weakening of the state, caused by a badly organized system, corrupt officials, and the undue influence of foreign actors such as the European Union and the United States. This frame emphasizes corruption and the waste of funds money, a dysfunctional juridical system, a weak and dependent (colonized) position in international relations, an insufficient recognition of Poland, a lack of proper immigration controls, and a weak economy, including an inefficient and unresponsive tax system. Importantly, among the five main program postulates, one is entirely dedicated to lowering taxes, a topic that also reappears in reference to other issues, revealing it as one of its main promises to potential supporters:

We won’t let politicians to corrupt us with our own money coming from excessive and complicated tributes. We want Poles to keep as much of the fruits of their work as possible. The citizens, not officials, are these who know the best how to wisely spend their money (Konfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość 2019).

While on the subject of education, the party emphasizes nativist aspects, highlighting the need to protect citizens from foreign influences. The Confederation uses two populist features (anti-establishmentarianism and people-centrism) in regard to the tax system and national finances to present itself as a representative of “robbed” and “hard-working” ordinary citizens who must fight against “corrupt” and “unrealistic” government and officials. However, they put themselves in the position of knowing what is best for people. Moreover, the party demands the militarization and re-masculinization of the nation, stressing the need for military education, sports education, and access to firearms:

Basic guarantees of preserve the integrity and independence of the state are strong culture, stable economy, modern Polish Army and high level of shooting education and defense society, which is impossible to maintain without a possibility to owing a gun by any educated and honest citizen (Konfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość 2019).

This vision of a strong – well-ordered, militarized, and moral – nation clearly falls within the rubric of socio-cultural (Rydgren 2018) and political authoritarianism (Meloan 2000) as well as a concept of the strong state (Mudde 2004). It also corresponds with more general (and embedded in the history of nationalist movement) right-wing claims of education as a tool of upbringing “the right” nation members, and combat readiness for external threats and war.<sup>2</sup> According to the Confederation, the state must be stronger: it requires more sovereignty, and politicians protecting state’s (political, cultural, and economic) independence and interests as well as supporting the citizens. The EU is presented as a deleterious – foreign – actor, a “super-state governed from Brussels” that imposes unfavorable decisions (such as the climate deal); in response, Poland must protect its agency and sovereignty and stand against current EU structures. Moreover, it must build a strong international position through political history, in short by “telling the true story of the Second World War.”

The motivational frames refer to a duty and moral responsibility for future generations: the need to protect (endangered) Polish interests and identity and call for the recognition and sovereignty of Poland. The party constructs itself as a critical, reflexive, reasonable actor, independent of the system.

#### *Alternative for Germany (AfD)*

Similar to the Confederation, the AfD program diagnoses an endangered nation, foreign influences, and a state out of control. The nation, national identity, and the family are all threatened first and foremost by immigration, revealing how the party defines the nation in ethno-cultural, nativist terms. Ethno-pluralist arguments are accompanied by a politics of fear, such that the higher birth rate among people with migration background is portrayed as contributing to conflict-laden and unstable conditions. The AfD thus suggests that these problems can be overcome by promoting the German language (threatened by “gendering” and English words), support for public media, but also limiting the presence and influence of migrants (by hindering the foreign financing of mosques and prohibiting Islamic institutions from becoming part of the state apparatus, for example). Nativism dominates in the party discourse, as immigration is concomitantly presented as a wider general problem of the state and its failures. The dominance of political correctness and liberal discourses, as well as the stigmatization and exclusion of individuals expressing (true) counter-opinions, are diagnosed by the AfD as national issues. According to the party, high criminality among immigrants, for example, is not accurately reflected in official statistics, since political elites as well as the media aim to disguise this reality as it does not fit their liberal worldview.

Not only the national political elite are to be blamed, but also the EU, which as a supranational institution has caused a loss of sovereignty. Moreover, the family – as a guarantee of social cohesion and stability – is of central importance to the AfD. The party argues that the meaning of the desired – traditional – model of the family has declined through the implementation of gender mainstreaming projects, alongside the financial and ideological discrimination of economically inactive mothers in favor of people without children. Hence, it proposes to implement an Alternative Family Policy, that strengthens families both materially and non-materially. Gender is also perceived as one of the sources of the decline in educational levels in schools and universities. Similar to the Polish case, sex education – framed as the sexualization of children – is seen as a foreign threat imposed on Germans. Moreover, the call for a more integrated school system is perceived as a means of decreasing educational attainment and abolishing meritocratic ideals.

Also under threat are people’s personal and economic liberties, jeopardized by the ruling political class, which instituted, for example, a climate protection policy that will lead to massive new restrictions. The AfD also considers the state of personal security to be alarming, as the state no longer protects its citizens; they demand a strengthening of security policies along authoritarian lines. Apart from underfinanced police departments, the AfD identifies the omnipresent influence of political parties in public authorities. Furthermore, the EU and US control German politics according to the AfD, especially since the transformation of the EU into a centralized state, “whose policy is made by uncontrolled bureaucracies.” Concomitantly, Germany’s economy was weakened by the introduction of the euro.

Regarding its diagnosis of a weak state, the party sees the problem’s origins in the country’s extensive bureaucracy, inconsistent labor laws, unfair and complicated taxation system, non-transparent finances, and the omnipotence of political parties. Although the AfD sees the weak state as an overarching problem, the lack of an adequate separation of powers has nonetheless led to a disparity that sees citizens insufficiently protected:

Behind the scenes, a small and powerful elite within the political parties is secretly in charge and is responsible for the misguided development of past decades. It is this political class of career politicians whose foremost interest is the retention of their own power base, status, and

material well-being. It is a political cartel, which operates the levers of government power, insofar as these have not been transferred to the EU (Alternative für Deutschland 2016).

Considering the ruling political elite's responsibility for all problems, the AfD program is dominated by a populist anti-elitist discourse that also rails against foreign influence, represented either by supranational organizations such as the EU or by migrants with a different culture and identity. Thus, antagonisms become apparent between the people as powerless underdogs against a powerful elite, and between a German identity based on language and culture against migrants, particularly the Muslim community. The German nation as well as state, society and culture are framed as endangered by Muslims:

Islam does not belong to Germany. Its expansion and the ever-increasing number of Muslims in the country are viewed by the AfD as a danger to our state, our society, and our values (Alternative für Deutschland 2016).

Interestingly, the AfD constructs German identity as inherently Judeo-Christian, in line with the official stance against the country's National Socialist past.

The party utilizes two features of populism (anti-establishmentarianism and people-centrism) to oppose the "corrupt" and "career-oriented" political elite and supranational actors in order to return political power to ordinary citizens through referenda and to take back sovereignty from international actors. To strengthen national sovereignty, the state, and the will of the people, the party thus constructs the following prognostic frames. Firstly, the party demands independence from the EU and other international agreements, the opportunity to fundamentally reform the EU and thereby strengthen national states, and the cooperation between different nation-states. The loss of sovereignty is deeply connected with a loss of national identity and a necessary orientation framework against anomy (cf. Heitmeyer 2008):

The vision of a centralized European state inevitably entails the loss of sovereignty of individual EU member states and their constituent populations. Only the national democracies, created by their nations in painful history, are able to offer their citizens the necessary and desired framework for identification and shelter. Only they can offer the greatest possible rights of individual and collective freedom. Only they can maintain and ensure these rights (Alternative für Deutschland 2016).

Secondly, it expects that decentralization will give more power to ordinary people by strengthening the power of rural areas and regional and local self-administration, introducing referenda and term limits, promoting federalism, and downsizing the federal parliament. Thirdly, it postulates a reform of the judicial system, a reduction of bureaucracy in the labor market, tax cuts for middle and low-income earners, stronger consumer protections, and a revival of rural areas. Fourthly, it calls for greater military independence, strengthening the police, liberalizing access to firearms, and stronger border protection. Moreover, liberalizations for native Germans are followed by a narrative of stricter immigration regulations, a harsher judicial system, and harsher rules for the deportation of migrants.

Comparing both movement parties, it becomes clear that they refer to the same diagnostic and prognostic frames, namely: the weakness and dependency of the state and the need to strengthen it; and the endangered (ethno-cultural) nation and national identity that requires protection. Both parties depict traditional families, the nation, and the educational system as endangered and in need of special attention and protection. This compulsive traditionalism (Giddens 1991) can be understood as one aspect of a socio-cultural authoritarianism, based on a set of commitments and beliefs that "propaganda" and the "indoctrination" of liberal culture has blurred the true nature of national identities. Whereas in the Polish case, the "foreign" threats are imagined in more general terms, in Germany, a specific image of migrants, particularly Muslims, emerges. Unexpectedly, while the Confederation in its conservative vision does not refer to the Catholic church and religion writ large

as relevant sources of Polish national identity, the AfD does: framing multiculturalism as a threat, it states that the foundation of the nation is a cultural identity based on Christian roots, scientific-humanist traditions, and Roman law.

Furthermore, both parties use the politics of fear, as well as combining nativism and anti-establishment populism, in their diagnoses of these problems (Wodak 2015). All threats and problems overlap in a strong dichotomy between good (national and rooted) values and bad (foreign and imposed) threats (cf. Kajta 2020). The populist division is expressed through two main discursive constructions of “them,” wherein “them” means both foreign actors – such as the EU and the United States, who threaten state sovereignty and its recognition – and the wave of liberal indoctrination that threatens national culture and heritage, parental freedoms, and children’s safety. Moreover, “them” also refers to a corrupt national government that wastes public money and an “oppressive” administrative system that “steals” citizens’ money and keeps them in a “bureaucratic corset.” Finally, especially in the German case, “them” refers to migrants, who are framed as dangerous, privileged, and uncontrolled, in comparison to “German voices,” which are silenced and restricted by political correctness. Against this backdrop, the Confederation presents itself as a protective force for Poles, especially young citizens, entrepreneurs, parents, families, and taxpayers. Importantly, the Confederation’s populism is limited to anti-establishment statements and people-centrism. Its goal – unlike the AfD’s – is to replace the governing authority without a decentralization of power or the invocation of *volonté générale* (Engler, Pytlas, and Deegan-Krause 2019).

Socio-cultural authoritarianism (represented by values “rooted” in a given nation) and state authoritarianism are not explicitly presented in either program. Nonetheless, in both cases, references to the stricter laws for non-citizens as well as militarization of citizens and borders are framed as strategies to protect the nation from external threats and to provide citizens with a space for decent and just lives. Interestingly, in both cases, there is an assumption that native citizens want to follow traditional values; the Confederation, for instance, opts for a neoliberal individualization of people’s choices (in education and taxation) rather than a strict authority controlling citizens’ lives. Importantly, although authoritarianism and nativism overlap here, the solution to the diagnosed problems lies in anti-establishment tactics, including the need to replace current authorities and corrupt elites. Here, the AfD adds populist arguments for the decentralization of power within the state borders, including the introduction of direct democracy and greater regional and local self-administration. The Confederation, on the other hand, proposes an increasing neoliberal individualization of daily life (especially for entrepreneurs and taxpayers) rather than a new vision of state administration.

Finally, in both cases it is possible to distinguish a further element of the radical right – which encompasses Euroscepticism but is ultimately much broader – namely an explicit aversion to international agreements and dependencies, such as those signed with the United States. Typical for the radical right, this antipathy is linked to a call for sovereignty (for example, in both cases, EU climate policies are framed as imposed and oppressive) and a recognition of the nation-state (Kopecký and Mudde 2002; Pytlas 2020). Interestingly, while Germany is a face of the EU for Polish right-wing circles, German organizations present similar critiques of the EU structure.

### **Social Movement Organizations**

#### *National Radical Camp (ONR)*

The Ideological Declaration of the National Radical Camp focuses mainly on socio-cultural dimensions and economics. What distinguishes the ONR’s discourse from those of the other examined organizations is, first of all, its pompous language and its centering of religion as the base of nation and state, an “absolute guideline” (Meloan 2000):

God is a Supreme Good, and redemption is the most important and ultimate goal of the man’s life. The commandments of Christ’s faith expressed in the traditional Roman Catholic

Church doctrine direct a man towards the Truth and set the ethical framework of earthly existence. Highlighting the enormous role of Catholicism, which has been a cultural-forming factor, a pillar of Polishness, and a mainstay of national identity for over a thousand years, we postulate a vision of Great Poland as a state permeated by the Catholic spirit (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny 2017).

The diagnostic frames highlighted by the ONR are organized around the image of the endangered nation. Accordingly, not only families, but also national identity and national coherence are endangered because of a “civilization of death,” “depopulation,” a “clash of civilisations,” “foreign influences and ideologies weakening the family,” demoralization, the activities of liberal and left-wing elites, and migration. Although not expressed explicitly, the broader context of Polish nationalist discourses lets us state that, for the ONR, most of these dangers are located within liberal discourses, including the demands of pro-LGBT groups. The more general rhetoric used in the Declaration and the clear avoidance of certain known concerns can be interpreted as an attempt to destigmatize the organization’s image and to mainstream its discourse (Kajta 2020).

Compared to the Confederation, the National Radical Camp’s overarching emphasis is on nativism, writing not about citizens, but the nation (capitalized as a proper noun – Nation) whose members deserve better culturally, politically, and economically, no matter if they live in Poland or abroad. Both God and the Nation are the driving forces around which the state should be organized. Although the organization employs the well-described discursive strategy of denying biological racism (Van Dijk 1992), it defines the nation in ethno-cultural terms, and refers to ethno-pluralism (the preservation of distinct and bordered ethno-cultural regions) as a potential counterpoint to multicultural society:

The member of the Polish nation is everyone who feels to be a Pole, feel an attachment to Polish tradition and history, and is recognized as a compatriot by the community While condemning biological racism, we postulate to maintain a state of ethnic homogeneity which favours the maintenance of social peace and state stability (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny 2017).

Although prognostic frames dominate the Declaration, they tend towards generalities versus specific ways of dealing with existing problems. The main distinguished prognostic frames are the protection of the (strong) state and the creation of a Great Poland. According to the former, there is a need to protect (or restore) an ethnically homogenous and Catholic-based nation and the traditional family. The movement thus proposes stricter anti-abortion policies and the return of Catholicism to public life. Moreover, the ONR criticizes the educational system, demanding that reproduction of the nation depends on the education of new patriotic elites – “free from foreign influences.” The tasks of proper education, including historical policy and promoting Polish cultural heritage, are assigned to the state. Importantly, Poland is seen as a potential Central Eastern European leader in the restoration of Latin civilization in the region:

In the era of a clash of civilizations there can be no tolerance for a weak sense of European identity, so Poland, as an immemorial pillar of a civilization that grew up on Christianity, will be the initiator of an invigorating movement that will spread from Central and Eastern Europe to the whole continent (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny 2017).

Such a vision of Poland as a “bulwark of Christianity” (*antemurale christianitatis*) and defender of Europe from external threats is not new in Polish discourse (Polynczuk-Alenius 2021). However, it seems that today it is a moral/cultural war rather than military one. Beyond the potential cultural strength of the region, Central Eastern Europe constitutes an important point of reference and counter-power to the EU.

According to the ONR, the ethnically homogenous nation should be strictly ordered in compliance with national radical politics, based on Catholic ethics and traditional values (such

as the family). One possible strategy includes compulsory military training aimed at inculcating citizens into a hierarchical, ordered, and disciplined society, in which an individual's position in the hierarchy is based on their morality, capabilities, and merits. On the one hand, the ONR postulates an institutional authoritarianism through control over the national spirit as well as the national economy (with a strong army as one of the guarantees of independence); on the other, it proposes a weakening of the role of political parties and a decentralization of the central administration. What needs to change is also the scope of immigration and emigration through regulations that make Poland less attractive for foreigners and foreign corporations (through the taxation of major corporations, for example) and create more national capital-based workplaces for Poles, in order to make Poland self-sufficient and economically sovereign. The motivational frame refers to an awareness of duty and responsibility stemming from the country's historical heritage (the ONR as the continuation of the fight for Great Poland). Facing the threats and self-focused political parties, they have to continue the struggle for future generations of Poles.

#### *Identitarian Movement Germany (IBD)*

Similarly (albeit with greater emphasis) to the AfD, the Identitarian Movement Germany (IBD) also diagnoses the suppression of individual opinions through liberal political correctness and its multicultural ideology by using a populist framing against the left-wing liberal establishment:

For far too long, the left-wing liberal establishment has claimed public sovereignty over speech for itself. As patriotic youth, we appear self-confident and confront those decision-makers and elites with their political failures who have allowed our generation to grow up with the big lie of a multicultural utopia. We break through the deceptive consensus and penetrate into their own comfort zones. There is now also a patriotic dissenting voice in Germany and Europe (Identitäre Bewegung e.V. 2019).

Politicians have thus promoted a false “one-world” ideology by reproducing a narrative of multiculturalism and open borders, which the IBD connects to the liberal and left wing's control over historicity, understood as “the set of cultural, cognitive, economic, and ethical models by means of which a collectivity sets up relations with its environment” (Touraine 1988, 40). The threat of migration, expressed through an ethno-nationalist lens, is another diagnostic frame element presented here. Based on the politics of fear and nativist notions of society, the organization stresses the danger to the German nation of a Great Replacement (whereby the ostensibly higher birth rate of immigrants threatens to eclipse native Germans in their own country) and disappearance of native Germans from their land. As a result of the opening of Germany's borders, the state has lost its sovereignty and experienced a loss of internal security:

The Great Exchange refers to a gradual process by which the native ancestral population is displaced and exchanged by non-European immigrants. We are in a demographic crisis throughout Europe, according to which our peoples are becoming a minority in their own countries as a result of falling birth rates combined with the growth of Islamic parallel societies and mass immigration, and could disappear completely in a few decades unless political countermeasures are introduced (Identitäre Bewegung e.V. 2019).

In response, the movement proposes a focus on the re-normalization of patriotism and patriotic discourses and an orientation towards a re-migratory model. Their main goal as a movement is to raise awareness among citizens and to act as a funder of public opinion in order to counteract this loss of national security and territorial sovereignty:

In addition, however, we also follow the real political developments with a critical eye – the unchecked mass immigration, the loss of our own territorial sovereignty through the opening of national borders, the resulting loss of internal security as well as the dominant spread of

Islamic parallel societies – for which we want to raise awareness with actions, campaigns and educational work (Identitäre Bewegung e.V. 2019).

According to the IBD, increased freedom of opinion and end to left-wing hegemony in cultural institutions would lead to a normalization and de-stigmatization of patriotism. Immigration issues are central for the IBD: they demand a strict protection of national borders and a stop to the flow of in-migration (by helping people in Africa to ensure that they stay there, for example). What matters is ethno-cultural identity – an essential component of a state:

Everyone also has the right to preserve and defend the qualities and characteristics of its ethno-cultural identity. It is precisely this preservation that we demand for our own German and European identity. The question of identity is becoming a strongly polarizing issue in the 21st century due to the pressure of mass immigration and Islamization, on which we, as an Identitarian Movement, also have a clear position (Identitäre Bewegung e.V. 2019).

Similarly to the other organizations, the motivational frame refers mostly to morality and responsibility, including a search for “the best possible solution for all,” in order to legitimize the IBD’s demands at various levels. Since an ethno-pluralist state organization is understood as a peace- and cohesion-promoting measure for both Europeans and immigrants, participation in the movement is framed as an urgently required step in response to an acute need for action.

As in the case of the movement parties, the comparison between the social movement organizations shows more similarities than differences. Firstly, both organizations highlight the youth of the people involved in its activities. This functions not only as a strategy to attract new supporters but also as a signifier of their ideological motives and their distance to parliamentary politics. Moreover, both organizations only minimally engage in overt populism – to criticize politicians as responsible for the diagnosed problems.

Secondly, both movements focus predominantly on a socio-cultural framing of their nativism: what seems to bother them most is their diagnosis of an endangered (by migrants and liberals) ethno-cultural nation. Moreover, both actors link nativism and ethno-pluralism in their line of argumentation. A state organized along ethno-pluralist lines is described as a peace and cohesion-promoting measure for both Europeans and immigrants and a way of maintaining cultural identities for all involved. That argument serves both as a “rational” justification of their stance and as a denial of their racism. However, in both cases, the “needed defense” of “us” (nation) is crucial to their anti-immigrant discourses, revealing the intersection of their racism and nationalism (Polynczuk-Alenius 2021). Importantly, while the ONR presents a vision of the nation strictly linked to Polishness and Catholicism, the IBD refers to both German and European identities. What is more, the IBD focuses primarily on the protection of the nation and the state against migrants (with reference to the “Great Replacement,” Islamization, and political correctness), whereas the ONR points to a broader picture of potential (liberal, foreign) threats to the Polish nation. Nevertheless, the ONR also emphasizes the threat of a clash of civilization, against this backdrop of which it centers not only the protection of the Polish nation but also – based on the course of Polish history – the notion of Poland as a potential protector of other European nations.

Despite these similarities, the ONR and the IBD differ in terms of their vision of the state. The Polish actor intertwines nativism and authoritarianism in order to imagine a hierarchical state founded on religion, morality, and merits. The ONR’s open rejection of democratic systems and the idea of equality places it within extreme right, in contrast to the other organizations analyzed (Betz and Immerfall 1998). Interestingly, similarly to the AfD but not the Confederation, the ONR demands a decentralization of administration and the return of greater powers to regional governments. The IBD, in turn, is interested in stricter border protections and migration policies, but does not present other, non-migration-related, authoritarian ideas of state administration.

## Conclusions

In the study, we were interested in the similarities and differences between official discourses of radical right movement parties and social movement organizations acting in two different national contexts. In particular, we considered the content and relationship between discursive frames assumed to be essential for the radical right (nativism, populism, and authoritarianism) (Mudde 2007; Rydgren 2018). Table 1 synthesizes the main frames identified in the official documents of the organizations analyzed.

The official discourses of radical right movement parties and social movement organizations showed mainly similarities and only minor differences, which does not allow us to definitively reject our hypothesis. The main features connected to the radical right in the literature (i.e. nativism, authoritarianism, and populism) are present in all of the analyzed programs and manifestoes. This result confirms the existence of both tight discursive links between radical right movement parties and social movement organizations associated with social movements, and a transnational “discursive ground” of radical right actors. Despite their variable institutional positioning, the movement parties reach for the radical discourses of social movement organizations, albeit with various levels of intensity, especially in terms of the inclusion of populist rhetoric.

Firstly, all of the selected organizations diagnose the frame of an endangered nation. In a nativist line, all of the actors diagnose a threat to the ethno-cultural nation and national identity and see the main threat stemming from foreign influences, defined as omnipresent, dominant, imposed, and exclusionary of any counter-narratives. In both countries, the “indoctrination of (cultural) liberals” and immigration appear to be the biggest obstacles to the maintenance of national identity and the nation itself. Secondly, although Poland and Germany differ in their political position within the EU, all of the analyzed documents raise the problem of the dependency and weakness of the state, highlighting the negative sides of the European Union and other international projects.

Importantly, in line with our expectations, the type of organization seems to play a role in the presence and intensity of populist claims, regardless of the country-specific context. Whereas movement parties reach for populist arguments more often than social movement organizations, they implicitly postulate the preservation of the existing electoral system. Both the AfD and the Confederation try to use existing democratic structures as well as the political opportunities contained therein. In their attempts to improve their strategic political position and gain support among voters, they reach for anti-establishment, populist frames to present themselves as the voice and protector of (native) honest citizens. Moreover, while one of the main features of populism is a division of society into two antagonistic groups – usually “the pure people” versus “the corrupt elite” (Mudde 2004), our analysis confirms the results of other studies (Wodak 2015) to show that “the people” are defined in exclusive, nativist, and moral terms, insofar as not all individuals living in a given state (including non-natives, domestic politicians and elites, and liberals) are perceived as belonging to the nation. Thus, the populist dimension of the analyzed movement parties is dominated by nativism. Furthermore, the populism presented here is often dominated by an anti-establishment/anti-elitist lens rather than overt reference to the core of populism – popular sovereignty. Although dominated by nativist and ethno-pluralist frames, the discourses of radical right social movement organizations in both cases appear to use weak (IBD) or no (ONR) populist framing. This might stem from the immediate interests of these social movement organizations, which do not strive for electoral success, and thus have no need to compete for broad support within parliamentary-oriented political structures (Caiani and Kröll 2017).

The final analyzed feature, authoritarianism, appears regardless of the type of organization. It refers to domestic politics pointed to a socio-cultural and political authoritarianism (Rydgren 2018; Meloen 2000), including the need to strengthen the judicial systems (expected to be stricter for non-natives), to tighten up the law, and to return to a traditionally ordered society, linked to the militarization of the people and the strengthening of (ethnically and morally) homogenous



**Table 1.** Main Frames of Movements Parties and Social Movement Organizations in Poland and Germany

|                   | Movement Parties   |   | Social Movement Organizations   |   |
|-------------------|--|---|---|---|
|                   | Confederation  | AfD   | ONR   | IBD   |
| <b>Diagnosis</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Weakness of the state</li> <li>b. Endangered nation</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The fear of heteronomy / foreign domination</li> <li>b. Endangered nation / the fear of loss</li> <li>c. out of control state machinery</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Endangered nation</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Endangered nation/migrant flows</li> <li>b. dominance of liberal discourses / “one-world-propaganda”</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Prognosis</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Strengthening the state</li> <li>b. Protecting the (strong) nation</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. National sovereignty</li> <li>b. Strengthening the state</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Protecting the (strong) nation</li> <li>b. Creation of “Great Poland”</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Re-normalization of patriotism</li> <li>b. Protecting the (strong) ethno-cultural nation / control over territory / implementation of a re-migratory model</li> </ul> |
| <b>Motivation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Duty and moral responsibility for future generations</li> <li>b. The need to protect (endangered) Polish interests and identity</li> <li>c. Calling for the recognition and sovereignty of Poland</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Protection of the people</li> <li>b. Maintenance of national and regional cultural traditions</li> <li>c. Maintenance of the level of wealth</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Awareness of duty and responsibility stemming from historical heritage</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ethno-pluralist state model as best possible solution for all</li> <li>b. The responsibility for the maintenance and safety of the nation</li> </ul>                  |

nations. The narrative of foreign threats (war, migration) translates into the combination of authoritarianism and strong state, and serves as a justification of claims of stricter border controls, a tight migration policy, and a stronger military. Thus, authoritarianism – with strict law and order – aims at building the nations’ resilience against any foreign (especially liberal) influences and powers, and corresponds with the idea of state as a secured, militarized protector of the nation.

In terms of the country comparison, the analysis demonstrated the striking similarity between the discourses of the Polish and German radical right movement parties and social movement organizations, especially in the case of the movement parties, which function in more transnational – and thus favorable to the radical right – discursive opportunity structures. We argue that regardless of the state, radical right actors share a general diagnosis of threats and enemies. To some extent they also present similar solutions applying securitization, protecting a nation, and strengthening a state. However, the differences between right-wing cultural resources in both countries are also visible. Whereas German organizations – located in one of the highest immigration countries in Europe – use anti-migration and anti-Muslim arguments more often, the Polish organizations refer to a more abstract picture of dangerous “cultural others” and (contrary to German actors) center religion as a significant point of reference. Then, the national history more often underlined by Polish organizations is referred to rather vaguely in official German programs – traditions, cultural history, and intellectual history are positive points for identification overshadowed by the time of nationalist Socialism. This dichotomy is also visible in the more straightforward and radical language deployed by radical right parties in Poland, acting within favorable political opportunity structures and competing in the shadow of the long established and very conservative Law and Justice party. The AfD, on the other hand, is still seeking to be recognized as a mainstream party, and thus must choose its words more carefully, at least in official documents. We conclude that this confirms our second hypothesis because the state contexts do matter for the discourses of radical right organizations, regardless of their type.

Despite these differences, it must be noted that the cross-national similarities between the general frames used in radical right discourses can serve both parties as a platform for cooperation and increasing their clout within the European Union and beyond. This “nationalist internationalism” – the transnational dimension of radical right discourses and the permeation of national discourses, despite different opportunity structures – requires further analysis, including across institutional levels. Moreover, since our analysis focused solely on official programs and manifestoes, just one of many genres of political discourse, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the identified frames translate into a public image of the organization for the consumption of not only current and potential members and supporters but also declared enemies. Importantly, social and political contexts have been constantly changing, and our study does not cover potential influences of pandemic or war in Ukraine on radical right discourses. Thus, to generalize about radical right discourses requires further systematic and comparative research on their various types (i.e., discourses in traditional and social media). Nevertheless, we suppose that diversifying and bifurcating its organizational discourse may allow a radical party to stay within the political mainstream while simultaneously maintaining a more radical supporter base. The relationship between the discourses presented in official documents and the less formal messages conveyed by representatives of the radical right in the media, on social media, and during in-person meetings with supporters thus remains an open empirical question.

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## Notes

- 1 Identitäre Bewegung e.V., Forderungen. <https://www.identitaere-bewegung.de/forderungen/> (2019). (Accessed October 10, 2019.)
- 2 It is noteworthy that the arguments of militarization tend to intensify in the times of growing insecurity, e.g., during war happening in a close proximity. For instance, in the face of war in Ukraine in 2022 politicians of Law and Justice and Confederation propose a bill to make access to guns easier. Similar claims appeared in Law and Justice discourse after 2014 when the war started in Eastern Ukraine.

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