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# Germany as 'a country of integration'? The CDU/CSU's policies and discourses on immigration during Angela Merkel's Chancellorship

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**ABSTRACT**

This article analyses the CDU/CSU's immigration policies and discourses during the Chancellorship of Angela Merkel. In doing so, it makes four observations. First, the article highlights that the CDU/CSU became proactive when it came to passing new and far-reaching immigration and integration legislation. Second, it is argued that these policies have sent conflicting messages, torn between the opening and closing of Germany's borders, and between welcoming diversity and demanding cultural assimilation. Third, this article identifies and explains six ways in which the parties have framed immigration in their common election manifestos from 2005 to 2017: as a cultural, economic, security, humanitarian, European, and gendered issue. Fourth, this study analyses the intra-party divisions that came to a head during the migration crisis: the place of Islam in Germany and the creation of a cap on the number of refugees that Germany would take in. Here, it is highlighted that in contrast to Merkel, the CSU, but also parts of the CDU, have called for more restrictive immigration policies and cultural assimilation. These findings are explained with reference to the political context: the rise of the far-right Alternative for Germany and the 2018 Bavarian regional elections.

**KEYWORDS**

Angela Merkel; CDU/CSU; immigration; integration; Germany; Leitkultur

## 1. Introduction

The 2015–16 migrant crisis was a defining moment in Angela Merkel's Chancellorship.[1] Over a few months, Germany accepted close to one million migrants, more than any other member state of the European Union (EU). The influx of so many people, many of them Syrian refugees, represented a huge political challenge for Germany's governing elite. It brought into sharp focus ongoing debates over the place of migrants in German society and helped fuel the rise of the xenophobic and far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). These challenges were especially pronounced for Merkel's centre-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU). As the dominant partner in every coalition since 2005, the CDU/CSU had already become more active in this policy area. The migrant crisis and threat posed by the AfD encouraged it to become even more active. Taken together, the various measures enacted during Merkel's Chancellorship have transformed Germany's immigration and integration laws.

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This article surveys aspects of the two centre-right parties' approach to immigration since 2005. Specifically, it explores changes in their political discourse and how the CDU/CSU have framed immigration in their manifestos. It then investigates how the migrant crisis has fuelled divisions within and between the two sister parties. Both questions are central to understanding how the centre-right in Germany has struggled with immigration.

The CDU/CSU's framing of immigration has both shaped wider discussion and defined policy options. Merkel's declaration in October 2010 that 'multiculturalism has failed completely' and Horst Seehofer's[2] statement that 'multiculturalism is dead' triggered heated debate (Jahn 2012, 59). They also paved the way for Germany's first Integration Law in 2016. At the same time, divisions within and between the two parties highlight the deeper geographic, ideological and electoral tensions that bedevil Germany's centre-right. The CDU is a federal party with powerful regional associations. Some (e.g. Thuringia, Brandenburg, Baden-Württemberg, and Mecklenburg-Lower Pomerania) are socially and culturally more conservative than others (Debus and Müller 2013, 163–164). The CSU, which stands for election only in Bavaria, is even more socially and culturally conservative, whilst its economic policy is generally to the left of most CDU regional associations (Debus and Müller 2013, 163–164). At the federal level, the CDU has moved to the centre under Merkel's Chancellorship (Wiliarty 2018, 113). Moreover, the CDU's base is a broad coalition of voters, including babyboomers, practicing Christians, farmers, the self-employed, civil servants, and blue-collar workers (Decker 2018). Immigration affects these groups in different ways, exposing their different social and economic interests. By prioritising some groups, the centre-right risks alienating others.

The remainder of this article proceeds as follows. The next section examines the CDU/CSU's immigration policies under Merkel, highlighting the major developments and their internal contradictions. This is followed by a methodology section introducing frame analysis and the codebook. Afterwards, the parties' manifestos are analysed. Six ways in which the parties frame immigration are identified here: as a cultural, economic, security, humanitarian, European, and gendered issue (in this order of salience). Yet the union parties were deeply divided over the management of the European migration crisis, and the manifesto analysis does not reveal these internal disagreements. The following section therefore analyses some of the leaders' discourses on two particularly contentious issues: the place of Islam in Germany and the introduction of a cap in the number of refugees Germany should take in. I argue that, whilst the CDU/CSU have described Germany as 'a country of integration' characterised by 'a wonderful diversity in unity' (CDU/CSU 2017, 69) they disagree internally on how many migrants should be allowed to enter Germany and on who can become part of German society. These divisions need to be understood in the context of the rise of the AfD and the 2018 elections in Bavaria.

## 2. The Christian Democrats' immigration policies, 2005–2019

West Germany became increasingly diverse in the decades after the Second World War.[3] The so-called 'guest worker' contracts were signed with southern European countries, Turkey, Morocco, Tunesia, and Yugoslavia between 1955 and 1968, when Germany was short of labour. By 1973, there were 2.6 Million migrant workers in West Germany, and roughly 4.9 per cent of the population were foreign born (up from 1.2

per cent in 1960; see: Butterwegge 2005). Between 1991 and 1995 alone, Germany accepted 1.1 million co-ethnic repatriates of German descent arriving from the territories of the former Soviet Union (*SpätaussiedlerInnen*), 40,000 Jewish 'quota refugees', and 872,049 asylum seekers, the majority of whom had fled from the civil wars in the former Yugoslavia (Mushaben 2017, 517; Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung n.d.). In 2017, almost a quarter (23.6 per cent) of people living in Germany had a 'background of migration' (bpb.de 2018).[4]

For a long time, however, the CDU/CSU took a 'defensive approach' to migration and cultural diversity and denied Germany's status as a country of immigration (Green 2013, 52). CDU Chancellor Kohl (1982–1998) also took a 'hard-line approach' to asylum seekers and refugees (Mushaben 2017, 251). By the mid-1980s, the CDU/CSU instrumentalised issues involving 'foreigners' and migration as a tool for spurring electoral support and political mobilisation (Schmidtke 2017, 504). Turkish non-nationals, in particular, were seen as scape goats for West Germany's socio-economic problems during the 1980s (Boswell and Hough 2008, 337). Only when the parties entered opposition in 1998 did they slowly begin to confront and acknowledge Germany's increasing ethnic and religious diversity (Green 2013).

The new Red-Green coalition government under Chancellor Schröder (1998–2005) planned to introduce far-reaching new laws for immigration, integration and citizenship that would eradicate the concept of a German *Volk* tied together by *ius sanguinis* (blood descent). From 1 January 2000, children born in Germany could acquire German citizenship when one of their parents had been living in Germany for at least eight years. In addition, adult migrants could now naturalise after having lived in Germany for eight years (down from fifteen), and after passing a German language test. In 2000, Schröder's government also introduced a Green Card for IT specialists. The CDU opposed the programme, arguing that Germany should train indigenous workers instead of recruiting foreigners (Boswell and Hough 2008, 340). In 2004, after much deliberation, a new immigration law (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*) was ratified. As it needed the consent of the *Bundestag* and the *Bundesrat* (the second chamber, at the time dominated by the CDU/CSU), the law represented a compromise between the red-green government and the CDU/CSU. The law made it easier for highly-qualified migrants in jobs to stay permanently in Germany. It also introduced compulsory integration classes for migrants. Hess and Green (2016, 319) refer to it as 'probably the single most significant piece of legislation in the migration policy domain for almost 40 years'.

These new laws provoked the socially conservative wings of the CDU/CSU. Some senior party figures led populist campaigns against dual nationality (Joppke 2000). The plans for the law also triggered a debate on integration and cultural belonging. CDU party group leader in the *Bundestag*, Friedrich Merz, argued that Germany has a liberal democratic 'predominant culture' (*Leitkultur*) that migrants must adopt and that has its foundation in the German Basic Law. The meaning of *Leitkultur* was, however, vague and changed over time (Pautz 2005, 44). Pautz (2005, 41) argues that the *Leitkultur* debate was meant to reinstate the state's authority by drawing new boundary lines between nationals and immigrants: No longer was the obsolete *ius sanguinis* to be used to define who was part of the national body; rather, a *ius cultus* was to mark this boundary. The debate continues, as some of the CDU's regional associations and the CSU still insist that a German *Leitkultur* exists (CDU Landesverband Sachsen 2016; CSU 2017).

Under Merkel's Chancellorship, immigration remained on the agenda. In 2006, her government launched two consultation bodies: The National Integration Summit (*Integrationsgipfel*) and the German Islam Conference (*Deutsche Islam Konferenz*). The purpose was to involve migrants living in Germany, their associations, and other societal groups in a structured dialogue with the government. Musch (2012) argues that migrants' input remained limited, as the agenda was largely set by the government. The National Integration Summit adopted a National Integration Plan (NIP) in July 2007. All participating actors agreed on the implementation of around 400 voluntary commitments and measures, such as the improvement of integration in the sectors of education, labour market, and German language acquirement (Musch 2012).

At the same time, some of the government's new laws restricted migrants' lifes. In 2007, the 2005 immigration law had to be amended in order to accommodate new EU legislation. The amendments caused much controversy amongst migrant organisations, NGOs, and the Green opposition in Parliament (Block 2012). Their criticism targeted the restrictions introduced to the migrants' right to remain, the financial sanctions introduced for those migrants who did not attend compulsory integration classes, the restriction to naturalisation, and some of the harsh family reunification provisions. The new legislation made it harder for refugees and asylum seekers to remain in Germany (Schneider 2007) but made it easier for entrepreneurs to set up business in Germany.

In August 2019, in order to address Germany's shortage of skilled labour, the *Bundestag* passed a new law to attract skilled workers with an officially recognised university degree or professional training from outside the EU. The *Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz*, which entered into force in March 2020, aims to speed up the hiring process by making it less bureaucratic. The government wishes to attract health and care workers, but also, STEM specialists. The law requires skilled workers to have learned German and to earn their living in Germany before they get a work permit. Other centre-right governments in Europe have opened up national labour markets for skilled workers from non-EU countries in an effort to address skills shortages (Laubenthal 2017).

Yet Merkel's biggest political challenge was the European migration crisis. She was among the first European leaders to call for more solidarity for refugees and asylum seekers and to enlist the EU in her efforts to manage the crisis (Helms, Van Esch, and Crawford 2019, 359). Speaking to the *Bundestag* on 9 September 2015, she declared:

> If we show courage and lead the way, a common European approach is more likely […]. If Europe fails on the refugee issue, we would lose one of the key reasons for founding a united Europe, namely universal human rights. (*Deutsche Welle*, September 9, 2015)

Between 2013 and mid-2015, over 1,226,000 people had entered Germany, the largest groups coming from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan (Bamf 2019). On 25 August 2016, Merkel overrode the EU Dublin III agreement, allowing those migrants who had not filed asylum applications in their first EU arrival state to enter Germany. The reasons behind this decision remain contentious. Alexander writes that the Chancellor was pushed into opening the border by Hungary's Prime Minister, Victor Orbán, who had sent the migrants in busses to the Austrian border and that afterwards, Merkel and the Austrian Chancellor, Werner Faymann, made their decision look like an 'almost spontaneous humanitarian decision' (Alexander 2017, 59). By contrast, Mushaben (2017, 527) stresses the humanitarian considerations behind Merkel's decision.

The migration flow continued over the next months, and the *Bundestag* ratified asylum packages in 2016 and 2017. The first package provided more funds for the newly arrived migrants, whilst the second restricted the migrants' freedom of residency and movement within Germany and expediated the deportation to their countries of origin – especially to Kosovo, Albania, and Montenegro, which were considered safe. Also, an Integration Law (*Integrationsgesetz*) was passed in the summer of 2016. Through this law, those asylum seekers who had good prospects of staying in Germany got early access to state integration measures. However, if asylum seekers refused to attend integration classes or take up work opportunities, their benefits were cut. The law also permitted all asylum seekers living in collective housing to take work-fare jobs and created 100,000 such jobs. For the next three years, when hiring a refugee for a regular job, prospective employers no longer had to show that no German worker was qualified (Deutscher Bundestag 2016).

As Funk (2016, 292) argues, the goal of Germany's recent refugee policy and practice has been twofold: first, to integrate those permitted to remain and to provide a needed labour pool. Second, to reduce the number of refugees who enter or can remain in Germany. For this second purpose, Merkel took a leading role in EU negotiations with Turkey's President Erdogan. In an attempt to reduce the number of refugees entering the EU through Greece, the EU struck a deal with Erdogan in March 2016. Turkey's coastline would be monitored and the country would admit the refugees that Greece had rejected for asylum, in return for six billion euros and consideration of visa free travel to the EU for Turks. The EU would accept one refugee already in Turkish refugee camps for each refugee Turkey took from Greece. This deal came under severe criticism for allowing European governments to shirk their international commitments to refugee protection (Rygiel, Feyzi, and Ilcan 2016). Critics of the deal also argued that whilst the Turkish president had become an increasingly repressive and autocratic leader, the EU and its member states did not condemn and sanction him strongly enough, fearing that he might open the borders and let Syrian refugees enter the EU (Greenhill 2016).

Overall, under Merkel's Chancellorship, the CDU/CSU have become more proactive when it comes to immigration. To some extent, they have taken a 'pragmatic turn' in their immigration policies (Schmidtke 2017). After all, Germany has accepted more refugees than any other EU country and is now welcoming skilled workers from outside the EU. At the same time, the recent asylum and integration laws are highly restrictive, as the CDU/CSU-led government wants to discourage refugees and asylum seekers from coming to Germany. The result is an immigration policy sending conflicting messages.

## 3. Analysing party discourse

Discourse analysts explore the ways in which discourses give legitimacy and meaning to social practices and institutions. Discourses consist of 'ensembles of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is produced and reproduced in a particular historical situation' (Halperin and Heath 2012, 309). What matters is not just the discourse itself, but its source, the channel of communication, the intended audience, and the connection to other texts and events. It is also a 'constantly replenished source' (Bucholtz 2003, 45) which means that through discourse, the social world is produced and reproduced.

The first part of my discourse analysis draws on four general elections manifestos published jointly by the CDU/CSU (2005, 2009, 2013, 2017). The CSU also issued a separate manifesto in 2017, the 'Plan for Bavaria' (*Bayernplan*) which will be analysed. Manifestos are authoritative documents that mirror the parties' self-declared positions over time. They have been agreed by the party conferences in a democratic process (Budge 2001). Yet, manifestos cannot be used to analyse intra-party disagreements. What is more, they are only published every four years before elections. Therefore, this article also analyses a number of public statements made by CDU and CSU politicians during the European migration crisis. I selected these statements because they reveal intra-party dissent.

I analyse discourse by conducting a frame analysis. Interpretative frames were originally developed for the study of social movements by Snow and Benford (1992) who defined frames as cognitive instruments that allow us to make sense of an external reality. Organisations, such as political parties, need to motivate their members, activists, and voters. In order to win their support, they need to provide a rationale, and they can do this by framing political issues in a certain way. In recent years, frame analysis has travelled to the study of party discourse. Helbling (2014) analyses how political parties in six Western European countries framed immigration between 1999 and 2006. Drawing on newspaper data, he demonstrates that the framing depended on the party (family and ideology) as well as the political circumstances. Research conducted by Lee and Chang (2010) suggests that framing can have an important effect on public opinion, depending on the policy issue and the voters' political sophistication. Furthermore, Slothuus (2010) examines the effects on public opinion of a sudden shift in how parties frame a salient issue and demonstrates that parties can be powerful in shaping the policy preferences of their supporters.

This study does not establish a link between party frames and public opinion; rather, it analyses the CDU/CSU's framing of immigration and then seeks to explain it. The discursive frames were identified by highlighting and then coding all phrases and whole sections of the manifestos dealing with immigration and migrants, thereby using an inductive method. Once all of these phrases and sections were identified, I categorised them into six frames: (1) immigration framed as a cultural issue; (2) immigration framed as an economic issue; (3) immigration framed as a security issue; (4) immigration framed as a humanitarian issue; (5) immigration framed as an European Union-wide issue; (6) immigration framed as a gendered issue. In some cases, these frames may overlap. For instance, certain issues could fit into both the economic and the cultural frame. An example would the parties' policy of obliging migrants to take language and integration classes. Here, the CDU/CSU's aim is to integrate them not only into the labour market but also culturally, into German society. Yet this requirement is mentioned in the manifestos' section dealing with cultural integration, under the heading 'Integration has Priority' (CDU/CSU 2009) where it is explicitly linked to the importance of adopting German values. I therefore assigned it to the cultural frame. Table 1 (below) lists the six frames and a number of subframes that emerged from the textual analysis. It also depicts the codebook which includes the keywords and phrases assigned to each (sub)frame. The keywords and phrases used for the coding reflect the parties' positions – and in some cases, the justification of their positions (see Helbling 2014) – on migration-related issues.

Next, I ranked these frames in reflection of their salience by wordcount, doing a word-count of each manifesto (excluding cover sheet, table of contents, index). I then counted the number of words dealing with migration in order to highlight the salience of these frames. Table 2 (below) shows the number of words that the parties spent on immigration (as percentage of the whole manifesto) and the word count for each individual frame. It demonstrates that the share of words on immigration went up from 5.5 per cent in 2005–9.4 per cent in 2017. Meanwhile, over 20 per cent of the CSU's 2017 *Bayernplan* dealt with immigration (See: CSU 2017).

## 4. The CDU/CSU's discourse on immigration, 2005–2019

### 4.1. Manifestos

#### 4.1.1. Immigration as a cultural issue

In all four manifestos, the cultural manifestations of immigration were the most salient frame. Three interlinked sub-frames are worth highlighting: The parties' changing image of Germany; the importance of migrants' integration; and the cultural contribution of certain migrants.

First, the manifestos' sections on immigration all start with the CDU/CSU's image of Germany. Germany is first described as 'a hospitable and open country' (CDU/CSU 2005, 34), then as 'a country of integration' (CDU/CSU 2009, 9). The next manifesto states that 'Germany is a successful country of integration' (CDU/CSU 2013, 40). The 2017 manifesto declares that 'Germany is characterized by a wonderful unity in diversity. Geographical, cultural, and human' (CDU/CSU 2017, 69). It then describes Germany as 'a modern country with a unique identity', stating:

> We have kept our cultural roots and strengthened our solidarity. At the 2006 football world championship in Germany and on innumerable occasions since, millions of people of all age groups and social classes have proved this in an impressive manner: it is a happy, effortless, self-confident commitment to a Germany we can be proud of. A patriotic commitment that does not exclude anyone and that does not turn against anyone. In Germany, there must not be any room for anti-Semitism, xenophobia, hate of foreigners, intolerance, or discrimination. (CDU/CSU 2017, 70)

The calls against anti-semitism and xenophobia are noteworthy, as they were not made in the previous manifestos' sections on immigration.

As the discourse on the cultural contribution of migrants became more positive, so did the terms used to describe migrants. In 2005, the CDU/CSU described immigrants primarily as *Ausländer* (foreigners, a term with a negative connotation) and occasionally as *Zuwanderer* or *Immigranten* (both words can be translated as 'immigrants'). Four years later, migrants were described as 'people with a migration background' (*Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund*) and only rarely as foreigners or immigrants. In the 2013 and 2017 manifestos, migrants are referred to as 'people with a migration history' (*Menschen mit Zuwanderungsgeschichte*) or *Zuwanderer*.

Second, the parties stress the need for migrants to integrate by: respecting German values and laws; becoming German citizens; learning the German language; joining (sports) clubs. This applies, increasingly, to Muslims. The 2009 manifesto mentions the National Plan for Integration, which 'has put an end to the liberalism that was

**Table 1.** Codebook: Frames, subframes, keywords, and phrases.

| Frames | Subframes, keywords, phrases |
|---|---|
| Culture | **Subframe 1: The image of Germany in the context of immigration**<br>• Germany is a 'hospitable and open' country<br>• Germany is a 'country of integration'<br>• Germany is a 'successful country of integration'<br>• Germany is 'characterized by a wonderful unity in diversity'<br><br>**Subframe 2: The importance of migrants' integration into German society**<br>• We need to improve and monitor migrants' integration into German society<br>• We welcome those migrants who want to adopt 'German values' and Germany as their 'home country'<br>• We need to prevent migrant 'ghettos', 'parallel societies', and 'multi-kulti' that were created by misguided indifference<br>• We need to make all migrants learn the German language<br>• We need to make integration classes compulsory for migrants<br>• Germany needs teachers with a migration background<br>• Those migrants who refuse to integrate might feel the consequences (and risk losing benefits and permanent residency)<br>• Migrants need to respect 'our basic law' and 'our common values'<br>• Successful integration means for us: the identification with our country, participation, and responsibility<br>• Joining clubs is a good opportunity for migrants to integrate, especially sports clubs<br>• We appreciate and support the contributions made by Muslim clubs and organisations to the integration of Muslim immigrants and intercultural dialogue<br>• The German Islam Conference is a platform for a permanent dialogue between the state and Muslims<br>• German citizenship is an active commitment to our country and the values of our Basic Law<br>• Dual nationality of non-EU citizens has to be an exception.<br>• We reject a general right for foreigners to vote in local elections. We prefer it when migrants become German citizens.<br>• Relgious freedom applies to everybody in Germany: Christians, jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Bahais and many others. They can live their lives freely and practice their religions as long as they comply with our laws. We encourage everybody to enter an inter-religious dialogue and to support our country in a common effort.<br><br>**Subframe 3: The cultural contribution of certain types of migrants to German society**<br>• We are particularly grateful for the re-strengthening of Jewish life in Germany<br>• We see German re-settlers as bridge builders between Germany and Eastern Europe<br>• It is important to remember the history of German expellees after Word War Two, and to recognise their cultural and economic contributions<br>• We promote the interests and cultural heritage of German re-settlers living in Germany today |
| Economy | **Subframe 1: The need for Germany to attract highly skilled workers from outside the EU**<br>• We need to do more to attract those foreign workers who will contribute to Germany's 'scientific and cultural excellence'<br>• We must limit labour migration to highly qualified migrants<br>• We need to improve and simplify the recognition of professional qualifications gained abroad<br>• We need to create a welcoming culture for bright minds from abroad<br>• We need a new law regulating the entry into the German labour market for skilled foreign workers<br><br>**Subframe 2: The necessity to better educate and train people with a migration background already living in Germany**<br>• 'Qualification trumps immigration': Prioritising people already living in Germany by training them for jobs in the care sector<br>• Re-settlers need to be better integrated into the German labour market, their job qualifications better recognised, and their pension rights strengthened |
| Security | **Subframe 1: The danger of 'criminal foreigners'**<br>• We want to simplify the deportation law. We must be able to deport those foreigners who received a prison sentence of at least one year without probation<br>• We need to combat organised crime: the trafficking of humans, weapons, and drugs<br>• We need to combat forced prostitution<br>• We need to fight more effectively against the abuse of visas |

(*Continued*)

**Table 1.** Continued.

| Frames | Subframes, keywords, phrases |
|---|---|
| | **Subframe 2: Islamist terrorism and its risks for German society** |
| | • The fight against international Islamist terrorism (suspected 'foreign' terrorists) needs to be better coordinated at the federal level<br>• We need stricter surveillance of radical Islamist groups, which are often antisemitic<br>• German's liberal democratic order must not be undermined by Scharia law<br>• Mosques where hatred and violence are preached need to be closed, and the people involved need to be deported<br>• We reject the attempt to exert political influence from abroad |
| Humanitarian | • We support the protection of those experiencing political prosecution<br>• We support new types of protection, such as the acceptance of refugees from third countries in situations when a return to their country of origin is not possible or when they cannot be integrated into the country that first accepted them.<br>• We recognise a fundamental right of asylum<br>• We have reduced the number of people who are allowed to stay in Germany by declaring more countries of origin as safe<br>• We want the number of refugees coming here to be permanently low. This will enable is to meet our humanitarian obligations through resettlement and relocation<br>• We have established a new database with the names of all asylum applicants, and we will strengthen our attempts to deport those people who don't qualify for asylum<br>• We will fight against the inhuman activities of people traffickers and create possibilities to ensure that migrants without protection claims will be prevented from entering Europe |
| EU | **Subframe 1: Labour market protection** |
| | • We need to fight against 'wage and social dumping' as a consequence of EU Eastern enlargement |
| | **Subframe 2: Internal and external border security** |
| | • EU eastern enlargement presents a challenge to securing our external borders<br>• EU needs to protect its borders against illegal immigration; Frontex to be strengthened<br>• EU needs to complete a register recording all entries into EU territory and exits<br>• EU needs better exchange of information between national security services because Islamist terrorism and organised crime know no boundaries |
| | **Subframe 3: Humanitarian concerns** |
| | • Immigration and asylum must remain under the control of the EU member states<br>• EU must complete its asylum system<br>• EU has a shared responsibility for refugees<br>• EU needs to make deals with African countries following the example of the refugee deal with Turkey |
| Gender | **Subframe 1: Migrant women as victims who need to be empowered** |
| | • Forced marriage is a human rights violation and will become an element of crime<br>• We need to protect and promote the human rights of Muslim women and girls living in Germany<br>• Migrant women need to be informed about human, civic, and social rights and about equality between men and women |
| | **Subframe 2: Migrant women's participation in and contribution to the German labour market and society** |
| | • We want to increase the labour market participation rate of women with a migration background<br>• The almost 600.000 female and male migrant entrepreneurs make a large contribution to the German economy. They are role models. Through targeted consultation and better qualifications, we want to support existing migrant-owned companies and win new entrepreneurs<br>• We want to promote education and training amongst migrant women in order to enable them to participate in public life<br>• Women with a migration background play a central role for the integration of migrant families |

**Table 2.** The salience of immigration in the CDU/CSU's Bundestag manifestos, 2005–2017.

| Manifesto for Bundestag elections (year) | 2005 | 2009 | 2013 | 2017 | 2017 CSU Bayernplan |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall word length | 11,075 | 27,188 | 41,919 | 19,373 | 11,695 |
| Word length on immigration and % of whole text | 612 (5.5%) | 1490 (5.5%) | 2407 (5.7%) | 1823 (9.4%) | 2388 (20.4%) |
| Word length on frames and % of sections on immigration | | | | | |
| Cultural frame | 268 (43.8%) | 900 (60.4%) | 1195 (49.6%) | 1001 (55%) | 977 (41%) |
| Economic frame | 27 (4.4%) | 140 (9.4%) | 682 (28.3%) | 238 (13.1%) | 179 (7.5%) |
| Security frame | 214 (35%) | 200 (13.4%) | 98 (4.1%) | 162 (9%) | 654 (27.4%) |
| Humanitarian frame | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 135 (5.6%) | 228 (12.5%) | 384 (16.1%) |
| European frame | 72 (11.8%) | 41 (2.8%) | 297 (12.3%) | 153 (8.4%) | 112 (4.7%) |
| Gender frame | 31 (5.0%) | 209 (14%) | 0 (0%) | 41 (2.2%) | 82 (3.4%) |

the misguided indifference towards existing parallel societies and avoidable conflicts' (CDU/CSU 2009, 50). In 2013, the parties make a more explicit reference to Muslims, stating that: 'we decisively oppose the isolation of parallel societies and designated Islamic courts that act outside our legal order. We expect Muslim organisations to act against this' (CDU/CSU 2013, 41). The 2017 manifesto declares that 'Muslims living in Germany have for a long time been contributing to the success of our country with their ideas and their work, and are therefore part of our society' but then states that: 'together with all peaceful Muslims we refuse the abuse of Islam for hatred, violence, terrorism and oppression' (CDU/CSU 2017, 73–74). Thus, from 2005 to 2017, the CDU/CSU have increasingly stressed the importance of migrants' integration, but with a particular focus on Muslims. In this process, peaceful Muslims became part of the 'us'.

Meanwhile, certain other migrants are praised for their cultural contribution to society (subframe 3). For instance, the union parties are 'particularly grateful' for the 're-gaining of strength of Jewish life in Germany' (CDU/CSU 2013, 68). References to the cultural contribution made by Jewish migrants from the former Soviet Union can be found in the 2013 and 2017 manifestos. Also, the parties stress the contribution made by German expellees and re-settlers as 'bridge-builders' between Germany and Eastern Europe (CDU/CSU 2005, 36). Thus, when it comes to Jews and other Germans by blood descent, integration is not seen as problematic.

Overall, the CDU/CSU have increasingly framed immigration as a cultural issue (see Table 2). The culture frame was most salient in 2009 (60.4 per cent) in the aftermath of the 2006 National Integration Summit, the German Islam Conference, and the 2007 National Integration Plan (see section 2). In 2017, culture was still the most salient frame (55 per cent). This is unsurprising, given that the *Bundestag* had ratified the Integration Law in 2016. The integration of non-Christian migrants has been a particular concern for the CDU/CSU and other Christian Democrats in Europe (see Hadj-Abdou, Bale, and Geddes* 2021).

#### 4.1.2. Immigration as an economic issue

The economic benefits of immigration play an increasingly important role for the CDU/CSU. Two subframes stand out: the need for Germany to attract highly skilled workers from outside the EU; and the necessity to better educate and train people with a migration background living in Germany.

First, in their 2005 manifesto, the parties promised that they 'will limit immigration to those foreigners who work in jobs we need to fill and to those who can make an excellent contribution to science and research, the economy, and culture' (CDU/CSU 2005, 34). In 2013, the CDU/CSU called for a 'welcoming culture for bright minds' that are 'highly qualified and eager to work' (40). In 2017, the union parties write that 'from all over the world, people come to Germany with their ideas, launch firms and create jobs. We will encourage and support them' (CDU/CSU 2017, 52).

The second subframe focuses on the (lack of) educational attainment and economic contribution of people with a history of migration living in Germany. In 2013, the parties noted that people with a history of migration are often qualified but that 'this potential is often unused, whilst our labour market has an increasing need for skilled workers' (CDU/CSU 2013, 40). The parties aim to improve the job qualifications of people with a history of migration 'to make sure that they have better chances on the labour market and that they can make a stronger contribution to the economic development of our country' (CDU/CSU 2013, 40).

Over time, the CDU/CSU have framed migration increasingly as an economic issue. The economy frame was most salient in 2013 (28.3 per cent). Also, economic migration has been framed in a more positive way since 2013. This has to do with Germany's lack of skilled workers, a problem that Merkel's government has sought to address with the 2020 law for skilled workers. Germany's population is also ageing rapidly, and by welcoming young, qualified, working migrants, the government is hoping to reverse the trend.

#### 4.1.3. Immigration framed as a security issue

The parties associate a number of security risks with immigration. Two interlinked subframes stand out. First, 'criminal foreigners' involved in international organised crime (human trafficking, drug trafficking, illegal weapon trading, and forced prostitution); and second, Islamist terrorism and its risks for 'the Western value community'.

Already in their 2005 manifesto, the union parties called for the deportation of criminal foreigners. In 2009, they used a stronger wording, declaring that: 'we must be able to deport those foreigners who received a prison sentence of at least one year without probation. This should also be possible in the case of young foreign offenders who have committed serious crimes' (CDU/CSU 2009, 81). Furthermore, they called for a new element of an offence to be introduced for 'massively integration-hostile behaviour, such as instructing people to be violent, or abusing wards' (CDU/CSU 2009, 81).

Moreover, the threat of Islamist terrorism is brought up in all four manifestos. The parties call for stricter surveillance of terrorism suspects, more data collection, and better coordination between Germany's political institutions. The 2005 manifesto calls Islamist terrorism 'one of the biggest challenges for the Western value community' (CDU/CSU 2005, 31). In 2009, the union parties promise that they will ensure 'a stricter surveillance and sanctioning of antisemitic and anti-western propaganda in Islamist newspapers, books, and on websites' (CDU/CSU 2009, 82). Finally, the 2017 manifesto

calls for the closure of mosques 'where hate and violence are preached' and for the deportation of dangerous Islamists – unless they are German citizens (CDU/CSU 2017, 74).

Overall, the security frame became much less salient over time, decreasing from 35 per cent (in 2005) to 9 per cent (in 2017). How to explain this? Once the CDU/CSU were in government, they stressed their positive record on law and order, describing themselves as 'the party for internal security' and emphasising that 'for years, Germany has been one of the safest countries in the world' (CDU/CSU 2017, 59). Still, the increasingly detailed references to Islamist terrorism are unsurprising, as a number of Islamist terrorist attacks had taken place in Germany in previous years, such as the 2016 Berlin Christmas market attack where eleven people were killed.

#### *4.1.4. Immigration framed as a humanitarian issue*

Only from 2013 onwards did the CDU/CSU frame immigration as a humanitarian issue. In 2013, they wrote: 'those who are politically prosecuted and vulnerable, need to be able to trust in Germany. We therefore recognise a fundamental right of asylum' (CDU/CSU 2013, 42). The 2017 manifesto includes a longer paragraph on refugees and asylum seekers under the heading: 'helping people in an emergency, controlling and reducing migration, and deporting applicants consistently' (CDU/CSU 2017, 62). The heading gives away the key message of the section, in which they stated that: 'we have confronted the challenge of the biggest movement of refugees in the post war era. We have helped many people in an emergency and guaranteed their admission and right to remain'. This is followed by a number of sentences highlighting the measures restricting peoples' right to remain in Germany, e.g. by: declaring Albania, Kosovo and other Balkan states safe countries of origin; creating a new database of all asylum seekers; and by seeking to deport those people whose applications for asylum have been rejected. Next, the parties wrote that they will fight against human trafficking. Importantly, they iterate that:

> A situation like the one in 2015 cannot and must not be repeated, because everyone has learned from this situation. We want that the number of refugees coming to us to remain permanently low. This enables us to meet our humanitarian commitments through resettlement and relocation. (CDU/CSU 2017, 63)

Thus, immigration was first framed as a humanitarian issue in 2013 (5.5 per cent) and became more salient in 2017 (12.5 per cent). This could be expected, as the number of applications for asylum in Germany had increased steadily since 2012 and reached an all-time high in 2016 (Bamf 2019). The parties' discourse on refugees and asylum seekers very much focuses on preventing their arrival and on restricting their right to remain. This is in line with the 2017 asylum package that restricted migrants' freedom of residency and movement within Germany and expediated the deportation to their countries of origin.

#### *4.1.5. Immigration framed as a European union-wide issue*

The CDU/CSU also framed immigration as an issue with EU-wide implications. Three sub-frames are highlighted: labour market protection, internal and external border security, and humanitarian concerns. As such, the EU is a cross-over frame that touches upon the security, economy, and humanitarian frames. Still, because of its explicit and causal link to European integration, it is a stand-alone frame.

In 2005, the parties stated that they will 'fight against wage and social dumping as a consequence of EU Eastern enlargement and illegal employment' (CDU/CSU 2005, 18). Four years later, security concerns had taken the place of economic concerns, as the parties argued that asylum policy must remain under the control of the EU member states, fearing that 'EU-wide asylum laws would soften up the German asylum compromise. We therefore reject them' (CDU/CSU 2009, 50). In 2013, the parties called for stricter controls of the EU's external and internal borders in order to combat 'transnational crime and reduce uncontrolled immigration more effectively' (CDU/CSU 2013, 73). They also rejected peoples' abuse of the European freedom of movement in order to claim benefits in Germany (CDU/CSU 2013, 42). In the 2017 manifesto, the economic implications of EU migration were no longer mentioned. Instead, EU migration was primarily framed as a security risk, with calls to fight more effectively against international terrorism and illegal immigration. At the same time, the manifesto stated that: 'Europe has a shared responsibility for refugees who are persecuted or in a state of emergency and therefore have a claim to protection. Here, all European states need to meet their responsibility' (CDU/CSU 2017, 56).

The salience of immigration as an EU-wide issue has varied a lot over time (see Table 2), as have the subframes: the economic concerns voiced over EU Eastern enlargement were eclipsed by security concerns. In 2017, Europe's shared responsibility for refugees is mentioned for the first time. This is unsurprising. Since 2015, Angela Merkel had pushed for more comprehensive EU policies, including compulsory and permanent quotas for sharing the distribution of refugees.

#### *4.1.6. Immigration framed as a gendered issue*

The CDU/CSU framed immigration as a gendered issue, focusing on migrant women. I detected two sub-frames: migrant women as victims; and migrant women's contribution to Germany's economy and society. Whilst the gender frame crosses over the security, economy, and culture frames, it is still a stand-alone frame, as migrant women (but not men) were singled out.

First, the 2005 manifesto framed (Muslim) women as victims of crime and oppression, stating:

> We will actively promote and protect the human rights of girls and women of the Muslim culture living in Germany. Forced marriage is illegal. Coercing someone into a forced marriage will become an independent element of a crime. (CDU/CSU 2005, 34)

In 2009, the illegality of forced marriage was stressed again, but the gendered discourse now focused on the need to improve migrant women's economic and cultural contribution. 'We want to increase the labour force participation rate of women with a migration background', the manifesto stated, and it also mentioned that 'the almost 600.000 female and male migrant entrepreneurs make a large contribution to the German economy' (CDU/CSU 2009, 51). These migrant entrepreneurs were then described as 'role models' (CDU/CSU 2009, 51). There was also an emphasis on the 'central role of women with a migration background for the integration of migrant families', although no explanation was offered as to why or how women might play this central role. The parties furthermore stressed the importance of improving migrant girls and women's education and job training opportunities (CDU/CSU 2009,

51). In 2017, they emphasised that: 'the equality of men and women applies to everybody who lives here, no matter where they come from' (CDU/CSU 2017, 71). Thus, from being portrayed as victims of crime and oppression, migrant women were increasingly depicted as 'useful' subjects with important social and economic functions.

Overall, the gender frame became more salient between 2005 (5 per cent) and in 2009 (14 per cent). Migrant integration was an important topic in the early years of Merkel's chancellorship. The 2007 National Integration Plan also focused on migrant women and called for the improvement of opportunities for migrant girls and women through measures such as: better information campaigns about their rights; more democratic participation; better support in the job; better (sexual) health education, etc. (Bundesregierung 2007). During her chancellorship, Merkel increasingly focused on empowering girls and women, although she refused to call herself a feminist (Mushaben 2018).

### 4.2. Intra-party divisions

The above analysis might give the impression that the CDU/CSU agreed on immigration. Yet, during the migration crisis, the CSU often behaved like an opposition party. The CDU was also internally divided on the management of the crisis and questions of cultural belonging. Some East German regional associations, but also the CDU/CSU's influential organisation for young party members, the *Junge Union*, disagreed with Merkel. In addition, the socially conservative *WerteUnion* was launched by CDU and CSU members in 2017. In order to avoid the impression of two sister parties unified on the issue of migration, this section highlights the discourses on two particularly controversial issues: Islam and Germany and imposing a cap on refugee numbers.

#### 4.2.1. Islam and Germany

The statement that 'Islam now also belongs to Germany' was first made by Germany's president, Christian Wulff (CDU) on the 20th anniversary of German re-unification (Wulff 2010). It still reverberates, as the majority of migrants arriving during the crisis came from predominantly Muslim countries of origin. Angela Merkel felt it necessary in 2015 to declare that 'it is obvious that today, Islam undoubtably belongs to Germany' (*Spiegel Online*, March 16, 2018). In response, Saxony's prime minister and CDU leader, Stanislaw Tillich, stressed that 'Muslims are welcome in Germany and can practice their religion' but that 'this doesn't mean that Islam belongs to Saxony' (*Welt.de*, January 25, 2015). Saxony-Anhalt's CDU wrote that 'Islam doesn't belong to Germany' into its basic principles in 2019 (CDU Landesverband Sachsen-Anhalt 2019).

Furthermore, on 15 March 2018, the first day into his new job as home secretary in Merkel's fourth government, CSU leader Horst Seehofer declared that 'Islam does not belong to Germany. Germany is shaped by Christianity'. He however explained that Muslims living in Germany 'obviously' belonged to Germany, but that this did not mean that 'out of false consideration we will give up our national traditions and habits' (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, March 15, 2018). This echoes the CSU's 2017 *Bayernplan* which includes the heading 'So that Germany remains Germany' and sentences such as 'Our predominant culture provides the standard' (CSU 2017, 13). The debate on Islam and Germany fits into the cultural framing of immigration, which was the most salient frame in the manifesto analysis above.

#### 4.2.2. Limiting refugee numbers and imposing stricter migration controls

On 31 August 2015, at the height of the migration crisis, Angela Merkel said: 'We have done so much – we can do this' (*Wir haben sovieles geschafft – wir schaffen das*). She meant that Germany could absorb large numbers of refugees from Syria and other war-torn countries. One year later, Seehofer declared that 'with the best will in the world' he could not adopt Merkel's statement. 'Limiting immigration', he argued, 'is a prerequisite for keeping this country safe' (*Zeit Online*, July 30, 2016). In its *Bayernplan*, the CSU called for an annual upper limit of 200,000 refugees in order to 'guarantee a successful integration' (CSU 2017, 16). No such upper limit was mentioned in the CDU/CSU's common manifesto. In January 2016, when he was still minister president of Bavaria, Seehofer also threatened to take the federal government to Germany's Constitutional Court if it did not stop refugees from entering Germany via Austria. He declared that: 'we are of the strong opinion that immigration must be steered and reduced if we want to be able to cope with it in Germany' (*Zeit Online*, April 14, 2016). Meanwhile, the *Junge Union* issued a motion ahead of the CDU's 2015 party conference calling for an annual limit of 117,000 refugees. At the last minute, however, the motion was abandoned in an attempt to seek a comprise with the CDU leadership (*Welt.de*, December 11, 2015). By contrast, Merkel spoke against the introduction of an upper limit of refugee numbers in Germany and the EU, explaining:

> For a number of reasons, I consider this instrument wrong. There is a difference when there is peace in Syria or Iraq. One year there might be very few refugees, the next year, there might be more. (*Welt.de*, November 30, 2016)

The disagreements between the CDU and CSU leaders over the management of the migration crisis had come to a head in early 2016, during the federal government's discussion of a new asylum package. Seehofer accused Merkel of abandoning the rule of law by letting migrants enter the country without valid travel documents and of thereby creating 'a rule of injustice'– a very strong expression that the CSU had used in the past to describe dictatorships such as the GDR (*Zeit Online*, February 9, 2016). Later on, the *WerteUnion* wrote in its manifesto:

> The 2015 mass migration into Germany was illegal and wrong. […] As a densely populated, industrialised country, Germany is an unsuitable destination for asylum seekers and refugees. […] Accepting [asylum seekers and refugees] can only be a temporary solution and the upper annual limit must be 50,000. (WerteUnion 2018, 1–2)

These intra-party debates on refugee numbers fit into the security and the humanitarian frames that were already identified in the manifestos. They need to be understood in the domestic political context. Since 2013, the CDU/CSU have had to deal with a competitor to their right, the Alternative for Germany (AfD). The rise of the AfD came as a surprise to many, as for a long time the union parties had no serious challenger to their right (Lees 2013). The party gained real momentum in 2015–2016 when it made headlines with its xenophobic discourse. One of the AfD's most visible slogans, which made its way into their 2016 principal guidelines and could also be seen on posters, was: 'Islam does not belong to Germany'. In the 2017 general elections, it won 12.6 per cent of the votes (92 seats in the *Bundestag*). Amongst all parties, the CDU/CSU lost the largest number of voters – over one Million – to the AfD (Vehrkamp and Mehregani 2017). The AfD's success explains, at

least to some extent, why parts of the CDU/CSU chose to adopt an anti-Islam, anti-refugee discourse. The AfD has been successful in winning votes in all parts of Germany but remains most popular in East Germany. In Saxony, it came first in the 2017 federal elections (Pickel 2019, 146). For the East German CDU associations, the AfD presents a particular threat. To some extent, this explains why some CDU politicians in Saxony have expressed sympathy for the far right and have made racist comments. It is also the reason for the launch of the *WerteUnion*, which is an attempt to move the CDU/CSU to the right, onto the AfD's territory. Abou-Chadi (2014) demonstrates that in countries where far-right niche parties have won an increasing amount of votes in the most recent elections, parties of the moderate right adopt more restrictive positions on immigration and become more culturally protectionist – which applies to parts of the CDU/CSU.

To provide some more context: Figures 1 and 2 (below) depict the results from the 2017 Chapel Hill expert survey on German party positions on immigration and integration (Polk et al. 2017). Figure 1 shows that amongst the parties included in this comparison, immigration was most important for the AfD. The AfD also advocated a highly restrictive immigration policy. The CSU favoured a stricter immigration policy than the CDU and found immigration more important than the CDU. The figure also highlights that the CDU was internally more divided on immigration than the other parties.

Figure 2 (below) shows the parties' positions on migrants' integration and minority rights, as well as internal dissent on integration policy. Unsurprisingly, the AfD has a strong preference for migrants' assimilation over integration, and it finds integration policy very important. The CSU isn't very far behind and has a stronger preference for assimilation over integration than the CDU. Amongst all the parties depicted, the CDU is the one that is seen to be most divided over integration policy.

Another explanation for the open disagreements between Merkel and Seehofer were the October 2018 regional elections in Bavaria. Opinion polls from before the elections show that 'refugees' was one of the most pressing issues for the Bavarian voters (more so than for the voters in the other West German *Länder*), and that the voters had lost their trust in the CSU to deal with the crisis (*Zeit Online*, August 13, 2018). The AfD was set to enter the Bavarian parliament for the first time, and the CSU was expected to lose votes to

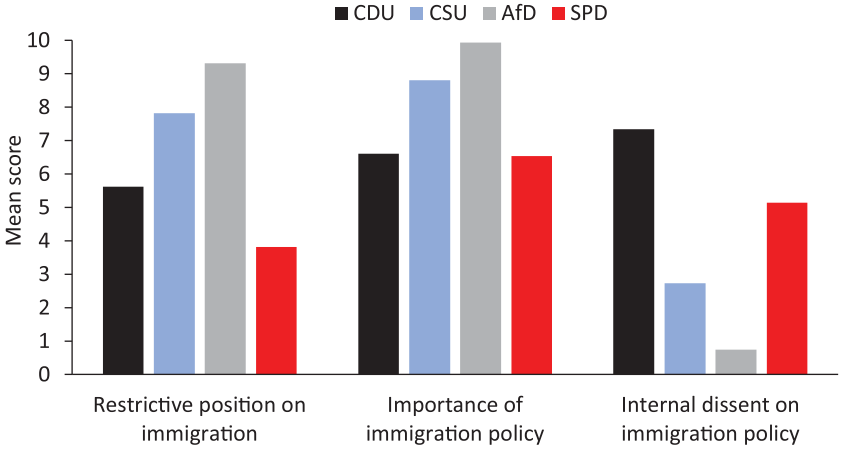


**Figure 1.** Party positions and internal dissent on immigration.

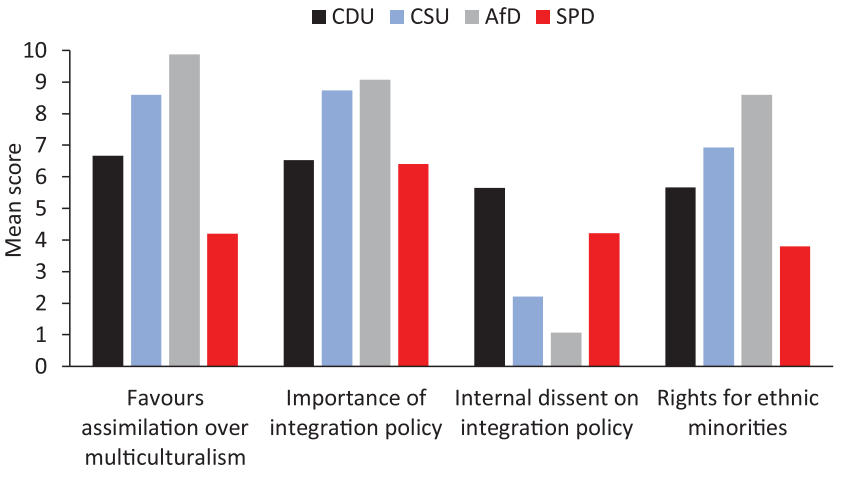


**Figure 2.** Party positions and internal dissent on integration.

them. In this context, Seehofer decided to escalate the conflict with Merkel and took a particularly hard line on refugees. In the end, his strategy backfired. By being 'intemperate' towards Merkel and by using 'sharp rhetoric', Seehofer alienated some of the CSU's centrist supporters (Deininger 2020, 35). Indeed, while the CSU lost 160.000 votes to the AfD, it also lost 170.000 votes to the Greens and 160.000 to the conservative Free Voters, thereby losing its overall majority in the Bavarian parliament (Schultze 2019).

## 5. Conclusions

This article has analysed the CDU/CSU's immigration policies and discourses during Merkel's Chancellorship. It has provided fresh empirical insight into how one of Europe's biggest centre-right *Volksparteien* negotiates immigration. This is a timely case study, as Germany has been at the forefront of the European migration crisis. Immigration has been a complex issue for the CDU/CSU which is a heterogeneous union of two parties operating in a federal state where powerful regional party associations have different ideological traditions. The fast rise of the anti-immigration, Islamophobic AfD has put additional pressure on the CDU/CSU.

A number of observations have emerged from my analysis. First, that the two union parties have been proactive in their immigration policies under Merkel's leadership. Since 2005, they have passed far-reaching new laws in the areas of asylum, integration, and skilled labour migration.

Second, I have argued that the CDU/CSU's immigration policies have sent conflicting messages, torn between opening and closing Germany's borders, and between welcoming diversity and demanding cultural assimilation. On the one hand, under Merkel's leadership, Germany has accepted more refugees than any other EU country. The CDU/CSU has also recognised that Germany needs skilled migrant workers from outside the EU. The 2020 law for skilled workers offers pragmatic solutions. On the other hand, the recent asylum and integration laws are very restrictive. For asylum seekers, life in Germany is difficult, as they face many bureaucratic hurdles and need to demonstrate efforts at integrating. Thus, whilst the CDU/CSU now welcome 'bright minds' (skilled

workers) from abroad (CDU/CSU 2013, 40) this welcoming culture does not necessarily apply to refugees and asylum seekers.

Third, in analysing party discourse, I have demonstrated how the union parties have framed immigration as a cultural, economic, security, humanitarian, EU-wide, and gendered issue. Whilst the salience of these frames varied over time, the cultural frame, which focusses on migrants' integration, stood out. It emphasised the importance of migrants' adopting 'German values', the German language, and following German laws. Tellingly, the CDU/CSU now describe Germany as 'a country of integration', in line with their recent integration legislation. It is, however, interesting to note here that the two parties still refused to call Germany a 'country of immigration' and that they also expressed their disdain for multiculturalism.

Fourth, I have analysed how the parties disagreed internally on two crucial issues: the role of Islam in Germany and the management of the European migration crisis. The controversy between Angela Merkel, CSU leader Horst Seehofer, and some of the East German CDU *Landesverbände* on whether Islam is part of Germany reveals how divided the Christian Democrats are over Germany's cultural identity in the twenty-first century. The other controversy analysed was the question of whether Germany should impose an annual limit on the intake of refugees. Indeed, this was a highly divisive issue during the 2017 federal election campaign. These intra-party divisions were exacerbated by two (linked) developments: the rise of the Alternative for Germany, and Bavaria's 2018 regional elections.

As a consequence of the rift between the CDU and CSU's leaders on the management of the refugee crisis, the government almost broke apart in the summer of 2018. In fact, Merkel found it easier to govern with the SPD than finding common ground with the CSU. Because of the complex dynamics between the sister parties, the German case is somewhat different from other European centre-right parties which organise nationally. It also makes it more difficult to assess whether as a whole, Germany's centre-right has become more pro-immigration in recent years. To be sure, Merkel has put the CDU onto a more pragmatic path in its immigration policy. At the same time, parts of the CDU and CSU call for more restrictive immigration policies and cultural assimilation, with particular reference to Muslims. They continue to advocate a German *Leitkultur* (predominant culture) that migrants should adopt. These claims are at odds with the CDU/CSU's own image of Germany as a 'country of integration' that is 'characterized by a wonderful unity in diversity' from their 2017 manifesto.

## Notes

1. Merkel was also CDU leader between 2000 and 2018.
2. Seehofer was CSU leader and minister president of Bavaria from 2008 until 2019. In March 2018 he became home secretary in Merkel's 4th coalition government.
3. The German Democratic Republic (GDR) also became more diverse, although the number of migrant workers (mainly from other socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and later on, Cuba, Mozambique, Vietnam) was relatively small. The GDR received only few refugees (Bade and Oltmer 2004).
4. 'A person with a migration background' is a term that was officially introduced by the Federal Statistical Office in 2005. It is relatively broad and describes a person who does not hold German citizenship by birth or who has at least one parent who does not hold German citizenship by birth (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018). For a critical discussion on the use of the term, see Will (2020).

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