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PARTY-LEVEL EUROSCEPTICISM OF THE RADICAL RIGHT: A
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY AND
THE ALTERNATIVE FOR GERMANY

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GERMANY

RADİKAL SAĞIN PARTİ BAZINDA AVRUPA KARŞITLIĞI: MİLLİYETÇİ HAREKET
PARTİSİ VE ALMANYA İÇİN ALTERNATİF PARTİSİ'NİN KARŞILAŞTIRMALI
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS	IV
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	V
LIST OF FIGURES	VIII
LIST OF TABLES	IX
ABSTRACT	X
ÖZET	XI
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1	7
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK	7
1.1 DEFINITION AND PARTY-BASED EUROSCEPTICISM WITH ITS MOTIVATIONS	7
1.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF RADICAL RIGHT PARTIES	17
CHAPTER 2	27
THE NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY	27
2.1 HISTORY OF THE MHP	27
2.2 POLITICAL POSITION AND IDEOLOGY OF THE MHP	35
2.3 THE MHP AND EUROSCEPTICISM	53
CHAPTER 3	65
THE ALTERNATIVE FOR GERMANY	65
3.1 HISTORY OF THE AfD	65
3.2 POLITICAL POSITION AND IDEOLOGY OF THE AfD	77
3.3 THE AfD AND EUROSCEPTICISM	87
CHAPTER 4	99
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MHP AND THE AfD	99
CONCLUSION	105
REFERENCES	108

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AfD:** Alternative für Deutschland (The Alternative for Germany)
- AKP:** Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (The Justice and Development Party)
- ANAP:** Anavatan Partisi (The Motherland Party)
- AP:** Adalet Partisi (The Justice Party)
- BTP:** Büyük Birlik Partisi (The Grand Union Party)
- CDU:** Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (The Christian Democratic Union of Germany)
- CFSP:** The Common Foreign and Security Policy
- CHP:** Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (The Republican People's Party)
- CKMP:** Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi (The Republican Farmers Nation Party)
- CMP:** Cumhuriyetçi Millet Partisi (The Republican Nation Party)
- CSU:** Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern (The Christian Social Union in Bavaria)
- DIW:** Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (The German Institute for Economic Research)
- DKP-DRP:** Deutsche Konservative Partei-Deutsche Rechtspartei (The German Conservative Party-German Rightist Party)
- DM:** Deutsche Mark (The German Mark)
- DP:** Demokrat Parti (The Democrat Party)
- DSP:** Demokratik Sol Parti (The Democratic Left Party)
- DVU:** Deutsche Volkunion (The German People's Union)
- ECJ:** The European Court of Justice
- EEC:** The European Economic Community
- EMU:** The European Monetary Union
- EP:** The European Parliament
- EU:** The European Union
- EUROJUST:** The European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation

EUROPOL: The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation

FAP: Freiheitliche Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (The Free German Worker's Party)

FCC: The Federal Constitutional Court

FETÖ: Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü (The Fethullah Terrorist Organization)

FRONTEX: The European Border and Coast Guard Agency

HDP: Halkların Demokratik Partisi (The People's Democratic Party)

IMF: International Monetary Union

IP: İyi Party (The Good Party)

MÇP: Milli Çalışma Partisi (The Nationalist Task Party)

MHP: Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (The Nationalist Action Party)

MP: Millet Partisi (The Nation Party)

MP: Muhafazakar Parti (The Conservative Party)

MSP: Milli Selamet Partisi (The National Salvation Party)

NATO: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NPD: Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (The National Democratic Party)

NSDAP: Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (The Nationalist Socialist German Worker's Party)

Pegida: Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlande (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West)

PKK: Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (The Kurdistan Worker's Party)

REP: Die Republikaner (The Republicans)

RP: Refah Partisi (The Welfare Party)

RPP: Radical Right Party

SP: Saadet Partisi (The Felicity Party)

SPD: Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (The Social Democratic Party of Germany)

SRP: Sozialistische Reichspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Reich Party)

SU: The Soviet Union

TKP: Türkiye Köylü Partisi (The Peasants' Party of Turkey)

UN: The United Nations

US: The United States

YPG/PYD: People's Protection Units/Democratic Union Party

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Properties Included in Definitions of Right-Wing Extremism/Radicalism

Figure 2: The AfD Votes in German States Until February 2020

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The MHP Votes and seats in Turkish Elections Between 1961-1995

Table 2: The MHP Votes and seats in Turkish Elections Between 1999-2018

ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis is to find out whether Euroscepticism in radical right parties is an ideological orientation or a strategic reaction. Two countries, Turkey as the candidate state and Germany as the member state, are chosen. Selecting countries from different levels of the European Union allows to approach the topic from two different perspectives. In these countries, Nationalist Action Party (MHP) and Alternative for Germany (AfD) were chosen as the representatives of the radical right parties.

The parties are analyzed according to the six characteristics of the radical right. These are nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy, belief in a strong state/authoritarianism, and populism. The Eurosceptic discourses of the parties are studied and how these discourses overlap the party ideology is examined. The study depends on official party discourses, election declarations, and member speeches to obtain objective results. As a result of this study, a clear connection has been found between party ideology and Eurosceptic discourse.

Keywords: Euroscepticism, European Union, Radical Right, Nationalist Action Party, Alternative for Germany, Ideology, Strategy

ÖZET

Bu tezin amacı radikal sağ partilerdeki Avrupa Birliği karşıtlığını ideolojik bir yönelim mi yoksa stratejik bir tepki mi olduğunu araştırmaktır. Aday ülke Türkiye, üye ülke Almanya olmak üzere iki ülke seçilmiştir. Ülkeleri, Avrupa Birliği'nin iki farklı seviyesinden seçmek, konuya iki farklı bakış açısıyla yaklaşmayı sağlamaktadır. Bu ülkelerde, radikal sağ partilerin temsilcileri olarak Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi ve Almanya için Alternatif partisi seçilmiştir.

Partiler, radikal sağın altı özelliğine göre analiz edilmektedir. Bunlar milliyetçilik, ırkçılık, yabancı düşmanlığı, anti-demokrasi, güçlü bir devlet / otoriterlik inancı ve popülizmdir. Partilerin Avrupa Birliği karşıtı söylemleri ve bu söylemlerin parti ideolojisiyle nasıl örtüştüğü incelenmektedir. Çalışma, nesnel sonuçlar elde etmek için partilerin resmi söylemlerine, seçim beyannamelerine ve üye konuşmalarına dayanmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın sonucunda parti ideolojisi ile Avrupa Birliği karşıtı söylem arasında açık bir bağlantı bulunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Avrupa Karşıtlığı, Avrupa Birliği, Radikal Sağ, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, Almanya için Alternatif Partisi, İdeoloji, Strateji

INTRODUCTION

Skepticism towards the European Union, both at public and political levels, has increased, especially after the Maastricht Treaty 1992. The treaty is considered as a giant leap for European integration with its attempt to create an ever-closer union by introducing European citizenship and a common foreign and security policy together with laying the foundation of a common currency. However, over the years, it is observed that while the European widening and deepening process has intensified, opposition, and skepticism towards the EU have also accelerated (Taggart, 1998).

In fact, some scholars claim that the skepticism towards the EU goes back to the Rome Treaty, 1957. Vasilopoulou (2013) analyzes evolution periods of opposition to European integration. According to her, there are three phases. These are the elite-driven and nation-specific phases, the post-Maastricht phase, and the financial crisis phase. Since the European integration is an elite-driven project, in the beginning, the opposition consisted of only elites. "The failure of the Pleven and Fouchet Plans, De Gaulle's veto of British membership in the early 1960s, and his struggle with Walter Hallstein over the powers of the Commission and the EP were the initial indicators of skepticism over the possible next stages of integration" (Vasilopoulou, 2013, p. 6). This phase continued with British negotiations and Thatcher's tough policy during the process of signing of the Single European Act. Thatcher acutely emphasized on the British nationality and opposed to the further development of the European Community like deepening towards a political union or introducing a common foreign and defense policy.

After the negative result of the Danish referendum on the Maastricht Treaty, the second phase started, and several opt-outs were begun to be negotiated.

In the beginning, four opt-outs were negotiated; the single currency, a common defense, European citizenship, and cooperation on justice and home affairs. Since these opt-outs are the fundamental principles of the treaty, it is reasonable to say that this is a skeptic approach to the very basis of further integration. These opt-outs also affected Irish-British Schengen opt-outs and British and Swedish currency opt-outs (Vasilopoulou, 2013). Moreover, the Irish rejection of the Nice Treaty in 2001, French and Dutch rejection of the project of the European Constitution in 2005, and Irish rejection of the Lisbon Treaty in 2008 did not help the integration process. These developments show that in the post-Maastricht phase, the opposition has become visible in the public opinion. Especially in the 2000s, a popular backlash against European integration was observed.

In the third phase, the effect of the latest financial crisis on skepticism towards the EU is observed. As a result of the high unemployment rates, national growth, and other domestic economic problems, the notion of a strong Union has lost its significance. "This phase marks a stage where national interests take – more than ever – explicit precedence over European Society" (Vasilopoulou, 2013, p. 9). Also, the debt crisis in Greece and the discussions on the country's leaving the eurozone have shaken the legitimacy of the European Union.

On top of all these, the United Kingdom voted to exit from the Union. The British people's decision to leave the EU has been considered as the greatest skepticism towards the Union. In other words, EU skepticism embodied with Brexit, and the Union lost one of its strongest members. In addition, Brexit brought up ideas such as Dexit and Qitaly that could create a domino effect in the Union and fuel the existential crisis.

All these developments necessitated answering several questions, including; What is Euroscepticism? Why are people against integration? What are the

motivational factors that cause Euroscepticism? What are the dynamics of party-based or public Euroscepticism?

At the same time, radical right parties have been rising in all over the world, especially in Europe. After the 2008 economic crisis, the immigration crisis, and the Brexit, the support for the radical right parties has boosted. Together with these parties, Euroscepticism has also increased because most of these parties are nationalist, anti-globalist and anti-multiculturalist hence, Eurosceptic. Despite this fact, there are limited research on Euroscepticism in radical right parties, especially in candidate countries. Therefore, it is important to study the motivations behind Euroscepticism in radical right party family for the future of the European Union. From this point of view, this thesis aims to find out whether party-based Euroscepticism in radical right parties is an ideological orientation or a strategic reaction. The answer to this question will shed light on whether skepticism towards the EU and the integration is permanent or a reaction that will disappear over time. If Euroscepticism is a strategic reaction, it can be assumed that it will not last forever and it is not a major threat to the European Union in the long run. However, if the driving force behind this is the ideology, it is reasonable to say that Euroscepticism is permanent and poses a threat to the existence of the Union. Therefore, it is essential to address this question.

For this purpose, this research analyzes and compares two radical right parties, one from a candidate state and one from a member state. Studying parties from different levels of the integration provides us the opportunity to approach to Euroscepticism from two different perspectives and provides a better understanding of the party family and their attitudes towards the European Union and the European integration. Also, it will be possible to have a knowledge on whether integration level has an effect on Euroscepticism. If the findings point out that both parties have similar

motivations on Euroscepticism, this means that integration level actually does not matter for radical right parties.

In order to answer these questions and contribute to the literature, this thesis analyses two radical right parties; the National Action Party (MHP) from Turkey and the Alternative for Germany (AfD) from Germany. These parties are perfect cases to study radical right Euroscepticism because of several reasons.

First of all, Germany, one of the founding countries of the European Union, is accepted today as the locomotive country of the Union. The weight of Germany in the EU is unquestionable. The country is the largest economy in the Union and has most of the seats in the European Parliament. Therefore, any level of Euroscepticism in Germany will have an impact on the future of the EU, and it is essential to study and understand Euroscepticism in Germany.

Turkey, on the other hand, has a unique history with the European Union. The relations go back to the early 1960s. Turkey signed the Ankara Association agreement with the European Community in 1963, applied for full membership in 1987, and more than ten years later, was granted official candidate status in 1999. Finally, negotiations were started in 2005. Today, Turkey is the country with the most prolonged duration of candidacy. Therefore, studying Euroscepticism in Turkey provides a unique perspective in order to understand Euroscepticism in the candidate states.

Thirdly, given the German political parties, the preeminent radical right party with a Eurosceptic agenda is the AfD. Although it is a newly established party, its roots go back to the previous radical right parties such as the Republicans. Also, the party achieved remarkable success in its short history. Founded in 2013, the party is now the main opposition party in the

German parliament, it has 11 seats in the European Parliament, and its supporters are increasing in every election. Therefore, the AfD has reached a success that other Eurosceptic parties in Germany have never achieved and has become the Eurosceptic radical right party in German politics with the most say so far. Today, AfD's ideology is represented in both domestic politics and in EU politics.

Fourthly, the MHP is the foremost Eurosceptic radical right party in the Turkish politics. The party has witnessed and contributed to the Turkey-EU relations since the beginning of the relations. It was mostly in the opposition in the Turkish parliament but was briefly in the coalition government between 1999 and 2002. Today, the party formed an alliance with the AKP government, which has been in power since 2002, and has a supporting position for the government.

Furthermore, MHP and AfD have a very similar ideology. For instance, both parties always emphasize the importance of the nation-state, sovereignty, and common national values such as language, history and identity. Neither of them accepts any policy or action that might jeopardize these values. Their Eurosceptic discourses also have commonalities. For example, both parties oppose to centralization and deepening process of the EU and they do not accept any involvement of the Union to the nation-state. Therefore, it will be possible to find out whether radical right Euroscepticism is an ideological orientation or a strategic reaction while observing whether the integration level makes a difference.

In order to achieve this objective, this study firstly analyzes the ideology of both parties based on Mudde's study in 1996. Mudde finds out that there are twenty-six different definitions of the radical right parties and fifty-eight different features in these definitions. However, five of them are at least in the half of the definitions. These are; nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-

democracy, and strong state. This thesis studies parties' ideology based on these five features and their populist discourses. Because, both parties have a strong populist discourse and their populism shapes their attitudes towards the European Union. Therefore, it is worth to study their populist ideology alongside Mudde's five features. In the second part of the thesis, Eurosceptic discourses of the parties are compared with their ideology and similarities and differences are observed.

The most benefited sources in this thesis are the party election declarations and reports, party members' statements, and social media accounts alongside the works of leading academicians in the field. Both parties publish their election declarations online, and especially the MHP publishes its reports on the EU openly on its website. Therefore, the resources are easily accessible. However, both parties publish their resources in their own language, and this creates problems in understanding parties' perspectives. This thesis eliminates the language barrier and makes a contribution to the literature by providing and comparing these resources in English.

The thesis is mainly divided into four parts. The first part gives a theoretical background and knowledge about the literature on the Euroscepticism and radical right parties. The second part discusses the MHP. Firstly, it provides a brief background of the party and discusses its political position and ideology based on six radical right features. Then, it analyses the Eurosceptic stance of the party and looks for a parallelism. The third part of the thesis is designated for the AfD. It follows the same structure as the MHP part; firstly, it gives a background of the party, then explains its political position and ideology, finally analyses the party stance on Euroscepticism. The last part of the thesis compares the two parties, mainly their Euroscepticism, and answers the question of whether Euroscepticism in radical right parties is an ideological orientation or a strategic reaction.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Definition and Party-Based Euroscepticism with Its Motivations

The acceleration of Euroscepticism leads to an increasing academic interest in the subject, especially in the post-Maastricht phase. Although scholars have not yet identified a precise definition or have found an answer to any of these questions, various studies have been carried out in this context. This section will be an overview of party-based Euroscepticism and the questions that have been raised in the literature.

There are several definitions of Euroscepticism, and Taggart's definition (1998) is the most common one in the literature. He claims that "Euroscepticism express the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration" (Taggart, 1998, p. 366). In fact, according to Taggart, Euroscepticism does not have a single position to the EU, there are three different positions. The first position rejects the European integration completely. The second position is not opposed in principle. However, it is skeptical because the EU is too inclusive. On the other hand, the third position also is not opposed in principle but skeptical because it is too exclusive (Taggart, 1998).

Although Taggart made a significant contribution to the literature, his conceptualization is deficient because it does not answer why and how these positions differ. Later, Szczerbiak and Taggart took a step further and conceptualized Euroscepticism as *hard* and *soft* Euroscepticism. "Hard Euroscepticism implies outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration and opposition to their country joining or

remaining members of the EU” (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2001, p. 10). In other words, it is the principled objection to the current form of the EU. Soft Euroscepticism, on the other hand, does not mean opposition to integration on principled grounds, it involves contingent or qualified opposition, and it can be summed up as an opposition to one or more policy areas without opposing the complete integration. This conceptualization is useful to understand general framework of the party Euroscepticism. However, it is a rather broad approach. For instance, it is hard to tell the difference between parties which are against a policy area and parties that just want to make a constructive policy to improve the Union. Should every criticism or disagreement be seen as Euroscepticism? In addition, the boundary line between hard and soft Euroscepticism is unclear. “If a party opposes three or more EU policies, is its Euroscepticism still soft or has it crossed the boundaries and has become hard?” (Vasilopoulou, 2013, p.5). Szczerbiak’s and Taggart’s classification does not answer these questions.

In order to make it more comprehensive and more explicit, Szczerbiak and Taggart came with another explanation for hard and soft Euroscepticism in 2008. According to them, hard Euroscepticism exists;

...where there is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008, p. 2).

On the other hand, soft Euroscepticism exists;

...where there is not a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas leads to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that ‘national interest’ is currently at odds with the EU trajectory (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008, p. 2).

Also, they focused on clarifying the question of how many policy areas must be opposed for a party to be considered as Eurosceptic. They accepted that it is difficult to determine a party's position towards the European integration based on the number of policies opposed. Therefore, they suggested that the quality should be the focal point rather than quantity and they specify the quality by proposing core policy areas. For instance, they considered the Monetary Union as a core policy area and Common Foreign and Security Policy as a non-core policy area (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008). However, Mudde criticizes this approach by arguing that the core policy areas also depend on the perception of the party in question to the core policies. "For example, while opposition to the economic policy of the EU might be secondary to a populist radical right party, it will be primary to a communist party" (Mudde, C. 2012, p. 196).

Another point raised by Taggart (1998) is that Euroscepticism might appear in four ways in political parties. First, *single-issue Eurosceptic parties* exist only to express Euroscepticism and to mobilize electors on the European issue. Second, *protest-based parties with Euroscepticism* have taken an anti-EU position as an adjunct to their general opposition to the functioning of political systems. These parties usually reject the established group of parties like government parties, and they stand outside. Thirdly, he categorizes the *established parties with Eurosceptic position*, and he defines the established parties as "either parties which have been parties of government or parties that have attempted to promote themselves as worthy of support because of their proximity to the government parties" (Taggart, 1998, p. 368). Finally, *Eurosceptical factions* occur when a significant part of an existing party express Euroscepticism while the party overall supports the EU integration.

There are political parties which are Eurosceptic in different degrees but why are these parties Eurosceptic? What are the factors that motivate these attitudes? And the key question is, is it the ideology or is it just a strategic

move? Some scholars state that ideology is the primary factor that shapes a party's position towards European Union and others say strategy motivates parties' attitudes towards the EU.

According to Szczerbiak and Taggart's work in 2001, there is no linear relationship between the right-left dimension and a party's position towards European integration. The crucial factors for them are strategy and party position in domestic politics. They are introducing six propositions concerning Euroscepticism. Firstly, the left-right distribution does not explain why parties oppose European integration. Secondly, party positions in their domestic party systems are related to the expression of Euroscepticism. Government parties or potential government parties tend to be less Eurosceptic, while peripheral parties are more likely to be Eurosceptic. Thirdly, public Euroscepticism does not necessarily correlate with party-based Euroscepticism. The consensus between parties and European institutions may outweigh popular Euroscepticism. Fourthly, the accession process is connected with Euroscepticism. "Euroscepticism is most likely to be stronger in those candidate states where accession is perceived as a more immediate prospect than in those candidate states where it seems more distant" (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2001, p. 13). Fifthly, in the candidate states, soft Euroscepticism is likely to be more evident than hard Euroscepticism. Lastly, compared with the established states, party-based Euroscepticism is more likely to be observed in newly established states.

Although they claim that the ideology is not an essential factor in identifying Eurosceptic parties, in their later works they accept the importance of ideology. They argue that it is more likely to find Euroscepticism -especially hard Euroscepticism- on extreme parties, not among the centrist parties (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2002). Also, they have extended their argument by suggesting that there are two factors determine party positions towards European integration. One of them is the party's ideological profile and values, and the second one is perceived interests of its supporters. In other

words, if the ideological profile and party's values are the determinant factors, that party is an ideology-based party. On the other hand, if interests are the main factors that determine the party position, the party is a strategy-based party. Nonetheless, once again they point out that "it is not possible to read off a party's position from whatever ideological family it belongs to" (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2003, p. 19). They maintain that parties might have broad ideology definitions, and this might cause different outcomes regarding the position. Also, the variety of ideas included in the European Union and the European project are so broad, so that the ideologies coming from different roots can intersect.

Kopecký and Mudde (2002) in their work about Euroscepticism in the East Central European parties, consider ideology as the primary factor which determines a party's position towards the EU and the integration process. In this work, they distinguish between European integration and the European Union and they use two concepts to explain the party attitude; *diffuse* and *specific*. Diffuse support means "support for the general ideas of European integration" whereas specific support means "support for the general practice of European integration" (Kopecký, P., Mudde, C. 2002). As a result of this typology, they introduce four categorizations of party-based Euroscepticism. Firstly, they present the term of *Euroenthusiasts* which means these parties support both EU integration and general ideas of the integration and they are optimistic about the future of the Union. Secondly, they categorize *Eurosceptics* as parties which support the idea of united Europe, but they are pessimistic about the current situation or future of the Union. Thirdly, *Eurorejects* are pessimistic about both the ideas underlying the process of European integration and the European Union mainly because of their ideological stance. Finally, *Europragmatists* do not have a strong opinion on European integration, but in order to meet their pragmatic interests, they appraise the EU positively.

They argue that while ideology determines broad attitudes towards European integration in principle, strategy determines whether a party supports the Union's current trajectory. In other words, "ideology determines a party's support for the ideas underlying the process of European integration, whereas strategy *can* play an important role in explaining support for the EU" (Kopecký, P., Mudde, C. 2002, p. 319). Therefore, ideology is the primary factor explaining the party-based Euroscepticism for both diffuse and specific concepts. Only the Europragmatists do not hold a firm ideological opinion towards the integration.

On the other hand, Chris Flood approaches the topic differently and claims that neither strategy nor ideology explains the party Euroscepticism. He argues that "broad party positions towards the EU should be categorized under descriptive labels which imply no assumptions as to the question of how those positions are reached in terms of ideological or strategic reasoning" (Flood, C., 2002, p. 5). He classifies party-based Euroscepticism in six positions. First, *rejectionist* positions basically reject membership to the EU, or they reject participation in some particular institution or policy. Second, *revisionist* "positions in favor of a return to the state of affairs before some major treaty revision, either (i) in relation to the entire configuration of the EU or (ii) in relation to one or more policy areas" (Flood, 2002, p. 5). Third, *minimalist* positions are happy with the status quo, but they are against further integration. Fourth, *gradualist* positions support further integration, but they prefer to process it slowly. Fifth, *reformist* positions support constructive engagement and express the need to improve existing institutions or practices. Lastly, "*maximalist* positions in favor of pushing forward with the existing process as rapidly as is practicable towards higher levels of integration either (i) of the overall structure or (ii) in some particular policy areas" (Flood, 2002, p. 5).

Nicolo Conti (2003) believes that both strategy and ideology are essential determinants in party Euroscepticism and classifies party attitudes to the European integration into five categories. He takes hard and soft Euroscepticism from Szczerbiak and Taggart and introduces three new categories. *No commitment/no mention* includes parties with no evident attitude to the integration process. *Europeanism* contains parties which act according to their interests, strategies and domestic goal. They commit to integration if it is beneficial to the party. *Identity Europeanism* includes the parties which support further integration even if it produces some cost.

By using this categorization, the author is trying to answer the question of whether attitudes to EU integration are ideological or strategic. He argues that both are possible and says, “party attitudes to EU can be shaped as part of the party ideology, or they can be rather independent from ideology and occur as a result of strategic action when Europe does not have such a dominant position as the party believes” (Conti, N., 2003, p. 20). Also, in his categorization, he considers hard Eurosceptic and identity Europeanist parties as extreme parties and argues that they act accordingly to their ideology. On the other hand, soft Eurosceptic and functional Europeanist parties have more pragmatic attitude, and they operate with strategic purposes. This argument coincides with Szczerbiak’s and Taggart’s argument. As it is stated earlier, they also believe that extreme parties are usually ideologically driven and centrist parties are strategically driven.

Moreover, Conti emphasizes the importance of party position in the domestic party system. Together with the ideology-strategy factor, whether a party is a core or periphery party, or whether it is a government or opposition party plays a significant role in determining party position towards European integration. He maintains that core/periphery and government/opposition factors are not alternative to each other but correlated, and they have combined effects on party preferences. Therefore, he considers them as one factor. Consequently, he argues that all these

factors -strategy/ideology, government/opposition (core/periphery)- co-exist, and they are influential on party position towards the integration.

Jan Rovny (2004) examines party-based Euroscepticism as a two-dimensional process. Firstly, there is the magnitude of Euroscepticism. He uses hard and soft categorization from Szczerbiak and Taggart, and he argues that “the magnitude of Euroscepticism can be seen as a continuum stretching from the limits of soft Euroscepticism to the limits of hard Euroscepticism” (Rovny, 2004, p. 33). Secondly, he tries to find out what motivates the Eurosceptic parties. Like Conti, he also believes the importance of ideology and strategy in party positions, and according to him, they are the fundamental motivations for Eurosceptic parties. Furthermore, he finds a connection between magnitude and motivations, and differently, from Szczerbiak, Taggart, and Conti, he argues that hard Eurosceptic parties tend to be either strongly ideologically or strongly strategically driven.

Sofia Vasilopoulou (2009) highlights the importance of ideology on Eurosceptic attitudes and examines extreme right nationalist parties’ approach to the European integration. She presents two key research questions in her article: “how do extreme right nationalist parties respond to the European integration?” and “how is the ideological identity of these parties connected to their position on Europe?” The author argues that the extreme right has been understood as a monolithic entity with regards to its position on the European integration and it is believed that these parties are utterly oppose to the Union. However, she rejects this viewpoint and claims that “extreme right nationalist parties actually display different levels of Euroscepticism” (Vasilopoulou, 2009, p. 4).

Vasilopoulou develops Kopecký and Mudde’s (2002) work on diffuse and specific support for European integration and conceptualizes party positions in Europe as a three-fold dimension; *principle*, *practice* and *future* of

integration. She defines principle as the desire for cooperation at a European level, practice as a balance between intergovernmental and supranational governing of the Union, and future as the willingness for an ever-closer union.

By using these dimensions, she introduces three types of Euroscepticism which the extreme right nationalist parties can adopt. First, *rejecting Euroscepticism*. These parties are against all aspects of the European integration, and they refuse principle, practice, and future of the integration. They have a strong anti-supranationalist and national self-determination rhetoric, they are in favor of withdrawal from the EU and naturally against any power transfer to a supranational entity. Second, *conditional Euroscepticism*. According to these parties, the principle of cooperation in Europe at a multilateral level has benefits for the country, however unification may damage the interests and sovereignty of the member states. They support the practice of integration provided that national sovereignty is not jeopardized, however reject practice and future of the integration. Lastly, *compromising Eurosceptic* parties are in favor of principle and practice of the Union. According to them, a degree of power transfer to the supranational level is not harmful as long as the interests and sovereignty of the members are guaranteed. However, they do not go as far as to advocate an ever-closer union.

Vasilopoulou contributes the ideology vs. strategy discussion in another direction. She applies socialist-capitalist axis and authoritarian-libertarian axis on her work instead of the right-left distribution. She claims that socialist-capitalist axis shows party positions on economic issues whereas authoritarian-libertarian axis displays non-economic issues like values, traditions and the structure of the community, and these two dimensions demonstrate actors' positions on major issues. Starting from this point of view, the author makes two hypotheses. First, deriving the from the authoritarian-libertarian axis;

A party supporting highly authoritarian social arrangements of the society and maintaining a very narrow and exclusive idea of citizenship is more likely to oppose European integration compared to a party supporting less authoritarian values (Vasilopoulou, 2009, p. 14).

Second, deriving from the socialist-capitalist axis;

A party supporting market allocation of resources is less likely to oppose European integration compared to a party that supports strong egalitarian distribution of resources (Vasilopoulou, 2009, p. 14).

According to her findings, rejecting Euroscepticism is closely related to authoritarianism and economy does not play a role here. On the other hand, parties that avoid from a total rejection of European integration adopt centralist/capitalist economic policies. Consequently, parties that reject European integration tend to be highly authoritarian whereas, compromising Eurosceptic parties show much less authoritarianism.

As a result, this literature review demonstrates that there are agreements and disagreements among scholars about the party-based Euroscepticism. It is clear that academicians have reached a consensus that domestic party systems are essential factors to understand a party's position towards European integration. On the other hand, they do not meet on common grounds about the effects of strategy and ideology on party attitudes. Although they agree that both of them are important, some of them highlight the significance of strategy, while others lay weight on ideology. Therefore, further research and testing are required to gain a better understanding of the motivations of party-based Euroscepticism. This thesis aims to contribute to these studies as a further research by examining two radical right parties and the driving force behind their Euroscepticism.

1.1 Characteristics of Radical Right Parties

According to many academics, the rise and fall of the radical right parties are in waves. The radical right party literature also has followed these waves, and when the parties were on the rise, the interest aroused in the literature. This section will be an overview of the literature of radical right parties and will analyze the main features of these parties.

The interest and studies towards radical right parties bring many disagreements among academics. For instance, while some scholars argue that these parties exhibit similar behavior regardless of the domestic politics of their countries, others claim that those parties should be studied as country-specific cases. However, according to Mudde (1996), studying these parties as country-specific cases makes them incomparable. Nevertheless, the number of comparative studies in the field has increased recently. For example, the rising radical right-wing parties in Germany, Italy, England, France, and other European countries have begun to be compared with each other (Van der Brug and Fennema, 2009; Caiani and Kröll, 2017; Stockemer, 2017; Breeze, 2019). Similarly, in the other parts of the world, such as the American continent, focus on the radical right-wing parties has increased. However, the literature failed to address radical right-wing trends as a whole and developed in a dispersed and inefficient way (Mudde, 2000).

In addition, there is no consensus on how to define a radical right party. Since these studies were country-specific, it has not been possible to make a definition covering these parties as a party family. Terminological confusion makes this even more difficult. Many different concepts have been proposed in the radical right concept such as extreme right, far right, neofascism, new right, new radical right and right-wing populism (Bassin, 2015; Akkerman, Lange, and Rooduijn, 2016; Campani and Lazaridis,

2017; Rydgren, 2018). For instance, the foremost radical right-wing parties in Europe such as the French National Front, Austrian Freedom Party, the Swiss Peoples Party, and the British National Front are considered as populist parties (Betz, 1993; Mudde, 2007), neo-fascists (Griffin, 1991; Eatwell, 2006), extreme right parties (Carter, 2005), or radical right parties (Rydgren, 2018). As Backes (2018) highlights, these party groups exist in a fluid state or in grey areas, which creates a challenge in making a clear identification. As this thesis aims to compare and contrast the two successful Eurosceptic right-wing fringe parties of two countries with different levels of integration, and although they are included into different concepts in the literature such as far-right, ultra-nationalism, extreme right, or populism, from now on they will be called radical right parties (RRPs) in order to avoid this confusion. Indeed, as discussed in the following chapters, these two parties have many commonalities, and they perfectly fit the grey zone in the literature with a mixture of populism, nationalism, and extremism. Another reason for calling these parties radical right is the clear separation of radical and extreme right in German law. While radical right parties can take part in the politics, extreme right-wing parties are not tolerated, and the Federal Constitutional Court has the right to ban those parties. Seeing that the AfD is the opposition party in the German Bundestag, it would be more accurate to call them radical right parties. However, as noted earlier, this distinction in the literature is not as clear as in German politics, and they are used interchangeably occasionally.

Moreover, there is no consensus as to what features these parties have. While some definitions include one or two core features, others contain eight to ten different features. Mudde (2000) states that there are three approaches on how many characteristics a radical right party has to have. Firstly, the quantitative approach claims that all features are equally important, and there is a specific number of features that the parties have to include. As for the second approach, what matters is the quality of the features; thus, some

of them are 'more equal' than the others. The third approach combines the first two approaches. For instance, there should be at least two features, and one of them has to be an exclusionist feature such as xenophobia or authoritarianism (Mudde, 2000). In his study, Mudde (1996) finds out that there are twenty-six different definitions of right-wing extremism with fifty-eight different features, and only five of them are mentioned by at least half of the authors. These are nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy, and the strong state. In the figure below, Carter examined the selected definitions of right-wing extremism/radicalism and found out whether they contained the features Mudde had brought forward. Also, she added other features that draw attention in the alternative definitions (Carter, 2018).

Figure 1: Properties Included in Definitions of Right-Wing Extremism/Radicalism.

	Strong state/ Authoritarianism	Nationalism	Racism	Xenophobia	Anti-democracy	Other
Ignazi (1992, 2002)	*			*	*	–
Betz (1994)			*	*	*	Populism; free market; smaller state
Eatwell (2000)		*	*	*	*	–
Minkenberg (2000, 2001, 2003)		*	*	*	*	Anti-establishment; populism
Schain et al. (2002)		*	*	*	*	Populism
Heinisch (2003)	*		*	*	*	Economic liberalism
Betz & Johnson (2004)		^a	^a	*	*	Populism
Carter (2005)					*	–
Givens (2005)		*		*		Anti-establishment
Rydgren (2005)	^b	*	*	*	*	Anti-establishment; populism
Kitschelt (2007)		^c	^c	^c	^c	Market-liberal economic position
Mudde (2007)	*	*	^d	*	*	Populism
Copsey (2008)	*	*	*	*	*	Populism; charismatic leadership
Hainsworth (2008)	*	*	*	*	*	–
Skenderovic (2009)	*	*	*	*	*	Populism

Notes:

^aBetz and Johnson argue that the radical right seeks 'to transform liberal democracy into an ethnocratic regime, which gives supremacy to the interests of "the people", defined in terms of a narrow conception of citizenship' (Betz and Johnson, *op. cit.*, Ref. 32, p. 313).

^bRydgren considers authoritarianism (which includes an emphasis on law and order and family values) an accompanying characteristic rather than a defining one (Rydgren, *op. cit.*, Ref. 39, p. 433, note 1).

^cKitschelt argues 'radical right parties either explicitly reject democracy (regardless of their stance on xenophobia and racism), or they embrace democracy, but make xenophobic mobilisation against immigrants and insistence on a dominant national cultural paradigm obligatory for all residents the central planks of their policies' (Kitschelt, 'Growth and persistence of the radical right', *op. cit.*, Ref. 30, p. 1178).

^dMudde explains that nativism demands that non-natives are to be excluded, and that the basis for this exclusion can be ethnic, racial or religious, but will always have a cultural component (Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 13, p. 19). This comes close to a definition of 'new racism' in which groups are distinguished and separated on the basis of culture rather than race.

Source: Carter, 2018, p.163

As it is seen in the figure, these features still dominate the literature. In this thesis, since the two parties' attitudes towards the European Union will be examined according to their ideological and strategic behaviors, instead of addressing all these characteristics, the prominent radical right features that

affect the approach to the EU of the MHP and AfD will be discussed. Together with these five features that Mudde put forward, populist discourses of the parties will be taken into consideration. While examining these features, it will be observed that all these features are interrelated and interactive.

Firstly, nationalism and nation are vitally important terms for the radical right parties and nationalism is included in most of the definitions according to the table; therefore, it is worth to examine these terms and their meaning to the RRP. Smith defines the nation as “a named human community residing in a perceived homeland, and having common myths and a shared history, a distinct public culture, and common laws and customs for all members” and nationalism is “an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential ‘nation’” (Smith, 2010, p. 9). Caiani and Kröll (2017) argue that a nation constructed in three ways. First of all, it is constructed based on opposition to ‘other’ and this could be my nation versus other nations or members of my nation versus non-members. Secondly, the nation is constructed as community with a sense of belonging based on identity and implies a homogeneous society by ignoring social, ethnic and cultural differences. Lastly, it is constructed as sovereign, therefore globalization and EU integration are seen as dangers to the nation-state, because they reveal non-native elements and threaten sovereignty (Caiani and Kröll, 2017).

Many scholars lay stress on the importance of the nation and nationalism for the RRP. For instance, Minkenberg defines the radical right parties primarily by ultra-nationalism and populism and argues that this is a myth of a homogeneous nation that puts the nation before the individual and his/her civil rights (Minkenberg, 2003). Similarly, Eatwell indicates nationalism as the core doctrine of the RRP. As for the extreme right

parties, he separates liberal nationalism and holistic nationalism and explains while liberal nationalism is a rational, individualist and pluralist concept, holistic nationalism stresses conversion, expulsion or worse of the 'other' and defense of a traditional conception of the community (Eatwell, 2000). In fact, most of the radical right parties define membership of the nation in ethnic terms and advocate exclusion or expulsion policies for non-members (Carter, 2018). These parties, with an ethnically-motivated understanding of nationalism, attach importance to a common culture, language, ethnic origin, religion, and history and believe that these concepts form the identity of people and connect them with their communities.

Also, the RRPs give importance to the idea of the nation-state, its borders, and national sovereignty. Nation-state maintains the idea that each nation should have its own state, and each state should have only one nation (Mudde, 2010). According to the RRPs, national borders and the state should be equal to the dominant ethnic group, national preference should be supported, and that the homogeneous nation should be idealized (Bar-on, 2018). Moreover, the nation is constructed as sovereign and should act independently. However, the legitimacy of the state depends on its representation of the nation (De Cleen and Stavrakakis, 2017), and concepts like a shared territory, culture, history, and language provide legitimacy for the nation's sovereignty. Therefore, the radical right parties are anti-globalization because of their understanding of nationalism. They believe that globalization can only be achieved through the destruction of ethnic, cultural, and religious differences between nations. Furthermore, globalization not only leads to the loss of identities of people but also imposes restrictions on the sovereignty of the national state (Della Porta, Caiani and Wagemann, 2012). The RRPs consider themselves as the only force that manages to protect the victims of globalization, and they blame the international and supranational institutions such as the European Union, the IMF, and the UN.

Secondly, racism is also a feature of the radical right that frequently appears in the definitions. According to Miles and Phizacklea, “racism is the belief in natural and hereditary differences between races, with the central belief, that one race is superior to the others” (Miles and Phizacklea, 1979, as cited in Mudde, 1995, p. 211). However, this biological understanding of racism has begun to change after the 1980s and has been replaced by cultural racism or new racism. New racism “...has replaced race with ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, lifestyle and so on to construct a myriad of reasons to legitimize exclusion, often justified by the need to protect the majoritarian morality, nation and culture” (Campani and Pajnik, 2017, p. 182). The contemporary radical right mostly embraces the cultural racism, and this way, they are able to use racist rhetoric without being stigmatized as being racists. They lay stress on the superiority of one group over another on the basis of culture rather than race. By emphasizing the differences in the name of ‘respect for diversity,’ the RRP’s reproduce hierarchy between cultures (Campani and Pajnik, 2017).

Thirdly, xenophobia is another characteristic of the radical right-wing parties which goes hand in hand with racism, but they are the same. As it was indicated above, racism maintains a hierarchical perspective of difference; however, xenophobia refers to “...an indiscriminate fear for all that is foreign and strange” (Davies and Jackson, 2008). Unlike racism, xenophobia maintains that different cultures and societies embrace different values, which are neither inferior nor superior. Yet, they are incompatible and incomparable with each other. Thus, the difference is tolerable only when it kept distant from cultural boundaries. Although there are a few radical right-wing parties that do not include xenophobia in their agenda, the majority of these parties have xenophobic behavior. In fact, Rydgren argues that xenophobia has been one of the most important elements for the emergence of the RRP’s (Rydgren, 2003). These parties are vehemently

opposed to the mixing of cultures and ethnicities, and they favor ethnopluralism, which supports the idea of cultural racism. “Right-wing populism construes the people as a culturally or ethnically bounded collectivity with a shared and distinctive way of life and sees that collectivity as threatened by outside groups or forces (including, of course, ‘internal outsiders’: those living on the inside who are seen as belonging to the outside)” (Brubaker, 2019). Therefore, in the eyes of the RRP people have to be kept separated in order to maintain the unique national characteristics and that mixing of different ethnicities will result in only the destruction of cultures (Rydgren, 2005). For this reason, anti-immigrant and anti-multicultural discourses are an essential part of their agenda. While migration has always been a hot topic for the RRP, it has come to prominence, especially after the recent migrant crisis. RRP consider immigrants as a major threat to the national identity and homogeneity of the country and they are in favor of strict immigration controls, repatriation, and policies that prioritize the nation in employment and social benefits (Givens, 2005). They reject “...the possibility of universal rights and the negation of the possibility of ethnically diverse communities living peacefully side by side in the same society” (Betz and Johnson, 2004, p. 324). Their solution to the social changes which come with the immigration is to limit the number of newcomers and if possible, the assimilation of those already living in the country. Consequently, the RRP argue that the ideal form of unity is the existence of a single culture within a nation-state, and differences pose a threat to this unity.

The fourth feature of the radical right-wing parties is that they exhibit anti-democratic behaviors. They oppose the key elements of a liberal democracy like the protection of minorities, and they prioritize majority rights and interests over the minorities which could be defined by religion, ethnicity, immigration status, sexuality, or gender. Mudde (1995) explains the anti-democratic idea as a combination of anti-pluralism and a rejection of the

fundamental equality of the citizen. Carter (2005) highlights the importance of anti-democratic sentiments for the RRP and argues that the defining feature of these parties is the anti-democratic behavior, and all other features are manifestations of the higher concept of anti-democratic sentiment. Similarly, Minkenberg (2003) maintains that right-wing radicalism is an ideology directed against freedom, equality, individualism, and universalism, which are the central values of liberal and pluralist democracy. However, there is a distinction between traditional and contemporary radical right parties. In contradiction to the 1950s and 1960s, the new radical right does not reflect the ideas of interwar fascism and do not completely reject democratic values (Minkenberg, 2003). Most of the RRP today claim that they treasure fundamental principles of democracy. Nevertheless, according to Carter, all parties in the family reject or oppose some or all the values of democracy and “any opposition to, or rejection or undermining of, the values of democracy, or of the values and the procedures and institutions of democracy renders a party anti-democratic” (Carter, 2018, p. 170). Anti-democracy, therefore, is one of the defining features of the RRP even though they have evolved over time.

Mudde’s last feature of the RRP is the notion of a strong state which is consist of three sub-features; anti-pluralism, law and order, and militarism. As pointed out above, anti-pluralism is also an indicator of anti-democratic behaviors which verifies the interrelation of these characteristics. Moreover, RRP are a proponent of law and order, and they seek authority through a strong police force. For those who violate the rules, they demand a strong punishment such as much higher prison sentences and the death penalty. As the name suggests, militarism is a call for a strong army with a lot of manpower, newest technology, and a considerable amount of equipment for the national interests (Mudde, 1995). However, recent literature associates these features with authoritarianism as there is an apparent difference between the traditional and new RRP. Heinisch, for example, argues that

these parties have an authoritarian conception of the state and “the 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). Similarly, Copsey (2008) refers to the importance of strong, ultra-nationalist government, and traditional values such as law and order, authority, community, work, and family. Also, in his recent works, Mudde argues that to qualify a party as radical right, it needs to display authoritarian tendencies that is an aggressive stance towards political enemies. He highlights authoritarianism as a more appropriate feature and explains it as the belief in a strictly ordered society with stronger law and order policies, more police force with greater competencies, higher sentences and fewer rights for criminals, and more discipline in families and schools (Mudde, 2017). Moreover, he states that a radical right-wing party does not have to be anti-democratic but goes against some of the fundamental values and principles of liberal democracy (Mudde, 2007), such as tolerance, pluralism, and the protection of minorities and their rights. Therefore, authoritarianism, together with a desire to a strong state, is included in the defining features of RRP.

The sixth feature of the RRP, which also constitutes an intersection between two parties’ attitudes towards the European Union is populism. Mudde defines populism as “a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people” (Mudde, 2007, p. 23) and thin ideologies like populism might be combined with other thin or full ideologies such as nationalism, socialism or ecologism (Mudde, 2004; Stanley, 2008). As Mudde argues, the core ideology of populism is the Manichean distinction between the pure people and the corrupt elite (Mudde, 2007; Müller, 2016; Lochocki, 2018 and Rucht, 2019). Populism maintains that the economic, political and cultural elites are

outsiders, or they are on the top, and those elites are isolated from the way of life of the people, their culture, values and the economic struggles (Brubaker, 2019). Right-wing populism claims that only they represent the true will of the pure people, and the corrupt elite is self-centered, selfish, and immoral. Therefore, populism creates the concept of ‘others.’ The RRPs tend to other and mark aliens, elites, established parties, and international or supranational institutes as outsiders. Moghissi says RRPs target specific groups and cause social division (Moghissi, 2019) and this social division which is based on national identification underlines the difference between natives and non-natives or “us” versus “them” cleavage (Daigle, Neulen and Hofeman, 2019). Generally, “us” refers to the pure people, citizens of the nation, and “them” refers to the outsiders such as foreigners and immigrants as well as the political, business and cultural elite. According to the RRPs, the social changes linked to immigration and European integration are a threat to the people and cultural values, and established parties are responsible of these changes, they even have perpetuated the changes with their migration policies and pro-European stances (Lochocki, 2018). RRPs argue that the elites in power ally with the foreigners because they benefit from immigration as it keeps wages low. They also claim that political elites seek to create new votes by collaborating with immigrants who benefit from the welfare state (Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019).

Consequently, various definitions and features of the RRPs have been suggested, however, nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy, call for a strong state/authoritarianism, and populism are the most essential features in the literature. In addition, as it is seen, these characteristics are quite convenient for defining the radical right-wing parties as a party family because of their interrelatedness and relatedness. Besides, these features state the Eurosceptic behaviors of these parties as it will be discussed in the forthcoming chapters.

CHAPTER 2

THE NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY

2.1 History of the MHP

Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) is considered as the most significant representative of the right-wing spectrum in Turkey. This chapter firstly will present a brief historical background of the MHP. Then the party's political position and ideology will be discussed according to the six RRP features. Finally, a comprehensive study will be carried out in the party's Eurosceptic discourse.

The MHP's roots go back to the Nation Party (Millet Partisi, MP) which was established in 1948. When the party was closed in 1953, one of the founders of the MP, Osman Bölükbaşı established the Republican Nation Party (Cumhuriyetçi Millet Partisi, CMP) in 1954. Previously established Peasants' Party of Turkey (Türkiye Köylü Partisi, TKP) joined to CMP in 1958, and the new name of the party was stated as the Republican Farmers Nation Party (Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi, CKMP). During the 1950s, the party had a populist, conservative and nationalist stance, and mainly supported by peasants and middle classes (Arıkan, 1998). In 1965, Alparslan Türkeş who was a former military officer became the leader of the party and changed its name to the Nationalist Action Party in 1969.

As the charismatic leader of the party, Türkeş was an important factor that shaped the party's ideology and organizational structure (Başkan, 2006). Under the leadership of him, the MHP had strengthened its nationalism structure, and the party had been identified with him. Further, his nationalist stance, militarist vision, and Islamic discourse had become more visible in

both party declarations and actions. Moreover, Türkeş was declared “Başbuğ,” means “the leader” which is a title like “führer” (Balcı, 2011).

During the 1970s, the party has adopted a quite radical stance, especially against leftist students, intellectuals and cosmopolitan values (Yavuz, 2002). Furthermore, the party developed close relations with the extreme right organizations like Patriotic Turkish Organization and Struggle Against Communism Clubs which were opposed to liberalism, capitalism, and communism. These organizations also were in a violent tendency, and the party ideology was shaped by these features (Çınar and Arıkan, 2002). As Arıkan states, Türkeş’s MHP had been creating an enemy such as communism and Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK) in order to unite elements of the extreme right and to find itself a legitimate place in Turkish politics (Arıkan, 1998). Similarly, Yavuz argues, the MHP always defined itself as the guardian of Turkey against imaginary or real threats and, until 1980 military coup, the enemies were the Soviet Union, the Turkish left and the Alevi community in Turkey (Yavuz, 2002). Especially the youth wing of the party which was known as Grey Wolves were considered as heroes in the violent struggle between leftists and rightists (Avcı, 2011). The violence has reached its peak in the late 1970s and several professors, politicians, and journalists known as leftist, became political victims (Heper and İnce, 2006).

In 1975, the Party was invited to join “Nationalist Front” (Milliyetçi Cephe) government with Justice Party (Adalet Partisi, AP) and National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP). According to Çınar and Arıkan, although the party achieved to attract marginalized middle-class voters in 1977 general elections, it remained as a single-issue party with anti-communist propaganda and failed to gain broader support (Çınar and Arıkan, 2002). The 1980 military coup banned the MHP together with all other Turkish political parties and, many MHP members and supporters were imprisoned. After the coup, the party was re-found by the ex-members under the name

of Conservative Party (Muhafazakar Parti, MP). However, since the National Security Council led only three parties to join the election, the MHP could not take part in the first election after the military coup in 1983. In 1985, the party changed its name to the Nationalist Task Party (Milli Çalışma Partisi, MÇP), and after two years, when the political restrictions on the ex-party leaders were removed, Alparslan Türkeş became the party leader again. However, the party failed to pass the 10% election threshold in the 1987 elections and could not take part in the parliament. In order to pass the threshold, the MÇP allied with the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, RP) for the 1991 elections (Çınar and Arıkan, 2002). As a result, the MÇP had 19 seats in the parliament, and the name of the party was changed again to the Nationalist Action Party. In the 1995 elections, the MHP could not pass the 10% threshold by itself and could not send a representative to the parliament. Table 1 illustrates MHP votes in Turkish elections between 1961 and 1995.

Table 1: The MHP Votes and seats in Turkish Elections Between 1961-1995

	Elections	Votes (%)	Number of Seats
CKMP	1961	14	54
CKMP	1965	2,2	11
MHP	1969	3	1
MHP	1973	3,4	3
MHP	1977	6,4	16
MÇP	1987	2,9	-
MÇP+RP	1991	16,9	19 (MÇP) + 43 (RP)
MHP	1995	8,2	-

Table 1: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (Turkish Statistical Institute), 2019

While the MHP was struggling with the domestic politics in an attempt to get a seat in the parliament, the world was undergoing significant changes. In the early 1990s, the collapse of the Soviet Union prompted the party to look for a new identity, and Türkeş pushed the party to pursue a more

centrist way (Öniş, 2003). However, the crucial shift came when Devlet Bahçeli became the leader of the party in 1997, after the death of the legendary leader Alparslan Türkeş.

During the first years of his leadership, Bahçeli focused on creating a new image for the party. He aimed to capture a central stance in the party, to reduce the extremism, and to maintain a non-violent position (Avcı, 2011). Heper highlights that Bahçeli's MHP "...left behind its anti-capitalist, anti-West orientation, and took effective steps to cleanse itself of its militant youth group..." and party's Islamist-nationalist group which was separated itself and formed a new party under the name of the Grand Union Party (Büyük Birlik Partisi, BTP) (Heper, 2002). Moreover, as the most radical step, Bahçeli cut the parties ties with the Ülkü Ocakları (Idealist Hearths). Ülkü Ocakları is the youth branch of the party which had a militarist and ultra-nationalist ideology, and a reputation of involvement in criminal activities during the 1970s. The number of Ülkü Ocakları was reduced and gathered under the roof of a foundation (Çınar and Arıkan, 2002).

Also, Bahçeli aimed to change the party's reputation in the eyes of the public. He took over the party's control, tightened ideological standards, and sought ways to reconnect with rural, conservative voters especially in the central Anatolia; hence the party connected urban and rural nationalist voters (Çınar and Arıkan, 2002). As Yavuz points out, in the 1999 elections, the party was introduced as an alternative to other parties in the Turkish political system, and conservative electorates turned their faces to the MHP in order to show their dissatisfaction with other parties (Yavuz, 2002). Similarly, Öniş argues that "... the MHP's success to a certain extent reflected an element of the 'protest vote' and a general disillusionment with the mainstream political parties" (Öniş, 2003, p. 32). As a result of Bahçeli's new policy, the MHP passed the 10% threshold by a large margin in the 1999 elections and became the second largest party in the parliament as a participant to the coalition government with Democratic Left Party

(Demokratik Sol Parti, DSP) and Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, ANAP).

Another reason why the MHP's electorate vote boosted is Turkey's struggle with the PKK. Because of increasing terror attacks in the 1990s by the PKK, there was a significant rise in Turkish nationalism (Arikan, 2002). Yavuz argues that long-standing Kurdish separatist movement has influenced people and they voted for the MHP out of fear of Kurdish nationalism (Yavuz, 2002). Also, Aras and Bacik indicate that the MHP has succeeded in convincing people that it is the only party that can solve the problem of terrorism (Aras and Bacik, 2000). It is important to keep in mind that the Kurdish movement is a crucial factor in shaping the politics of the party and that this problem is always a priority for the party.

The coalition government, composed of the DSP, the ANAP, and the MHP, is considered to be the most harmonious coalition in Turkish politics, although it includes opposing poles, left-wing and right-wing parties (Başkan, 2005; Heper, 2002; Öniş, 2003). According to Başkan, the reason why the coalition works in such a consensus is that party leaders kept interests of the country ahead of party interests (Başkan, 2005). In fact, Devlet Bahçeli has repeatedly stated that Turkey's interests take precedence over the interests of the party; thus, the coalition government should work in coordination, and the leaders have to put up with each other (Sabah, 1999, as cited in Heper and İnce, 2006). Considering the violent past of the party, Bahçeli's attitude, which demonstrates the change in the functioning of the party, is quite surprising. Actually, as Başkan and Öniş argue, an extreme right party like the MHP usually faces a dilemma. On the one hand, they have to take some radical decisions to satisfy their voter base; on the other hand; they have to work in harmony with the coalition partners by realpolitik's nature (Başkan, 2006, Öniş, 2003). While dealing with this dilemma, Bahçeli did not display the same attitude about Öcalan's death sentence, despite the image of a leader always in favor of reconciliation.

One of the most critical tasks of the DSP-ANAP-MHP coalition government was to prepare the National Program for the adaption of the EU Acquis which requires new laws and amendments particularly in the field of human rights. Considering the situation of Öcalan, among these requirements, the most controversial one was the abolishment of the death penalty. During the 1999 election campaign, Bahçeli promised that Öcalan would be executed if the MHP come into power (CNN Türk, 2014). As it was mentioned above, this kind of approach to the PKK and the Kurdish issues has led the MHP to achieve such success. Therefore, Bahçeli could not risk his electorate by being in favor of the abolishment of the death penalty. Nevertheless, despite the resistance of MHP, the death penalty was abolished in peacetime with the other coalition partners' efforts. This dilemma that the MHP faced and Bahçeli's moderate attitude led to a massive loss of votes in the 2002 elections. According to Başkan, supporters of the MHP complained that the party did not keep their promises for the sake of harmony, and they made too many concessions and began to move away from the nationalist stand (Başkan, 2005). Thus, the party lost its traditional conservative and rural voter base to the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) (Eligür, 2007), and it could not pass the 10% threshold, therefore, remained outside the parliament in the 2002 elections.

In the 2007 elections, the party took its place in the parliament as the third party, and by achieving to pass the 10% threshold, it managed to stay in the parliament as an opposition party until the 2018 elections. In this period, the MHP's election campaigns mainly focused on criticizing the AKP government, which has been in power since 2002. In the 2007 election campaign, the MHP concentrated on criticizing the AKP over the PKK attacks and the demands of the European Union on Armenian and Cyprus issues (Eligür, 2007). Migdalovitz argues that MHP owes its success to its firm stand on these issues (Migdalovitz, 2007). The electorate who voted for the AKP on the previous elections voted for the MHP in 2007 elections

because of the dissatisfaction with the AKP on the PKK and the EU issues (Eligür, 2007). Thus, the MHP became an opposition party with 14,3% of the vote.

Similarly, in the 2011 election campaigns, the MHP's principal focus was the Kurdish issue and the AKP's Kurdish initiative which provides further encouragement to Kurdish separatism and terrorism (Aydın-Düzgit, 2012). Also, the party has continued to criticize the AKP-led democratization reforms within the EU accession process (Aslan-Akman, 2012). According to Başkan and Güney, in this election, the number of seats the MHP get was quite critical (Başkan and Güney, 2012). The ruling party, AKP, desired to gain enough seats in the parliament to make constitutional amendments unilaterally. Therefore, the AKP attacked the MHP during the election campaign in order to make it fail to pass the threshold (Başkan and Güney, 2012). Consequently, the MHP got 12,9% of votes with 53 seats and achieved a lower success than 2007 elections.

During the 2015 election campaign, while the MHP continued criticizing the AKP over the Kurdish initiative (Başkan-Canyaş, Canyaş, and Gümrükçü, 2016), it also harshly criticized the corruption scandal which included illegal recordings of conversations between high-level government officials (Bardakçı, 2016). Moreover, the party was strongly opposed to the AKP's intention to introduce the presidential system and put an end to the parliamentary system. In the declaration, it is highlighted that the party is opposed to presidential or similar systems which are dangerous to fundamental rights and freedoms, and might lead to authoritarianism (MHP, 2015a, p. 72). As a result, MHP attracted the dissatisfied AKP voters in June 2015 elections and increased its votes from 12.9% to 16.3% (Bardakçı, 2016).

However, according to the election results, no political party could reach the number of 276 seats required to be the sole ruler, and the coalition option

came into question. Since the MHP focused on the Kurdish initiative, corruption scandal and presidential system in the campaign, it put these questions on the table as its conditions in the coalition meetings (Başkan-Canyaş, Canyaş, and Gümrükçü, 2016). These conditions were the mainstays of the AKP; therefore, a coalition government with AKP and MHP was off the table although they were closer than other parties in the political spectrum. Also, Bahçeli rejected joining or supporting a coalition which includes the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP) (Onuş 2015) and declared that his party is ready to take the responsibility as the main opposition party (Bianet, 2015). As a consequence, the parties failed to form a coalition government, and it is decided to go for an early election on November 1. According to Sayarı, Bahçeli's decision was irrational (Sayarı, 2016) because politicians tend to win elections and stay in power (Lave and Schofield, 1990 as cited in Sayarı, 2016). Sayarı suggests that two reasons might be behind Bahçeli's attitude; first, he assumed that the upward trend in the MHP's vote would continue; second, he did not want to be a part of a new coalition because of the previous failure (Sayarı, 2016). Nonetheless, on November 1, the MHP lost its votes to the AKP and got 13% of votes with a lower success.

Despite all of these, electoral mathematics forced two parties to form an alliance in the 2018 elections. The AKP and the MHP formed "people's alliance" (Cumhur İttifakı), and they did not only participate elections together, but they also had a joint president candidacy: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Both parties had their reasons for this alliance. On the one hand, the AKP could get extra votes at the parliamentary elections and Erdoğan could guarantee his presidency, and the MHP, on the other hand, could pass the threshold even if it could not get at least 10% of the votes (Pitel, 2018). In the election, the people's alliance raced against "the nation alliance" which consists of four opposition parties, the Republican People's Party (CHP), the İyi Party (Good Party, IP), the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP)

and the Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti, DP). The people's alliance got 53,66% of the votes thereby, the MHP joint the government after a long break. Table 2 illustrates MHP votes in Turkish elections between 1999 and 2018.

Table 2: The MHP Votes and seats in Turkish Elections Between 1999-2018

	Elections	Votes (%)	Number of Seats
MHP	1999	18	129
MHP	2002	8,4	-
MHP	2007	14,3	71
MHP	2011	13	53
MHP	2015 June	16,29	80
MHP	2015 November	11,90	40
MHP	2018	11,10	49

Source: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (Turkish Statistical Institute), 2019

2.2 Political Position and Ideology of the MHP

Since its establishment, the Nationalist Action Party is considered as an ultra-nationalist and conservative right-wing party in Turkish politics. The principle of loyalty to the leader and rigid hierarchical discipline were prominent among the fascist tendencies of the movement (Findley, 2011). Although the party's ideology has always been viewed as the far-right, as it was stated before, under the leadership of Devlet Bahçeli, MHP has developed a more moderate perspective. Nevertheless, MHP has been the most successful nationalist party in Turkish politics. Apart from nationalism, like the other RRP, the MHP embraces racism, xenophobia, anti-democratic attitudes, the notion of a strong state, and populism. Also, the party uses themes that are comparable to the European radical rights parties; therefore, they have similarities in many ways with those parties in

Europe. “The traditional platforms of nationalism, ethnocentrism, the protection of territory, and a focus on the struggle between nations can easily be detected within the MHP” (Avcı, 2011, p. 437). Arıkan also finds similarities between the MHP and European radical right parties and argues that both sides have successfully covered their fascist ideology with a conservative language. That is why he calls the MHP ‘an iron hand in a velvet glove’ (Arıkan, 1998).

In order to understand the ideological foundation of the MHP, it is essential to consider the Nine Lights Doctrine proposed by Alparslan Türkeş in 1967. According to this doctrine, there are nine principles; nationalism, idealism, moralism, communitarianism, positivism, peasantism, freedom and personalism, progressivism and populism, industrialism, and technologism. The doctrine is mainly based on Turkish nationalism shaped by the Islamic religion and comprises a basis for the MHP’s ideology ever since. It was a doctrine that “eliminates all liberal-capitalism, communism, westernism, and imitationism as that are against the history and traditions of the Turks” (Arıkan, 1998, p. 128). The doctrine proposes an alternative way to the capitalism and communism for the Turkish society, and this alternative way is unique for the Turkish nation because the core principle of the doctrine is the Turkish nation rather than the individual or the notion of class (Başkan, 2006). This third way selects Turkishness as the baseline and provides a powerful Turkey with strong leadership, discipline, and sacrifice; however, it commits to parliamentary, multi-party democracy (Landau, 1982). Therefore, Landau describes this ideology as “...a typical ‘best for everyone’ ideology, with obvious emphasis on nationalism, idealism and morals, in a populist vein” (Landau, 1982, p. 602).

This chapter will analyze the MHP’s party program within the context of the radical right-wing party characteristics mentioned in the RRP’s literature

chapter and examine its political position by focusing mostly on its election declarations and statements of the party members.

Firstly, the Nationalist Action Party gives the greatest priority to the nationalism. According to a statement in the party's 2018 declaration, the party believes that nationalism is the most significant intellectual force that will enable a nation to achieve its goals of solidarity, improvement, and catching the era (MHP, 2018, p. 45). Also, the party states that they never accept any goal which does not include the nation, and they understand nationalism as a political management project applicable in every aspect of life. Nationalism is so crucial to the party that there is even a definition in the 1999 Party Program;

Nationalism, on the other hand, is the collection of ideas and sensibilities which aims to develop the sense of belonging to the Turkish Nation and taking its exclusive qualities as a fundamental reference in interpreting the world and the developments. Among the elements of the Nationalist thought system, the notions of national identity, national language, national culture, national sovereignty, national state and solidarity are very important. Our nationalism, accepts giving a meaning to its existence and securing its future as the fundamental objective, and sees every necessary for this purpose (MHP, 1999, p. 28).

The MHP supports the idea that the Turkish nation includes all the living things within the borders of the Turkish Republic, and they share a common culture, history, and language. Bahçeli says that “our common denominator is the love of the country, the flag, and the nation, our common value is to speak in Turkish and our common point is to say, ‘how happy is a man who says I am a Turk!’” (Bahçeli, 2007). One of the campaign pledges of the party was that a national cartoon industry would be developed to help children to assimilate cultural values (MHP, 2015a; 213, 2018;100). The party's ideology, the nationalist action, is described by the party as the will to maintain and perpetuate the understanding of one flag, one nation, one state, and one language (MHP, 2015a, p. 6-7), and they are the non-negotiable national values. The Turkish

language is particularly important for the party because, for the nationalist action, the existence and the future of Turkey directly depend on the Turkish language. Indeed, Bahçeli states that “in addition being a symbol and a tool of communication, our Turkish language is one of the fundamental values that make us a nation. Keeping Turkish alive is a vital national duty that the state and the nation must cooperate” (Bahçeli, 2000). Moreover, the party demands that Turkish be used as the language of science, art, commerce, and telecommunication at the international level (MHP, 2018, p. 100).

Sovereignty, unity, and integrity of the state are also crucial principles for the MHP. The party equates these components with the honor of the country and considers itself as their guardian. In other words, any limitation or assault to those principles is perceived as an honor problem in an emotional manner. For instance, in the 1995 election declaration, it is stated that “it is our duty to avoid any factors that place limits on sovereignty of the Turkish state and the nation, and that degenerate the national and spiritual culture and values” (MHP, 1995, p. 15). Similarly, in the 1999 election declaration, it is highlighted that strengthening national unity and integrity is the principal reason for the existence of the party (MHP, 1999, p. 38). In other words, the preservation of the native country takes priority over all issues (Arıkan, 1998), and this will only be possible with a shared understanding of the nation and a collective future march (MHP, 2015a, p. 20).

For the very reason, it is not surprising that the MHP is an anti-globalization party and is skeptical of international organizations. The party appreciates positive aspects of globalization, notwithstanding it opposes a rapid change and is skeptical of embracing the world. The party argues that the rapidly advancing scientific and technological developments force daily life and traditional institutions to a fast and uncontrolled change (MHP, 1999, p. 15). Although the globalization creates opportunities to spread democracy, to strengthen the rule of law and to secure the fundamental rights and freedoms, this process goes

along with problems like international terrorism, immigration, ethnic conflicts, internal disturbances, regional conflicts, hunger and impoverishment, growing gap between rich and poor countries, violations of law, and environmental disasters (MHP, 2015a, p. 31). Also, Devlet Bahçeli maintains that “Turkey should integrate with the globalizing world without sacrificing national and moral values” (Bahçeli, 2002, as cited in Heper and İnce, 2006, p. 882). This statement clearly shows that the Bahçeli is skeptical of globalization because he perceives this as a process that will destroy national sovereignty, national loyalty, traditional values, and national unity. Likewise, the party says Turkey should not hope for help from international partners and allies (MHP, 2018, p. 111).

Secondly, both biological and cultural racism appears in MHP's discourse. As an RRP with a long history, the MHP mostly embraces the biological racism, especially during the Türkeş era. In order to understand the MHP's racist attitudes, it is useful to look into the ideological fathers of the party and the concept of Turanism or Pan-Turkism. Nihal Atsız, a close friend to Alparslan Türkeş was one of the important figures who contributed generating the party ideology. According to Atsız, there are innate inequalities among people and races and Turkish race is the superior one. He argues one has to have the 'Turkish blood' in her/his veins to be a real Turk, and people who do not have the Turkish blood should not be employed in official jobs (Balçı, T., 2011). Though his ideas were not included in the party's official sources, he especially influenced the party base significantly. Similarly, Türkeş argues, "Our opinion on the subject that the Turkish nation is a race which raises great talents, is based on a robust and deep-rooted belief...Among the nations living on earth Turkish nation is the one whose future is the most brilliant. Because we possess a glorious and honorable history which will give us enthusiasm and speed" (Nalbantoğlu, 1994, as cited in Korkusuz, 2008, p. 92).

Atsız and Türkeş contributed to one of the fundamental components of MHP's ideology, Pan-Turkism, or Turanism. The aim of Turanism via Pan-Turkism is to unify all the Turkish-speaking ethnic Turks in the world, particularly those who lived under the Ottoman Empire and the Soviet Union. Ümit Cizre maintains that this "Pan-Turkist (racist) component, which MHP shares with many fascist movements in the world, went hand in hand with a Turanist, irredentist element reminiscent of the Nazi Party in Germany" (Cizre, 1992, p. 145). The party has "a romantic and racist notion of Turkish history and culture" and argues that all Turks share common ancestry (Avcı, 2011). However, this component of MHP's ideology has been diminished over the years. Firstly, because of the increasing pressure on Alparslan Türkeş, he shifted the party ideology from a fascist-Turanist position to a nationalist action (Ertekin, 2008). Secondly, as stated before, Devlet Bahçeli made significant changes in the party ideology and has found a relatively moderate way for the party. Today, MHP sees the relationship between Turkey and other Turkish countries as political and economic cooperation and suggests a strategic partnership with them (MHP, 2011, p. 185; 2015a, p. 256; 2018, p. 108).

When the party programs and printed official party materials are examined, there is no sign of racism. On the contrary, even liberal elements can be seen in these documents. A close analysis of the party and its members, however, shows that racist ideas are deeply implemented in the party. In addition to the idea of uniting all the Turks in the world under one roof, the party exhibits a hostile attitude towards the non-Turkish groups. Especially Kurds are the favorite targets of the party. Until the 1990s, the party denied the existence of the Kurdish identity. Türkeş referred the Kurdish language as an artificial language, and he said that "if these people were a separate lineage, a separate nation, then we would have struggled to prevent the people of that region from coming to the levels that would represent and rule the Turks. We would have vehemently opposed it. For the future of our state, our nation, we would have fought for the pride and dignity of the Turks. Why didn't we do it? Because

these people are out-and-out Turks" (Türkeş, 1988, as cited in Bora and Can, 2016, p. 90). In the 1990s, the party position on Kurdish identity changed, the party began to recognize Kurds, but declared them enemies. This rhetoric has been suppressed in public however, it was quite common in the party and among its supporters (Bora and Tanıl, 2016). In 2015, in a group meeting in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Bahçeli accused the then prime minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu of equating Turkish and Kurdish languages. In his speech in Diyarbakır, Davutoğlu said, "We are here to make our beautiful Turkish and our beautiful Kurdish siblings. I would like to learn about our beautiful Kurdish, and I bought a grammar book". This speech was unacceptable for the MHP and Bahçeli considers it as a political murder. He asks to Davutoğlu, "if you consider Kurdish as a brother language to Turkish, which nation do you accept as the equivalent of the Turkish nation?" (MHP, 2015a, p. 104-105). Another example of the MHP's attitude towards the Kurds came after the Ministry of National Education wrote in a schoolbook that Kurds were Muslims before Turks. Secretary-general of the party, İsmet Büyükataman, objected to this argument and said, "this is a propaganda to create a Kurdish history and to establish a perception that the Kurds were here before the Turks and they are the real owner of this geography" (Altay, 2019). These examples show that the party does not perceive the Kurds as an equal, and even cannot accept that they might have a history of their own.

In a similar vein, the party also has a racist attitude towards non-Turks outside of the country. For instance, after the news about the Chinese government's discrimination of Uighur Turks, the youth branches of the MHP attacked the Chinese establishments in several places. A group of ultranationalists attacked a Korean tourist assuming that he was Chinese. Bahçeli, instead of apologizing, defended this group with racist words. He said, "Our nationalist youth is sensitive to injustice in China. They should have the freedom to exercise their democratic rights. These are young kids. They may have been provoked. Plus, how are you going to differentiate between Korean and Chinese? They both

have slanted eyes. Does it really matter?” (Tremblay, 2015). Moreover, *ülkü ocakları* displayed banners in multiple places that say, “we crave Chinese blood” (Diken, 2015). Also, Bahçeli criticized Galatasaray, a Turkish football team, because they took the field with 11 foreigners in a game. He said he would quit his favorite team if they take the field with only foreigners (NTV, 2017). While the party is very careful not to be stigmatized as racist, these examples show that racism has always been a part of party ideology.

Thirdly, the MHP, like other RRP, displays xenophobic behaviors. However, it is not easy to find clear examples of the party’s xenophobia like German or French RRP because Turkey has never hosted a significant number of foreigners until the Syrian crisis. Even during the flow of migrants from Syria, Turks never considered Syrians as foreigners as much as Europeans do because Syria was within the borders of the Ottoman Empire, and they share a history and a religious identity. Therefore, xenophobia has not been a dominant element of the party ideology.

However, the party ideology revolves around national unity and common national values. The party always highlights that the Turkish homeland is indivisible integrity, and the Turkish nation is inseparable and indivisible, and the common values like culture and traditions are the glue that keeps a nation together. Therefore, the party desires a country in which language, religion, and ethnic differences are overcome, and a common national consciousness is created (MHP, 2011, p. 37), and the language must be Turkish, religion must be Islam, and the people must feel as Turkish. One has to embrace the Turkish values and respect them; otherwise, there is no room for a foreigner. Thus, as a party with deep concerns with national values, Turkishness, unitary structure, common history and language, the MHP inherently exhibits xenophobic behaviors. For example, after the Marmara earthquake in 1999, then Minister of Health Osman Durmuş refused to receive help from other countries. He rejected offers of medical teams and blood coming from Greece, Armenia,

Romania, and the United States, he said, Turkey had no need of “doctors, nurses, blood, medicine or ambulances. We have no need for foreign doctors who are unused to our customs” (Buncombe, 1999). Also, after Italian aid workers had demanded hygienic conditions in the showers and toilets, Durmuş stated that Turks do not want doctors whose habits are different from theirs. He said, it would be nice if Turks were left to their own devices since the Turks could easily use the nearest mosque’s toilet (Daily Radikal, 1999, as cited in Arkan, 2002). Additionally, in the 2015 election declaration, the party suggests developing a national computer games software industry to protect children from foreign cultures (MHP, 2015a, p. 213).

After the refugee flow to Turkey, the MHP has created an image that the party sees Syrians as brothers and sisters from a neighbor country, which they share a history. However, the grassroots of the party have always been skeptical of the Syrians; thus, the administrative layer has always acted with deliberation, and the party started to signal that they do not want immigrants in the country. The MHP approaches the issue of Syrian refugees as a matter of internal security and includes the “Internal Security” title in the election declaration. Some statements in the declaration could easily be considered as xenophobia. For example, it is stated that the presence of a large number of refugees in the country could cause social problems such as theft, robbery, epidemics, drug use, prostitution and illegal labor (MHP, 2015a, p. 239). In other words, the party sees refugees as potential criminals. In the election declarations, the party says that the migrants accepted to Turkey should be kept in the borders of the countries which they came from, and they should be returned to their native countries quickly (MHP, 2015a, p. 239; 2018, p. 123). Moreover, recently, the party changed its migration-oriented language and began to call them not sisters or brothers but ‘guests.’ An MHP member of the parliament, İsmail Özdemir, stated that “we are hosting four million Syrians. The host has limited resources, and we have exceeded this possibility too much” (Yüksek, 2019). Similarly, then vice president of the party, Şefkat Çetin said that having a great

number of refugees has changed the demographic structure and disturbed the social fabric of Turkey. “The number of people who lost their jobs due to refugees has increased day by day and the order of our cities has been disturbed” (Milliyet, 2016).

Additionally, the party established a commission called the Transboundary Migration Commission (Sınır Aşan Göçler Komisyonu) and published a report. According to the report, 88.9 percent of MHP voters favor the return of Syrians to their countries. The report also draws attention to the Turkish men’s tendency to marry young Syrian women, and it is argued that these marriages damage the social fabric (Yüksek, 2019). Consequently, although the party has little experience in migration, it is reasonable to say that the party is indeed skeptical of foreigners, and when the conditions met, it has the potential to have xenophobic attitude at least as much as its European fellows.

Fourthly, the MHP claims that they adopted democratic rules and principles, and sees democracy as the assurance of fundamental rights, freedoms and rule of law. Therefore, it would be unfair to claim that the party rejects democratic values completely. However, when the party declarations, members’ speeches and the actions of the youth branches examined detailly, it is crystal clear that MHP is an anti-democratic party. Although the party claims it embraces liberal democratic values such as equality of citizens, individualism, universalism, and civil liberties, its actions prove the opposite.

The nation-state is one of the essential elements the MHP’s ideology, and it belongs to one dominant group, which is the Turkish nation. All the other groups or ethnicities must be gathered under the roof of the Turkish nation. The party claims that there should be democratic maturity, and culture of consensus, and exclusionist rhetoric should be eliminated. However, in order to provide this environment in the country, Turkey's national and spiritual values should be the common grounds (MHP, 2018, p. 44). Moreover, the party argues that

instead of highlighting differences -which are artificial and only made up to divide Turkey-, a national holistic view on the grounds of shared values should be reflected in public, and our shared values should be explained to the public by clergy, educators, sociologists, opinion leaders, and media organizations (MHP, 2018, p. 42).

The party recognizes minorities set out in the Lausanne Treaty which are Armenians, Jews, and Greeks (MHP, 2004), and rejects the existence of all the other minority groups and argues that making mention of the presence of the minorities or different ethnicities causes discrimination (MHP, 2015a, p. 18). According to the party, minority movements should not be allowed, and it should not be possible to extend the right to self-determination of nations to ethnic demands and adventures (MHP, 1999, p. 10). In addition, in 2011, the then president Abdullah Gül said that the right of every segment of society to live as themselves must be guaranteed by the constitution. The party finds this statement very problematic asks which member of the Turkish nation has not got the right to live as himself/herself (MHP, 2011, p. 67). Obviously, the party does not recognize and accept any group other than those who consider themselves as a Turk and afraid that the Turkish values cannot dominate others. The party explicitly says that they are against creating a multipartite nation structure by giving political and legal status to different ethnic identities (MHP, 2015a, p. 71). For example, the party opposes the granting of legal personality to the Greek, Armenian and Jewish minorities and the non-interference of the Turkish authorities in managing their foundations. Also, the party opposes non-Muslim minorities' training in clergy (MHP, 2011, p. 125-126).

The MHP's ideology necessitates to suppress all the minorities under the weight of the Turkish nation and the Kurds are the most affected group by this understanding. As it was discussed before, the party does not see Kurds as equals to Turks and says if Kurds want to live in Turkey, they have to abandon their Kurdish identity. In 2009, the AKP government initiated a resolution

process to the Kurdish question which is called ‘the Kurdish opening’. The process aimed to make radical reforms such as broadcasting and education in the mother language, lowering the 10% electoral threshold, changing certain city names to their original Kurdish names and redefining the concept of Turkish citizenship. Unsurprisingly, the MHP has been the biggest opponent to these reforms. The party argues “many legal and administrative regulations made in parallel with this 'betrayal' process are ethnicity-centered, shaped with an understanding that highlights differences and discrimination. The legal process in this context jeopardizes the state, the nation, and the unitary structure of Turkey” (MHP, 2015a, p. 18). According to the party, broadcasting, education, and public service in the mother language are dangers to the Turkish language and the Turkish nation. The party claims that if we accept this, there will be two official languages, then two official nations, and eventually, a federation with two states. This is the beginning of the independent Kurdistan (MHP, 2012, p. 158). In a speech in Diyarbakır, Bahçeli asks to Kurdish people “When we put the mother language into the constitution, will you full up? Will your bread increase? Can you get a new dress on your back?” (Bahçeli, 2011). Bahçeli implies that having an official language and identity are not so important for the Kurdish people. Also, the party opposes to the lowering of the threshold because they consider this reform as paving the way for politics on the basis of ethnic separatism (MHP, 2004, p. 5). The party feared that minorities would gain political identity. Moreover, the MHP strictly against to use of the word ‘Turkishness’ (Türkiyelilik). They argue that this would change the definition of national identity and replace the concept of citizenship with the Turkish nation.

In addition, the party claims that they are the defender of a free and independent media. However, in the 2015 election declaration, it is maintained that “We believe that there should be no restrictions and censorship on the press, broadcasting and other means of communication unless it is contrary to the indivisible integrity of the state and the nation, fundamental principles of the

republic, national security and public order” (MHP, 2015a, p. 65). Similarly, the party states that “The Nationalist Action Party believes that the right to association, to organize meetings and demonstrations should be exercised in accordance with its essence provided that they do not contradict the fundamental principles of the republic, national security, and public order” (MHP, 2018, p. 37). These arguments are extremely ambiguous and questionable. It is not clear which elements threatening the integrity of the state and the nation or endangers the republic, national security and public order. This understanding can be used arbitrarily and may cause results that contradict democratic values.

Fifthly, as the other radical right parties, the MHP always has had a strong statist position. According to the MHP, the state is the ultimate representative of the Turkish nation; it has to be treated with honor and has to be protected by any means. Because of its anti-individualist and statist stance, the party believes that interests of the state must be superior to the interests of the individuals and the duty of all individuals is to sacrifice themselves for the integrity and wellbeing of the state. The Nine Lights Doctrine is also a profoundly statist ideology which perceives the state as the most important entity and argues that sacrifices should be made for its sake (Yavuz, 2002). The commitment to the statist understanding comes from the *ülküçülük* (idealism) which “signifies a devotion to the wellbeing of the state seen as the utmost embodiment of the nation, identifying the state’s interests as inseparable from the nation’s interests” (Çınar and Arıkan, 2002, p. 26). *Ülküçülük* consists of the backbone of the MHP; therefore, the preservation of the nation-state is a matter of life and death for the party. Furthermore, for the MHP supporters, there is no difference between the party and the state. In other words, serving the interests of the state is the *raison d’être* of the MHP (Çınar and Arıkan, 2002). However, whereas Türkeş was faithful to the ideology of *Ülküçülük* and equality of the state and the party, Bahçeli maintains a stance which gives primacy to the state over the party. He has adopted the slogan “Önce ülkem ve

milletim, sonra partim ve ben” (“First my country and my nation, then my party and myself”) (MHP, 2018, p. 5), which he repeats at every opportunity in social media or the party group meetings. Thus, the notion of strong state is vital in the party ideology. In fact, the party argues that “In any field of our country, the establishment of an authority other than the state authority should not be tolerated and allowed” (MHP, 2018, p. 109).

The MHP believes that the notion of strong state can only be achieved with a strict law and order, a strong police force and a deterrent army. The party demands radical changes in criminal justice and penal systems. The party argues that the elements that pave the way for lack of public order should be eliminated and intelligence services should be strengthened (MHP, 2018, p. 109). In order to prevent disturbance of the peace and establish the control, the party promises a 'preventive police force', employment of security staff which will work at nights, and a camera system that will work 24/7 (MHP, 2015a, p. 238). Also, they demand to enhance of employee personal rights of the police force, specialist gendarmes, and private security guards (MHP, 2015a, p. 248-249). However, the MHP does not see these changes as sufficient and requests a total participation of the society, public and private sector. They argue that security of the country is everyone's responsibility (MHP, 2015a, p. 244).

Many of these amendments mentioned in the election declarations are argued to improve the system. However, party arguments are rather unclear, especially, the punishments against terror criminals and corrupt officials. The MHP demands harsh penalties against all persons, institutions, organizations, communities, and similar elements that harbor, support, collude, provide fund, collaborate openly or secretly, and sympathize terrorism (MHP, 2015a, p. 241). However, the definition of terrorism or the content of the punishment are ambiguous. A clearer example of the party's understanding of punishment against terrorism are noticeable in the party member's arguments. For instance, general vice president of the party, Fethi Yıldız claims that “The aggravated

life imprisonment imposed on the abolition of the death penalty does not clear society's conscience in some crimes, especially in terror crimes. As a party, we demand the death penalty for terrorist crimes" (Sayın, 2019).

The MHP also lays stress the need for strong armed forces. The party regards the Turkish Armed Forces as a matter of glory and honor and promises to make it one of the three most powerful armies in the world (MHP, 2018, p. 77). In this sense, the party advocates the need to increase the mobility and deterrence of the armed forces, to initiate the modernization process and to adopt advanced technology in the army. Moreover, the party argues that instead of hoping to benefit from the international security partnerships and allied relations, a national defense structure based on our own dynamic and values should be taken as a basis. The party suggests a national war industry and a national software system (MHP, 2015a, p. 111-112). In a similar manner, the party is highly protective of the Turkish borders. In the 2018 election declaration, it is argued "a priority should be given to the completion of the establishment of the physical and technological border security system, particularly the Iraq and Syria border" (MHP, 2018, p. 244). Furthermore, the party is the biggest supporter of military actions on the Syrian border and is in favor of the establishment of a security zone in northern Syria (Bahçeli, 2019).

Finally, the Nationalist Action Party has always been a party prone to othering and making a distinction between the pure people and the corrupt elite. Like other RRP, the MHP also has internal and external enemies threaten the unitary structure and sovereignty of Turkey. Actually, the MHP has always needed an 'other' to survive in politics. During the Cold War years, the favorite enemy was the communism. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the party needed another target and the PKK was the perfect for the MHP. Nowadays, the most prominent internal enemies of the party are terrorist organizations mainly the PKK, the YPG/PYD (People's Protection Units/Democratic Union

Party), and the Fethullah Terrorist Organization (Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü, FETÖ), the Kurdish people, and established parties.

The PKK has been the main enemy of the MHP since time immemorial. The party considers the PKK as one of the biggest threats to Turkey's integrity. The party members and Devlet Bahçeli frequently refer to the PKK members as bloody murderers and their leader Abdullah Öcalan as the baby killer. In addition, Bahçeli argues that there is no difference between the PKK, the YPG or the PYD (Anadolu Ajansı, 2018). Even though these organizations are considered separately in the international arena, the MHP argues that all the world knows that they are the same and they should be recognized as a terror organization by all the countries. Also, as it was mentioned before, the party has been strictly opposed to the Kurdish Opening process which was launched by the AKP government to solve the conflict between Kurdish minority and Turkish state. MHP argues that this initiative is a PKK initiative, and its purpose is to accomplish all the things in a political way which the PKK couldn't achieve with weapons and violence (Bahçeli, 2009). The party sees this process as the divisibility and dismemberment of Turkish state.

In addition, the MHP accepts the FETÖ as a terrorist organization from the day of the July 15 coup attempt. For the party, along with the PKK, the FETÖ has also been a major threat to the Turkish state, and their purpose has been to create a chaotic atmosphere, launch a civil war, and divide the country. According to the party, the FETÖ members are traitors and enemies of Turkey which infiltrated into all segments of the state including jurisdiction, police forces, armed forces, and NGOs. Moreover, the party claims that the FETÖ has been trying to take the control of the MHP since the November 1, 2015 elections (MHP, 2018, p. 53-54). As a right-wing populist party, the MHP believes that the external world and their domestic collaborators are conspiring against Turkey. In parallel with this understanding, the party argues that "while Turkey is dealing with the FETÖ inside of the country, it is also facing with

the FETÖ supporters both inside and the outside of the country who attempts to drive Turkey into a corner” (MHP, 2018, p. 54).

Another enemy to the party is the Kurdish society in Turkey. As it was discussed above, the party has always objected to giving cultural rights to Kurds and has never recognized the Kurds as a minority in Turkey. Also, it has been the party which opposes the most to the Kurdish problem (Öniş, 2003). In the eyes of the party, the Kurdish community in Turkey has always been a disappointing child who misbehaves and always causes troubles. The party perceives their existence as a major threat to the national unity and the unitary structure of Turkey.

Also, the party has a hostile attitude towards the established parties. Its strategy between 2002 and 2018 revolved around accusing the AKP of several issues such as foreign policy, Kurdish policy, EU policy, and corruption. According to the party the AKP governments are responsible of the economic downturn, corruption, and they wasted public money. Also, the party accusing the AKP of social degeneration. It is argued that the AKP administrations, lacking national identity and national history consciousness, have made the path of the systematic elimination of the Turkish nation. In this process, first of all, the strong ties between the members of the nation were tried to be loosened. For this purpose, differences in the level of detail were emphasized and common values of historical and cultural depth were rendered worthless (MHP, 2015a, p. 17-18). According to the MHP, the AKP was ruled by cadres, which sought legitimacy in the imperialist powers and highlighted the blind, unstable, unidentified, and impersonal politics (MHP, 2015a, p. 32). The AKP government, which sank to the bottom of the disloyalty and has fallen into the pit of insincerity, has dragged our country into a sorrowful environment (Bahçeli, 2012). Before the 2015 elections, Bahçeli summarizes party’s view on the AKP. He says “The AKP is a threat to democracy. The AKP is a threat to national unity and a thousand-year brotherhood. The AKP is a threat to

individual rights and freedoms. The AKP is hostile to yesterday and a threat to the future. The AKP is a hook to law and an obstacle to peace. And the AKP is the only adversary of Turkishness, a source of sin that has plagued the Turkish nation” (MHP, 2015b, p. 12).

However, after forming an alliance with the AKP, the MHP needed a new source of ‘other’ and began to attack the CHP, the HDP, and newly founded IP. This time, the party accused these parties of allying with PKK and FETÖ. The party sees them as traitors because they have not participated in the fight against FETÖ enough and want to return to the parliamentary system. Bahçeli argues that CHP, HDP and IP are the political triplets and says that “when I say HDP/PKK, you understand IP, when I say CHP, immediately think about Kandil -where the PKK camps are located-, when I say Pennsylvania - where the leader of FETÖ lives-, think of it all” (Bahçeli, 2019). Moreover, the party maintains that the political structures deprived of national and moral sensitivities, especially the CHP, did not respond positively to our call to unite against FETÖ, and the attempts to disrupt the struggle against FETÖ were continued (MHP, 2018, p. 54). In a nutshell, the MHP, like other RRP always creates an ‘other’ in the domestic politics and this other changes according to the dynamics of the politics.

Additionally, the Nationalist Action Party creates external others such as international organizations and western countries. The party claims that the chaos and conflict scenarios designed within the framework of the imperialist goals of global playmakers make our state and nation lose a lot (MHP, 2018, p. 41). Also, the party accuses the western countries of surrounding Turkey, driving it into a corner, putting in a passive position, and restricting its historical, geographical, and cultural rights (Bahçeli, 2019). Moreover, according to the party, the western powers collaborate with the terrorist organizations and pose a threat to Turkey’s unitary structure, national unity and sovereignty. The party argues that particularly the US and European countries,

and several other countries which are hostile towards Turkey, support the terrorist organizations in the Syrian border of Turkey, openly give them heavy weapons, and help to establish a puppet state in the region (MHP, 2018, p. 55).

In this environment as a populist party, the MHP consider itself as the savior and the true representative of the Turkish nation. In the 2015 election declaration, the party says that if the God permits, the MHP will come to power alone and longing for a national power will end (MHP, 2015a, p. 6). Bahçeli says that the MHP will spoil the game played over the national perpetuity, national state and national identity with its patience, wisdom, common sense, and steadiness (Bahçeli, 2019). The party claims that the MHP is the solution for all the problems in Turkey and argues that “if the MHP is strong, Turkey will be strong and secure, if the MHP is strong, the nation will find the peace and prosperity, if the MHP is strong, law and justice will be ensured, if the MHP is strong, the Turkish state and nation will move to the future within independence, and if the MHP is strong, the "Leading Country Turkey" will be built” (MHP, 2018, p. 16).

2.3 The MHP and Euroscepticism

The MHP, as a radical right party, attaches great importance to Turkish nationalism; in fact, the party is clearly a Eurosceptic party with ultranationalist character. The MHP acknowledges the importance of global and regional formations and supports Turkey's membership to these developments. However, it argues that the MHP has indispensable and non-negotiable criteria which are Turkey's territorial integrity, indivisibility of the Turkish nation, the supremacy of national sovereignty, and the common values that constitute our national identity (MHP, 2000). According to MHP, Turkey's EU membership has to take place while protecting the national unity, integrity and the unitary state structure. "Reform and transformation process must be in a way that does

not damage Turkey's social fabric, common values, internal peace, and stability" (MHP, 2002, p. 42). Although nationalism is the most salient factor that drives the party's Euroscepticism, other characteristics of RRP's such as anti-democratic behaviors, belief in a strong state, and populism, influence party position towards the EU. In general, the MHP accuses the European Union of being hypocritical and discriminatory and implementing double standards against Turkey.

While the MHP has always been sensitive about Turkish nationalism, sovereignty, identity, and cultural values and criticized the EU, during Alparslan Türkeş's leadership, the party had its sharpest Eurosceptic attitudes. In the 1977 election declaration, it is said that the Customs Union is enslaving countries, and if a developed and a developing country integrates around the economic rules, the developed country will be better off, and the developing country will suffer (MHP, 1977, p. 29). That is why the MHP strictly opposed to the Union at the very beginning of Turkey's journey to the EU.

In 1987, Turkey applied for full membership to the European Union. After that, the MHP took the EU more seriously and involved it on its agenda by adding a separate section for the EU in the declarations starting from the 1999 elections. When the party was a part of the 1999 coalition government, it was one of the parties that signed the National Program, which was the list of commitments Turkey would make in the context of the EU accession process. This program included new laws and amendments in several policy areas such as minority rights, freedom of speech, and the death penalty. However, these areas were sensitive issues for an ultranationalist party like the MHP. Although the party was always in favor of harmony among the coalition partners and its Eurosceptic rhetoric has been relatively softened, it could not be indifferent to these reforms (Bardakçı, 2010). The party's objections to reforms prepared to adapt to the *acquis* led to deadlocks within the fragile coalition (Avcı, 2011).

The MHP lost the 2002 elections and remained out of the parliament. The AKP government came to power alone, and during its first couple of years in the government, Turkey had its 'golden age' of Europeanisation. The AKP successfully promoted the EU accession process and triggered several democratic packages and amendments. In reaction to these developments, the MHP harshened its Eurosceptic discourse. It considers the demands of the European Union, which are mostly the Copenhagen criteria and harmonization packages, as impositions on Turkey and argues that they do not comply with the party's non-negotiable criteria. The party claims that the conditions and impositions of the EU can only be put in front of a country defeated in war. When these conditions are compared with the Treaty of Sevres, it seems like the Sevres was resurrected (MHP, 2009, p. 6). During this period, the MHP opposed the EU, and therefore the reform process, on three key issues that are still shaping the party's position towards the EU.

First of all, as an RRP, the MHP accuses the EU of highlighting ethnic, sectarian, and cultural differences and trying to change the state structure of Turkey. One of the subjects that the MHP opposes the most is the recognition of Kurds living in Turkey as a minority by the EU. According to the European Commission country reports on Turkey, the rights given to the minorities, especially to the Kurdish minority, are insufficient, and the opportunity to get education and broadcast in their mother language should be provided to them. Also, the EU criticizes the 10% threshold and points out that it makes it difficult for minorities to be represented in parliament. The MHP considers this criticism as an attempt to create a 'national minority' in Turkey and questioning the Treaty of Lausanne (MHP, 2009, p. 3). In addition, the EU's call for dialogue with local authorities to solve the Kurdish problem is also perceived as separatism by the MHP (MHP, 2009, p. 3; 2006, p. 2). The party argues that these 'impositions' of the EU coincide with the demands of the terrorist organization PKK, and this shows the EU's true colors. According to the party, the European Union aims to disrupt Turkey's unitary structure by creating a

notion of 'Turkishness' under the name of cultural rights (MHP, 2004, p. 12, 25, 58). The MHP believes that the European Union has become a shelter for ethnic separatists, the lobbies that support terrorism, and ones who insult to national values and want to destroy Turkey's unity (MHP, 2009, p. 3).

In recent times, related to the party's Kurdish and PKK concerns, the MHP accuses the EU of supporting the terrorist organizations that Turkey fights with. The party maintains that "particularly the United States and European countries supported YPG/PYD terrorist organizations in the southeast of Turkey and openly provided them heavy weapons and ammunition" (MHP, 2018, p. 55). Also, Bahçeli claimed that the conference on the 'European Union, Turkey, the Middle East, and the Kurds' held in the European Parliament turned into PKK propaganda. "The European Parliament has become an institution in which animosity against Turkey and aiding and abetting the terrorist organization have become explicit" (Bahçeli, 06 Feb. 2020). He said in a speech that "what do we need for a formation that stands behind the PKK? What will we need in a union structure that protects FETÖ? How long will be maintaining this painful and problematic accession process that hurts our national pride, undermines our national dignity and carries Turkish hostility in its spirit? The point of a parting of the ways with the EU has been reached. We are Turkey. We are a strong and self-sufficient state and nation" (Bahçeli, 20 Jul. 2019).

The second issue that motivates the MHP's Euroscepticism is the island of Cyprus. The party sees the Cyprus problem as a 'national cause' and Turkey's internal matter. After the Cyprus Operation in 1974, the northern part of the island has been controlled by the Turkish army. The future of the island and a solution to its dividedness have become one of the major topics on the party agenda. The party attaches great importance to national sovereignty and territorial integrity in Northern Cyprus and maintains that no decision to endanger these will be accepted or supported. However, according to the MHP, the EU acts in the interests of the Greek Cypriot side and the wishes of Greece and makes this issue a precondition to Turkey's membership. The party argues

that the EU forces Turkey to recognize southern Cyprus officially, to open Turkish harbors and airports to Greek Cypriot ships and airplanes, and to remove the veto that prevents Greek Cypriots' membership to the international organizations. These demands are certainly unacceptable to the MHP. "It has been revealed that the rupture and the parting of the ways, so-called a 'train-wreck' will take place at the Cyprus station" (MHP, 2006, p. 5). This statement clearly indicates that the party is determined to end the accession process if the EU does not abandon its imposition on the Cyprus issue, and even if the EU guarantees full membership, the party will be opposing any compromise in the Cyprus policy.

The MHP's sensitivity on the Cyprus issue still continues, and the party is still accusing the EU of taking side with Greece and Greek Cypriots. For example, Turkey recently started drilling for natural gas in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. In response to this activity, the EU announced that they are preparing to impose sanctions on Turkey. According to the MHP, this means to usurp Turkey's sovereignty rights and national interests in the eastern Mediterranean. For the MHP, the EU is agitated by the Greek Cypriot Administration and Greece against Turkey. Bahçeli says, "the EU has dared to question Turkey's strategic identity and to harm our sovereign rights. The picture in front of us is a double standard, a political caliper, a diplomatic siege, and Turkish hostility. The issue has become Turkey's and Turkish Cypriots' history and justified existence. The eastern Mediterranean is a sovereignty issue for Turkey. Turkish Cypriots are not alone". He even argued that the EU membership process, which has completely returned to adventure and treachery and has become a lie and deception, should be discussed. "If we are going to enter the EU by leaving our roots, transferring our sovereign rights, I say, let the EU sink, let the membership go down" (Bahçeli, 20 Jul. 2019).

Another issue that shapes the MHP's Euroscepticism is the Armenian issue. MHP claims that the EU has put forward the Armenian issue as an obstacle in the accession process, just like the Cyprus issue. The party criticizes the EU

for addressing the Armenian issue in its foreign, security and defense policy sections. For the MHP, the EU applies impositions on Turkey to open the Armenian border and to develop diplomatic relations with Armenia in order to harmonize Turkish foreign policy with its foreign and security policy. Therefore, the party claims that the EU has favored 'imposter' and 'occupant' Armenians, and it may lead to a demand for recognition of genocide in the future (MHP, 2006, p. 5; 2009, p. 4).

In 2015, the European Parliament adopted a resolution which described the 1915 events as genocide and urged Turkey to recognize this event. The reaction of the MHP was quite harsh to this act. Bahçeli said that the relations with the EU have already lost its importance, and he indicated that after this incident, it is obvious that relations are going to the point of no return. "The European Parliament has distorted history and revealed its Turkey and Turkish nation allergy. The decision of the European Parliament is contrary to historical facts, international law, the conscience of humanity and is no different than a rag. If the European Parliament is looking for genocide, if they are concerned with the perpetrators of the genocide, if they are curious about the criminals who commit a crime against humanity, who have built death valleys in different geographies, they should look at their own past and face their own ambitions" (Bahçeli, 16 Apr. 2015).

It is clear in the party and its members' statements that these three issues are the red lines for the MHP in Turkey-EU relations. In 2013, then the parliamentary group leader of the party, Oktay Vural, summarizes the accession process from the MHP's point of view by arguing that "in this process, Cyprus has become a part of the European Union process. Recognizing the Armenian genocide has become part of the European Union process and resolving the so-called Kurdish problem has become part of the European Union process". According to Vural, "at this moment, with its one-sided conviction and the understanding of obedience, the European Union process has become a process that jeopardizes Turkey's strategic interests"

(Vural, 2013, as cited in Aras, 2015, p. 302). The party explicitly expresses at every possible opportunity that they will not make compromises on these issues. While these are the main obstacles to EU membership, there are other problems that the party emphasizes from time to time.

One of the subjects that the MHP objects in the accession process is the rights of non-Muslim minorities living in Turkey. In the progress reports, the EU recommends Turkey to open the Halki (Heybeliada) Greek Orthodox Seminary and to give the right of the Orthodox Patriarchy to use the title of 'ecumenical.' However, according to the MHP, the EU has a secret agenda on these issues. For the MHP, the aim of the EU is to give non-Turkish citizens the opportunity to work in the Patriarchate after graduating from Halki Greek Orthodox Seminary. In this way, it will be possible for foreign nationals to be elected as a Patriarch (MHP, 2006, p. 4-5). Also, the party says that giving the right to use the title of ecumenical to the Orthodox Patriarchy will result in giving him political status (MHP, 2004, p. 7) and this will give Patriarchate and its external supporters the opportunity to gain new positions (MHP, 2006, p. 5). Although the non-Muslim minority rights have been a hot topic for the MHP, after 2010, the party lost its interest in this issue. This might be because of the recent growing divergences between Turkey and the EU or increasing Islamization in the AKP governments, which, in the eyes of the MHP, is a guarantee to suppress non-Muslim rights.

Another issue that has been a hot topic for the MHP until 2010 is Article 301, which penalizes insulting Turkishness, the Republic, as well as the organs and institutions of the state. The European Union criticizes that this article might be used arbitrarily and may limit freedom of expression. Therefore, Article 301 needs to be brought into line with the relevant European standards. However, the MHP rejects this demand and claims that the EU wants to liberate insulting the Turkish state and the Turkish nation. The European Union has made this issue a measure of civilization and democratization. "The aim of imposing Article 301 is not to protect the principle of intellectual thought and freedom

of expression. This is the delirium and lie of those who hate Turkey" (MHP, 2006, p. 3). A similar argument recently has been raised about the anti-terror law. After the readmission agreement between the EU and Turkey, as the agreement requires, Turkey has to meet the EU's 72 benchmarks, which include narrowing its counterterrorism laws in order to get visa liberalization in the Schengen area. However, as an RRP which has authoritarian and anti-democratic characteristics, the MHP maintains that counter-terrorism is a national and strategic issue that should never be loosened, and the purpose of the EU countries is to prevent our fight against terrorism in order not to keep the promise of visa liberalization (Bahçeli, 17 May 2016).

The MHP not only criticizes the EU's demands on the readmission agreement but opposes to the entire agreement. According to the agreement, those who illegally made a transition from Turkey to an EU country will be returned to Turkey and those who made the transition from an EU country to Turkey will be returned to that EU country. The aim of the agreement is to prevent irregular migration flow to the European Union. In return, Turkey was promised a total of 6 billion euros in financial aid, which was decided to be given in two stages and be used to finance projects for the refugees. Additionally, visa liberalization to the Turkish citizens was promised. However, according to the MHP, this agreement only a tactic to make Turkey a refugee camp. Bahçeli argues that the EU is trying to get rid of the refugee problem with money and visa promise. He says Turkey will not be a 'refugee storage' or a 'rental watchman' waiting at the EU border crossings, and our national dignity and sovereignty should never be underestimated (Bahçeli, 26 Apr. 2016). Similarly, in a public statement Şefkat Çetin maintains that this agreement does not protect national interests of Turkey. This is actually a surrender agreement imposed by the EU. He argues that since most of the refugees are Muslim, this attitude of the EU creates a civilization issue, and the Union is acting as a Christian club (Çetin, 19 Mar. 2016). In another statement, he claimed that the

readmission agreement would turn Turkey to 'the refugee dumpster' of the EU (Milliyet, 2016).

As a populist RRP, the MHP while has been criticizing the EU in every opportunity; it also has been blaming the AKP governments for accepting all demands of the Union and risking the national values. Until to the point that the EU membership lost its importance to the AKP, the MHP accused the AKP of making compromises about the key issues mentioned above. In the eyes of the party, the AKP's EU policy is submissive, obedient, and tractable. According to the MHP, the AKP is collaborating with 'submissive lobbyists' and accepting all the impositions that the EU has applied on Turkey. This policy will make our country a 'satellite state,' whose national stance and sensibilities are lost. (MHP, 2003, p. 30). Also, the MHP argues that sometimes the AKP acts as a nationalist party but it is only for show. In fact, the prime minister and government officials bargain with the EU behind closed doors to meet Brussel's impositions (MHP, 2006, p. 7). The AKP members ignore national interests and shut their eyes to the demands that will jeopardize the unitary and nation-state structure of Turkey (MHP, 2010, p. 37).

As can be seen, the MHP, as a party from a candidate country, concerns with the candidacy process rather than the EU institutions or policies. Differently from the AfD, which will be discussed in the following chapters, the MHP does not have a specific opinion on the institutions or policies such as the Economic and Monetary Union or the common commercial policy. However, since then, it is an ultranationalist party that strongly rejects any loss of sovereignty; it is clear that the party is against the deepening process of the EU. Therefore, like the AfD, the MHP will also be opposed to the EU involvement in the national policy areas such as fiscal and monetary policy, judiciary, education, or foreign policy and will never accept a European identity. As a matter of fact, the MHP argues in 2004 that the demands of the EU on foreign policy are narrowing the scope of a national foreign policy implementation and revealing a full dependency on foreign policy (MHP, 2004, p. 11). Considering that the

common foreign and security policy is one of the backbones of the EU formation, the position of the MHP on this issue can be interpreted as an opposition to the Union in principle.

On the other hand, the MHP states in every opportunity that the party is not opposed to the membership in principle. The party says the EU membership is a 'state policy'; therefore, they support the full membership. However, the party constantly opposes the reforms required by the accession process. According to the MHP, it is not possible to compromise with the EU on issues that undermine the national integrity and the interests of Turkey. Besides, the party believes that the EU does not want Turkey in the Union because Turkey has no place in a Christian project (MHP, 2009, p. 8). Considering the party's concerns that were mentioned above, the MHP rejects all the fundamental principles of the European Union, such as minority rights and a common foreign and security policy. In fact, the party argues that in the EU accession process, Turkey will have to transfer all the policies and decisions to EU control, and the aim is creating "a Turkey that governed by the EU inspectors and EU missionaries in Turkey" (MHP, 2005, p. 29). For the MHP, the only purpose of the EU is to keep Turkey, which has a highly strategic significance, under control (MHP, 2010, p. 46). When Turkey announces that it no longer wants to be a member of the Union, it will regain its honor (MHP, 2010, p. 19).

From the very beginning of the accession process, the party makes the EU look like a monster whose sole purpose is to damage the Turkish values. The party says the accession process is filled with blackmail, preconditions, unfair demands, and pressure. Today, the MHP's position on the EU is quite clear. The party reminds in every opportunity that the membership is not something Turkey has to pursue no matter what. EU membership should not be regarded as Turkey's inevitable fate. "Our party does not consider Turkey-EU relations as an identity or fate issue. Our party defends that no matter what happens, Turkey is not obligated, forced, and indigent to drag in the EU orbit" (MHP, 2018, p. 106). Bahçeli in his speech in a party meeting summarizes the party

opinion about the integration process. He says, "the EU membership is not an identity or existence issue for Turkey. Turkey is not a cheap country that drags in the EU orbit and transfers its sovereignty rights. Either an honorable, equal and respected way to the membership is provided or everyone goes their own way. We have no more endurance or patience to stand whims, caprice and frustrating demands of the EU. If it ends, it ends; this is not the end of the world, it will not" (Bahçeli, 2018).

Looking at the party arguments, we can come to the conclusion that the MHP is a great example of the grey area parties on the scale of hard and soft Euroscepticism. The party says it is not against membership in principle yet rejects any sovereignty loss, strictly against a supranational institution above Turkey and makes the EU look like a hate figure. Therefore, Szczerbiak and Taggart's work fails to explain the MHP's exact position. However, given the party's frequent statements about ending the accession process and its opposition to the fundamental EU principles, the MHP can easily be placed somewhere close to the hard Euroscepticism of the scale. In this way, two ideas raised in the literature are supported by these findings. Firstly, Szczerbiak and Taggart (2002) say the radical or extreme right parties are likely to be hard Eurosceptic parties. Secondly, Vasilopoulou (2009) argues that the parties which display authoritarian characteristics tend to be hard Eurosceptic. Since the MHP is a radical right party with authoritarian characteristics and tends to be a hard-Eurosceptic party, these arguments can be assumed to be correct in the MHP case.

Also, taking into consideration the party arguments, it is pessimistic about both the ideas underlying the process of European integration and the European Union. Therefore, it can be placed as a Euroreject party in Kopecký and Mudde's (2002) categorization. On the other hand, the party always highlights its conditions on the membership. The party states that if an honorable and equal membership is provided by the EU and Turkey's demands are met, they are not against the membership. The party accepts that cooperation at a

multilateral level has benefits for the country, but sovereignty rights and national benefits must always be protected. Therefore, in Vasilopoulou's work (2009), the MHP is an example of the 'conditional Euroscepticism' type of parties.

CHAPTER 3

THE ALTERNATIVE FOR GERMANY

3.1 History of the AfD

The Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD) has been the most successful radical right party in the German politics since the World War II. However, its success cannot be understood without mentioning previous radical right party initiatives. This chapter firstly will explain the radical right-wing German parties which set foundation to rise of the AfD and summarize their history. Then, a brief history of the AfD will be presented. In the second section, the party's political position and ideology will be discussed according to the main RRP features. Finally, the Eurosceptic discourse of the party will be examined.

Before discussing the previous right-wing party attempts, it is useful to understand the situation in Germany during the interwar years and the World War II as the result of the World War I was devastating for Germany. In the interwar years, the Nationalist Socialist German Worker's Party (NSDAP) which ruled the country between 1933 and 1945, became a mass movement and evolved to a totalitarian regime under the leadership of Adolf Hitler. The party was controlling every aspect of German life and believed that the Aryan race is the master race and it is a pure race superior to others like gypsies, Jews and those who did not belong to the Aryan race. Therefore, the radical nationalism, anti-Semitism, and obsession with the master race caused a systematic murder of Jews and led to the death of millions of people.

After the defeat of Germany and the dissolution of the Third Reich in the World War II, occupation forces, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union, started a denazification process and prohibited any symbols and discourses which might lead the revival of Nazi parties. When the Federal

Republic of Germany was founded, a new constitution entered into force. It was designed to preserve the democratic system and protect the rights of individuals, whether German or foreign. Moreover, the Federal Constitutional Court had given the right to ban anti-democratic parties. Also, high-level Nazi leaders were tried, many were sentenced to death or life imprisonment and low-profile Nazis were dismissed. Besides, most people in Germany have become anti-totalitarian democrats, primarily because of war fatigue, the memory of Nazi atrocities and the devastating military defeat (Braunthal, 2009).

After the NSDAP, the radical right has become a taboo in Germany and has created fear against the rise of these parties. “The burden of the past” caused German radical right parties to receive less votes than their counterparts in other European countries like France (Backes, 2006). However, in spite of the denazification process and the fear, national socialism continued to exist in both German politics and society.

Although they have had some electoral success at the state elections as well as at the European elections, the German radical right parties are mediocre size at the national level when they are compared to their European counterparts (Mudde, 2000), such as French National Front and Austrian Freedom Party. However, since they form the foundation for the development of the AfD, it is essential to understand the dynamics of these parties. Later in this section, while discussing AfD’s formation process, we will observe that there are many similarities between the previous attempts and the AfD.

Firstly, the German Conservative Party-German Rightist Party (Deutsche Konservative Partei-Deutsche Rechtspartei, DKP-DRP) consisted of German national, conservative-revolutionary, and monarchist members, as well as former Nazis (Braunthal, 2009). In 1949, the party passed the 5% threshold and sent five deputies to the Bundestag. When the nationalists who were the majority in the party, expelled the former Nazis, they founded a new party called the Socialist Reich Party (SRP). Although the party could not achieve a

notable success in federal elections, in 1951 they got 11% of the votes, in Lower Saxony. The supporters of the SRP were expellees and refugees from Eastern Europe, and “ultra-nationalists and anti-Semites who dreamt of a reconstituted powerful Germany” (Braunthal, 2009, p. 24). The Bonn government made states to restrict the party’s activities. However, the party continued its activities. Therefore, the Bonn government requested the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) to declare the party unconstitutional. As a result, the party was closed on the grounds that it did not support the free and democratic order of the country, was anti-Jewish, had an authoritarian party structure and had a program similar to NSDAP.

Second, the National Democratic Party (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands, NPD) was founded in 1964 and it still takes part in German politics. In the beginning, NPD’s manifesto involved National Socialist, anti-communist and conservative Catholic elements, and one of the fundamental focus points of the party was the reunification of Germany (Schellenberg, 2013). Although the NPD has not been able to pass the election threshold and sent members to the Bundestag, it was really close to this target in 1969 with 4.3 percent of the total vote. In addition, between 1966 and 1969, the party got more than 5 percent and gained seats in seven out of eleven state parliaments.

Supporters of the NPD generally were the ones worried about the 1966 recession leading to another depression. These supporters are consisted of “discharged front soldiers; disgruntled workers, especially in the ailing coal and steel industries; the self-employed; and farmers”, as well as “law-and-order conservatives and neo-Nazis who were dissatisfied with the government’s rapprochement with the communist bloc” (Braunthal, 2009, 25). In addition, the NPD laid stress on the supposed danger that the guest workers caused. However, when the recession ended, the support for the NPD declined and even though the party won seats in the state elections, it consistently failed to get into the Bundestag. Despite the recent closure cases, the party still continues to participate in the elections with its neo-Nazism rhetoric.

In 1979, another radical right party appeared in German politics. The Free German Worker's Party (Freiheitliche Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, FAP) was founded by a former Nazi Martin Pape. The FAP was the closest party to Nazism among other right parties, and the members involved several violent actions against foreigners and other opponents (Braunthal, 2009). The party was outlawed by the Constitutional Court in 1995.

Fourth, the Republicans (Die Republikaner, REP) was founded in 1983 by Franz Schönhuber, a former volunteer at the Nazi Waffen SS. The party had a surprising success with 7 percent in its first election, 1989 European elections. In the same year the Republicans had their biggest success in Bavarian state elections by getting nearly 15 percent of the votes. However, after unification of Germany, its attractiveness has declined.

Republicans are known for their opposition to the loan that was offered by West Germany to East Germany, and for their radical discourse and opposition to foreigners. For instance, the party leader Schönhuber argued that "...we can't allow our history to be reduced to Auschwitz" (Schmemmann, 1989) and according to right-extremist historians, he questioned the exact number of Jews who died during the Holocaust, he implied that the numbers might be exaggerated (Braunthal, 2009). Also, during its first years, party's program focused on limiting foreigners admitted into the country, and "it was also replete with anti-Europe, anti-West, ultra-nationalist, racist, and xenophobic statements" (Braunthal, 2009, p. 26).

Especially after the Maastricht Treaty, the party focused on an anti-EU agenda. The party describes the Maastricht Treaty as "Versailles without weapons." The Republicans have a wide range opposition agenda against the EU such as policies on environmental protection and food right, the democratic deficit, EU centralism, the loss of German sovereignty, and the unequal representation in the EP (Mudde, 2000: 48).

The party's supporters were living in small towns or working-class districts, they had few social and cultural opportunities, and they had low levels of income and education. Nearly two-thirds of the supporters who normally voted for the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, CDU) or the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD), voted the Republicans to protest the government policies (Braunthal, 2009). As it will be discussed in the following parts, the Republicans are quite similar to the AfD regarding their electoral base and being a xenophobic, anti-European, and an ultra-nationalist party.

The last example to German radical right parties is the German People's Union (Deutsche Volkunion, DVU). The DVU was found in 1987 by Gerhard Frey. Even though the party had some success in state parliaments, it could not achieve to get a seat in the Bundestag. Mudde argues that the party's ideology consists of three features: nationalism, patriotism, and xenophobia. Also, it is an anti-American and anti-Semitic party, and it is a defender of national identity and sovereignty; therefore, it has negative attitudes against international cooperation like the EU and the NATO (Mudde, 2000).

The reason why these parties couldn't achieve success is mainly the political culture of the Federal Republic. Because of the infamous result of the national socialism, the Germans approached to the right-wing parties with caution. "After the experiences of National Socialism, an anti-totalitarian and anti-extremist fundamental consensus was established in the 1950s, which has functioned as a bulwark against radical parties on the right (as well as the left) side of the political spectrum until the present" (Vorländer, Herold and Schäller, 2018, p. 51). For example, SRP was banned by the FCC in 1952 because of its ultra-nationalist and anti-Semitic activities. Also, radical right-wing voters shifted to other conservative parties like CDU and CSU (Vorländer, Herold and Schäller, 2018).

However, the recent developments in Europe such as the Euro crisis, the refugee crisis, and the terrorist attacks have paved the way for radical right parties, creating an image that Europe is not stable, secure and safe anymore. Brubaker argues that "...several independent crises have converged in recent years to create a 'perfect storm' conducive to populism, and especially to forms of right-wing populism that unite economic, cultural, and securitarian protectionism" (Brubaker, 2019, p. 36). The radical right-wing parties like AfD have benefited from these crises. While several European countries have suffered from an economic downturn, Germany has taken on the task to save the Euro and the suffering nations. Merkel's bailout policies were supported by the established German parties, and there wasn't any party to challenge these policies. As a matter of fact, from the beginning of the European Union, almost all German political parties supported the integration and EU-led solutions. When there was a problem, the answer was more EU and more integration. Thereby, the AfD filled this gap, and the lack of alternative has made the AfD a popular party (Grimm, 2015). Also, according to Arzheimer, the AfD is different from previous opposition attempts because it "...was formed by 'moderates' with very high SES, considerable civic skills, and some political experience..." (Arzheimer, 2015, p. 540).

The economic crisis triggered the rise of the AfD undoubtedly, but the greatest impact was the refugee crisis in Europe. Chancellor Angela Merkel's open-door policy has led thousands of refugees from the Middle East to come to Germany. This sudden rise in the number of refugees has awakened fears about the future, and many Germans worried about their jobs and social welfare, and it created an opportunity for populist claims to protect jobs, welfare and identity of the people (Brubaker, 2019). The AfD with its anti-immigrant discourse has created a distinctive image as an alternative to the refugee-friendly policy of Merkel (Vorländer, Herold and Schäller, 2018). AfD deputy chairman at the time, the current co-chairman Alexander Gauland, called the refugee crisis a "gift" for the party. "Because in the AfD's loathing to the mass influx of

migrants from a different culture, in its tirades about failing government and almost-criminal politicians, there also elation about circumstances that playing into its hands” (Zeit Online, 2016).

The terror attacks in the cities of Europe have also caused fear among the Europeans, and the EU countries have focused on protecting their borders and citizens. Radical right-wing parties like AfD benefited from these attacks because they were against foreigners and Islam, and they advocated the closure of borders. These attacks in Europe have legitimized the arguments of the radical right-wing parties, including AfD. The AfD succeeded in turning these crises into opportunities; it gained success in several local parliaments and eventually become the main opposition party in the Bundestag.

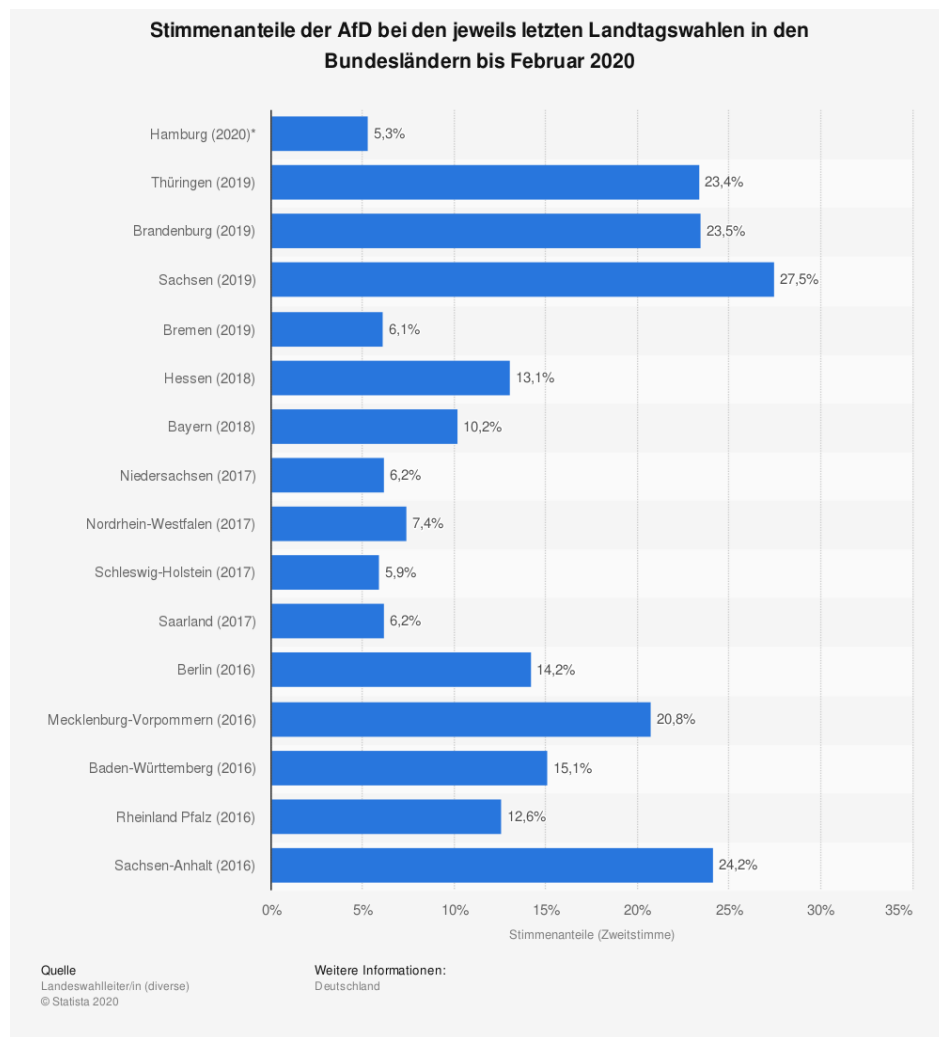
Another reason why the AfD has become a successful radical right party in Germany is the CDU’s shift to the center of the political spectrum. This shift that the CDU has been experienced created an ideological vacancy on the right spectrum of German politics; thus, created an opportunity for the AfD (Franzmann, 2018). In this way, members and the electorate of the CDU found themselves a place to be represented.

As stated previously, the AfD is considered the first successful radical right party in Germany after World War 2. In spite of its short history in the political arena, the party has reached a success that no radical right party has achieved in a country where the rise of the right is such a taboo. It was founded in February 2013 by Alexander Gauland, Bernd Lucke and Konrad Adam who were also founders of the Election Alternative 2013 (Wahlalternative 2013) which later evolved to the AfD. The members of the party come from various backgrounds such as university professors (mostly economists), entrepreneurs and journalists. For instance, Lucke is an economics professor at the University of Hamburg, and Gauland and Adam have a journalistic background. Also, some of the members like Gauland and Adam were Christian Democratic Union (Christlich Demokratische Union, CDU) members who were unsatisfied

with Merkel's policy by claiming that the CDU has lost its conservative core issues such as democratic nationalism, religious attitudes, support for family and the educated bourgeoisie (Franzmann, 2016).

Half a year after its foundation, the party participated in the 2013 Bundestag elections. Although it was a very young party, it had remarkable success with 4.7 percent of the votes and narrowly missed the electoral threshold. In the 2014 European Parliament elections, the party was even more successful and got 7.1 of votes with seven seats. Finally, in 2017 Bundestag elections the party got 12.6 of votes and gained 94 seats as the third largest party in the parliament. The AfD also had notable achievements in state elections, especially in Eastern Germany. In 2014 the party obtained 12,2% of the votes in Brandenburg, 9,7% in Saxony and 10,6% in Thuringia. The results of the 2016 state elections were even better, and the party got 24,2%, 15,1% and 20,8% in Sachsen-Anhalt, Baden-Württemberg, and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern accordingly. The figure below shows AfD's vote shares in local elections until February 2020.

Figure 2: The AfD Votes in German States Until February 2020



Source: Statista, 2020

While the AfD mostly attracted the CDU/CSU voters, the party managed to draw support from every political camp in 2013 elections (Lewandowsky, 2014) and continued to attract these voters in the next elections. Zeit Online, a German newspaper, conducted an analysis of how the votes changed in the 2013 and 2017 elections. According to Zeit, around 1 million people who voted for the CDU/CSU in 2013 decided to vote for the AfD in 2017, the Left Party lost 11% of its voters to the AfD, and the party managed to attract the support of 1.4 million non-voters (Zeit Online, 2017). Also, a study done by the

German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) states that the AfD has more supporters in rural areas with an aging population, more popular among men, and there is a positive relationship between low household income and party support (Franz, Fratzscher and Kritikos, 2018). Moreover, Financial Times argues that while the AfD had an electorate of all levels of education in 2013-14, in recent years the party is more popular among lower levels of education, and the AfD supporters are dissatisfied and concerned about their financial future and worried about downward social mobility (Financial Times, 2017).

Behind all of these, the AfD struggled with serious internal conflicts. As a new party, it had a difficulty finding its ideological direction. Lewandowsky highlights that newly founded center-right parties face a typical dilemma: on the one hand, the party has to host various ideological strands in order to gain electoral success, but on the other hand, the coexistence of different ideologies creates a potential for conflict and difficulties in the medium term (Lewandowsky, 2014). The AfD is not an exception to this dilemma. According to Franzmann, the AfD has two wings in the party; the first one is the economist wing which emphasizes euro-related concerns, and the other one is the national conservative wing which focuses on moral issues, migration policy, and law and order (Franzmann, 2016). Bernd Lucke who wanted to keep the party as a single-issue party with an anti-euro focus tried to increase his influence in the party. He competed with Frauke Petry, one of the spokespersons, for the leadership. Contrary to Lucke, Petry was known with her anti-islam and anti-immigrant attitude. At the 2015 party conference, Lucke lost against Petry, and he resigned, claiming that he left the party because it was becoming Islamophobic and xenophobic (Reuters, 2015). Petry pulled the party towards a populist direction, and she has become a strong dissident of Merkel's open-door policy to Syrian refugees in 2015 and 2016 (Lees, 2018). This split is considered as an ideological turning point in party's profile (Kroh and Fetz, 2016, as cited in Allthof, 2018).

Similarly, in 2016, Muthen, an economics professor who was elected as a co-spokesperson after Lucke, and 12 deputies quitted the party's parliamentary group in the state Baden-Wuerttemberg because the party members rejected to expel Wolfgang Gedeon, who was accused of anti-Semitism (Deutsche Welle, 2016a). This debate on the right-wing nationalism and pragmatism flared up again in early 2017 with Björn Höcke's speech. He criticized the Memorial to the Jews Murdered of Europe in Berlin, saying, "We the Germans, our people, are the only people in the world who put this shame in the heart of the capital." (Deutsche Welle, 2017).

Before the 2017 Bundestag elections, Frauke Petry tried to pull the party to a more moderate and pragmatic direction in order to keep the party's possibility of joining the coalition (Allthof, 2018) because the support for AfD declined and shifted back towards the mainstream parties (Lees, 2018). This motion of Petry was declined at the party convention in April, and she announced that she is not going to be the leading candidate. Right after the elections, she resigned from the party. The AfD members elected Alexander Gauland and Alice Weidel to fill her spot. While Gauland is known for his conservative discourse, Weidel has a more liberal attitude. The Atlantic argues that "this political odd couple appeared to represent two wings of the party: Gauland, a firebrand conservative with a penchant for provocation, and Weidel, an economist, lesbian, and mother, who was drawn to the party because of its euro-skeptic roots." (the Atlantic, 2017a).

Since the AfD is a newly established party and it had serious struggles finding its direction, several studies have been conducted to place the party on the political spectrum. As it is stated above, the party got votes from various ideologies, and it was established as a single-issue party with a Eurosceptic agenda which can be found on any place in the political spectrum. Furthermore, the party leaders claimed that they do not belong to left nor right of the spectrum (Scicluna, 2014). However, since its establishment, the party ideology has changed drastically.

Issues like nationalism, immigration, Islamization, and traditional values have played a part in the election declarations as well as leaders' speeches. Arzheimer argues that the AfD is a far-right party "...because of its nationalism, its stance against state support for sexual diversity and gender mainstreaming, and its market liberalism." (Arzheimer, 2015, p. 551). Similarly, Scicluna asserts that although it is not a far-right party like Wilders's Dutch Party for Freedom and Le Pen's National Front, the AfD occupies a place on the right of the CDU. She argues that some of its policy positions, such as its defense of the family as the basic unit of society and its criticism of immigration, show that it leans towards the right (Scicluna, 2014). Also, Jäckle and König highlight that "the AfD which started out as a market-liberal single-issue anti-Euro party, turned into a nationalist and populist right-wing party and gained ground in the opinion polls." (Jäckle & König, 2016, p. 223). Today, the party is categorized as a radical/extreme/populist/far right-wing party by many scholars (Arzheimer, 2015; Bebnowski, 2015; Franzmann, 2016; Häusler, 2016; Lewandowsky, Giebler and Wagner, 2016).

In its short history, the AfD has transformed from a Eurosceptic professors' party to a conservative, radical right party with a focus on nationalism and anti-immigration. As illustrated above, the party gradually lost its moderate voice, and conservative and nationalist face of the party has gained influence. Arzheimer in his study on the AfD's ideological standpoint, argues that "...the AfD is certainly unusually prone (by German standards) to display national symbols and to emphasize Germany's national interest." (Arzheimer, 2015, p. 545). Similarly, Franzmann claims that the 2013 electoral campaign of the AfD was dominated by socio-economic issues, however in 2017, it clearly became a more traditional, authoritarian, and national party (Franzmann, 2018). Also, Allthof states that the year 2015 brought a big change to the party, and its agenda has become more anti-immigrant and ethno-nationalist (Allthof, 2018).

It is clear that the AfD began as an anti-EU party and has evolved towards a more nationalist and xenophobic structure as the faces in the party have

changed. It has placed itself in the right of the political spectrum as a radical party. The next section will study features of the radical right populist parties and will detailly study AfD's party program.

3.2 Political Position and Ideology of the AfD

As it was discussed above, in its short history, the AfD has experienced severe internal conflicts and has struggled to find its political orientation. When the moderate members left the party, it has shifted towards the right of the political spectrum and has become a nationalist, xenophobic, anti-immigrant, anti-globalization, and a radical right party. At first, the AfD started its journey with a Eurosceptic agenda, which criticizes the mission Germany has undertaken in the eurozone crisis. However, today, AfD considers preserving the German culture as its most important task and takes the immigration crisis, which it sees as the biggest threat to this mission, to its focus. This chapter will analyze the AfD's party program within the context of the radical right-wing party characteristics mentioned in the RRP's literature chapter and examine its political position by focusing mostly on its latest election declaration and statements of the party members.

First of all, as mentioned above, after the radical change in the AfD, it has become increasingly nationalistic in its discourse, and nationalism has begun to constitute one of the core ideologies of the party. Despite the country's experience of National Socialism, national identity and national interests have become prominent in the party agenda. In the 2016 party program, it is stated that the state and the civil society must defend German cultural identity with confidence (AfD, 2016, 10). The party has adopted campaign slogans such as "Our Country, Our Rules," "Our Country, Our Values," "Our Country, Our Homeland." Moreover, the party often utters that they are proud of being a German, and every German should also be proud of their people, country,

heritage, and culture. For instance, the party posted “What is wrong about being German?” on its social media accounts. On the 2017 Bundestag election declaration, the party argues that;

We maintain an open mind towards other nations and cultures, but wish to be and remain German at heart. Therefore, we shall continuously strive to uphold human dignity, support families with children, retain our western Christian culture, and maintain our language and traditions in a peaceful, democratic, and sovereign nation state for the German people (AfD, 2017, p. 5).

In line with ethnic nationalism, AfD believes that democracy and freedom are based on a shared heritage, cultural values, and historical memories. In the 2019 European Parliament election program, the AfD maintains that cultures, languages and national identities have evolved through centuries of historical development, and only in national states with a democratic constitution, the sovereignty of the people and the fundamental rights of citizens can live and be protected as the center of democracy (AfD, 2019, 11). The party highlights the importance of German values such as traditions, culture, language, Christianity, and family and considers the language as the building block of the German culture. For instance, the party perceives the use of English in German culture as a “misconceived form of internationalization” (AfD, 2017, 40). Also, at the EU level, the AfD wants to ensure that German is equated with English and French in everyday practice. Furthermore, the party demands that the TV channels such as Deutsche Well broadcast worldwide in German instead of only in English (AfD, 2019, 75-76).

It is also fair to say that the party is skeptical about globalization because, in the 2017 declaration, the word “globalization” takes place only once. Besides, the party does not believe in international organizations and claims that “[O]nly 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” (AfD, 2017, 16). Another example to support this argument is Petry’s

interview, where she states, “German politics has a responsibility to ensure the survival of its own people, of its own nation” (Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung 2014, as cited in Kim, 2017). Along the same line, in the 2017 election declaration, it is argued that “[I]t is one of the primary political goals of the AfD to preserve the great cultural heritage for future generations, and to develop and retain its unique characteristics in an age of globalization and digitalization” (AfD, 2017, p. 46).

Secondly, both biological and cultural racism can be seen in the discourse of the Alternative for Germany; however, as a new RRP, the party mostly embraces the latter. As for an example of the biological understanding of racism, the following statement by the Thuringian leader Björn Höcke clearly demonstrates the party position. He argues that Africans and Europeans were biologically different and practiced diverging reproduction strategies (Hurtz, 2015, cited in Jäcke and König, 2016). Similarly, Gauland argued that people might like Jérôme Boateng as a football player, “[b]ut they don’t want to have a Boateng as their neighbor” (the Guardian, 2016). Jérôme Boateng was born in Germany, has a German mother and a Ghanaian father. Furthermore, Klilauer argues that within the AfD, real Germans are called ‘Bio-Germans,’ which refers to racial belonging, not just to citizenship, and being a true German always means blood and race (Klilauer, 2019).

Additionally, Nationalist Socialist rhetoric has become more visible in party members’ discourses. For example, Frauke Petry said that the word “völkish” should be destigmatized. This word is closely associated with National Socialism (Deutsche Welle, 2016b). Another example that demonstrates admiration of the party for the Third Reich is Siegbert Droese’s license plate. His license plate was ‘AH 1818’, where AH stands for the initials of Adolf Hitler and 1 and 8, the first and eighth letters of the alphabet, are considered a code for Adolf Hitler among neo-Nazi groups (Deutsche Welle, 2018). Droese

was the head of the AfD in Leipzig at the time, and now he is a member of the German Bundestag for the AfD Group.

Furthermore, the AfD was associated with the Pegida (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West) movement. Pegida is a right-wing, nationalist, ethno-racist, and islamophobic movement that organizes regular anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic protests in the East German city of Dresden. Although the party has been trying to avoid allying with the Pegida, some members of the party are apparent supporters of the movement. For instance, Meuthen said that “we should lift the ban on cooperation that we have,” he means he wants to be able to speak at Pegida events and show the party symbols there (Reuters, 2018a). Gauland identified Pegida as a “natural ally” of the AfD, and Petry invited Pegida to Saxony’s Parliament to discuss cooperation (Grimm, 2015). Grabow argues that the AfD and Pegida are “two sides of the same coin” (Grabow, 2016).

The AfD is an excellent example of the RRP which covers their racist attitudes with the notion of preserving culture, traditions, and values without being stigmatized as racists. As it was mentioned before, racist rhetoric is a taboo in German political culture. However, the AfD perfectly legitimizes the exclusion of non-German people by using a cultural racist discourse. For example, in the 2017 election declaration, the party argues that the birth rate amongst immigrants is higher than Germans, and it will accelerate ethnic-cultural changes in society (AfD, 2017, 41). According to the party, the solution is more German children and larger families (AfD, 2017, 40, 41). For instance, Petry suggested that German women should have more children to avoid the need for immigration; she advised women to have at least three children (The Independent, 2016).

Thirdly, the AfD, as it is seen in the examples above, is a xenophobic RRP and this has been the most prominent characteristic of the party, especially after the

refugee crisis. It is quite clear that the AfD attaches great importance to German values and traditions and is highly protective of them. According to the party, the biggest threats to these values are migration, multiculturalism, and Islamization. The party maintains that different cultures and ethnicities have different values and mixing them causes damage to all cultures. Therefore, the AfD is strongly opposed to multiculturalism and migration. According to the party, multiculturalism is “blind to history,” it degrades the indigenous culture, and it is a serious danger to the national state (AfD, 2017, 46). AfD politician Droese underlines that “for peaceful coexistence, there is no future for multiculturalism” (CNN, 2017).

The most comprehensive part of its 2017 election declaration is the ‘Immigration, Integration and Asylum’ chapter. It is argued that The Common EU Asylum Policy has failed, therefore external EU borders should be closed completely (AfD, 2017, 58), otherwise, they “...demand strict German border control measures to prevent an uncontrolled influx of migrants and this includes measures to safeguard ‘the green border’” (AfD, 2017, 59). The party even demands a restriction of free movement within the EU, and the host country should be allowed to control the immigration (AfD, 2017, 60). Furthermore, the party makes a distinction between high-skilled immigrants and unqualified immigrants and claims that “the decision on the quality and quantity of immigration is a prime prerogative of any sovereign state and should apply unconditionally to Germany as well” (AfD, 2017, 61). Additionally, according to the party, the multi-cultural society concept has failed, and the best way to live together is assimilation if it is possible. This cannot be forced; however, immigrants have to be fully integrated into the German legal and social system. The party even suggests that permanent residence must require a successful integration, and anyone who refuses to integrate must lose the right to reside (AfD, 2017, 62).

More striking claims attract notice in party members' discourses about the immigrants in Germany. For example, Petry said that firearms should be used by the officers to prevent illegal border crossings (Deutsche Welle, 2017). Karsten Hilse, AfD's parliamentary member, claimed that the arrival of people "who reject our way of life" threatens German values, and "[w]e are being heterogenized and diluted" he continued, "the German people... are meant to silently accept this change and ultimately the loss of our homeland." (CNN, 2017). Moreover, Gauland said that "one million people -foreigners- being brought into this country are taking away a piece of this country and we as AfD don't want that... We say we don't want to lose Germany to an invasion of foreigners from different culture. Very simple." (Independent, 2017). An AfD politician Klaus Riedelsdorf argues that "Germany has no special responsibility for Arab refugees just because 80 years ago we persecuted the Jews" (New York Times, 2017). Former SPD politician, now AfD member in the European Parliament Guido Reil, explains why he would like to live in a migrant district when he moves to Brussels; he wants to see every day why he is fighting (DW Documentary, 2019). Additionally, the party posters have almost hateful statements towards the immigrants. For incidence, a poster shows a group of migrants and says, "the Germans will not finance a better life for you" (CNBC, 2017). Another poster shows two women with bikini and says, "Burkas? We prefer bikinis" (The Washington Post, 2017).

Besides being an anti-immigrant party, the AfD is particularly skeptic of the religion of Islam. The party argues that Islam is incompatible with German culture. In the declaration, the party claims that an increasing number of Muslims is a danger to the German state, society, and values, and that "Islam does not belong to Germany." Also, it is argued that "minaret and muezzin calls contradict a tolerant coexistence of religions, which the Christian churches of modernity do practice" (AfD, 2017, 48-9). Similarly, Gauland argued that "the growing Islamization of Germany poses an urgent challenge for its public and state order, cultural identity and the internal peace of our country" (CNN,

2018). Moreover, Hans-Thomas Tillschneider and AfD lawmaker said that “Islam is foreign to us and for that reason, it cannot invoke the principle of religious freedom to the same degree as Christianity” (Independent, 2016). Klaus Riedelsdorf refers to Islam as an ideology and says Islamic takeover of Germany is the greatest danger the country has faced since the Cold War (New York Times, 2017).

Fourthly, the AfD exhibits anti-democratic behaviors. Although the party claims to be loyal to democracy, the AfD rejects the values of liberal democracy and supports direct democracy rather than representative democracy. The party is against pluralism and constitutional protection of minorities. It considers the general will is more important than anything, and it can only be achieved through the means of direct democracy. In the 2017 election declaration, it is indicated that “only direct democracy exercised by the electorate can return political parties to the democratic system” (AfD, 2017, 10). The party defends the introduction of referenda and maintains that Germans should have the right to vote on the laws made by the parliament, and the federal president should be directly elected by the people (AfD, 2017, 8-12). In this way, the power of the president will be increased, and the president will be able to claim that his/her power comes from ‘the people’ to legitimate his/her actions.

Furthermore, the AfD considers a democratic nation-state belongs to one ethnic group, and others can only live if they accept the dominance of this group. The party’s anti-multicultural attitude and hostility towards minorities, which explained previously, support that according to the AfD, German political culture and values are predominant, and others will have to adjust with it. Also, the party calls for the reinstatement of the status quo of the *jus sanguinis* (right of blood), which determines citizenship by having one or both parents who are citizens of the state (AfD, 2017, 25).

Consequently, although the Federal Constitutional Court has not banned the party on the grounds of violation of democratic principles and constitutional order, the AfD's attitudes towards the essential aspects of democracy, particularly liberal democracy, such as pluralism and minority rights, are sufficient to classify AfD as a party with anti-democratic orientation. Althoff argues that the AfD is an anti-democratic party "with its deliberate attacks on the political system and its maneuvers to destabilize democracy" (Althoff, 2018, p. 6).

Fifthly, like the other RRP, the Alternative for Germany is a defender of a strong state. They demand a fundamental change in the law enforcement and judicial system. The party requests a strong police force and law and order to retain the authority. According to the party, the number of staff in the police force and the amount of the budget should be increased, and more equipment should be provided. Also, the party demands longer sentences, reduction of the age of criminality to twelve years, and jail sentences to those who assault officials such as police officers, fire-fighters and medical rescue staff (AfD, 2017, 24, 25). Moreover, the AfD argues that in order to protect themselves from the offenders, the acquisition of the gun license for the citizens should be facilitated (AfD, 2017, 25).

Similarly, the AfD is in favor of the reformation on the German armed forces and argues that extensive structural, personnel, and material changes are essential. For instance, the party demands the restoration of conscription. Furthermore, the party is highly protective of the German borders. The party suggests operational crossing points and a "green border," and protective fences or similar barriers should be set up when it is necessary (AfD, 2017, 26). Also, the AfD is against the idea of a European military force. Instead, the party suggests a well-equipped and trained German Armed Forces as the "pillar of German sovereignty" (AfD, 2017, 30). In a similar manner, the party advocates

that any engagement of NATO must be aligned to German interests, and all Allied troops stationed on German soil should withdraw (AfD, 2017, 29, 30).

In addition, as a pro-authoritarian party, the AfD is highly concerned with the social structure of the society, such as forming a family. According to the party, marriage and family are the nucleus of civil society, and they should be protected by the government (AfD, 2017, 39). The party argues that family as a fundamental unit of society is undermined because of government institutions such as day-care facilities and full-time schools, gender mainstreaming projects, and the general focus on individuality (AfD, 2017, 40). In 2014, the Baden-Württemberg AfD's declaration suggested that state broadcasters should be made to present marriage and family in a positive way (Deutsche Welle, 2016c). Furthermore, the AfD sees itself as a defender of the 'traditional family model' and is against abortion and same-sex marriage. For instance, in 2016, the party proposed a new sexual education curriculum which states that information on homo-, trans- and bisexuality should be limited in the sexual education lessons (Deutsche Welle, 2016d).

Finally, as a populist radical right party, the AfD clearly makes a distinction between the pure people and the corrupt elite and has a tendency to create internal and external others. The internal enemies are mainly the elites, the established parties, immigrants, refugees, and minorities in the country. The party blames especially the established parties for their policies such as immigration, economic or culture, and family policies. In the 2017 election declaration, it is stated that "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," and they pursue only their interests; to retain their own power base and status. "Only the citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany can end this illegitimate state of affairs" (AfD, 2017, 7). As an example of the misguided developments, the party argues the elite in power benefits from immigration. In the words of the party, "in order to fight

the effects of the negative demographic development, political parties currently in government support mass migration, mainly from Islamic states, without due consideration of the needs and qualifications of the German labour market” (AfD, 2017, 41). In a similar vein, at a rally, Gauland accused “the parties represented today in the Bundestag” of “the attempt to gradually replace the German people with a population from all parts of this earth” (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 2016, as cited in Kim, 2017).

Although the AfD clearly regards all the established parties as an enemy, their favorite one is Chancellor Merkel. Especially because of the refugee policy, the party called Merkel a traitor accused her of letting almost a million asylum seekers into Germany and adopted ‘Merkel must go’ as their main slogan. Moreover, Andre Poggenburg, the AfD’s leader in Saxony-Anhalt, described Merkel as the ‘worst chancellor in German history’ (The Sun, 2016).

Also, as discussed previously, the AfD considers refugees and immigrants as invaders and attackers, and they are the reason for unemployment, crime, and terrorism. The party is strictly against immigration from the third countries as well as from the other EU countries. Minorities in Germany are also others to the AfD. The Turks living in Germany constitute the largest communities outside of Turkey. Since they are both ethnically and religiously different, they are the perfect others to the party. Poggenburg called Turks living in Germany “camel drivers who should return to their mud huts and polygamy” (Reuters, 2018b). Similarly, Gauland said that Turkish-German Aydan Özoğuz, who is Social Democrat parliamentarian and Germany’s integration commissioner, should be “disposed of” back to Anatolia. He used the term “entsorge,” which the Nazis used for the Jews (Deutsche Welle, 2017). LGBTI people are also internal others to the AfD. The party rejects education on gender ideology in schools and argues that “our children should not be the plaything to the sexual orientation of a noisy minority at school” (AfD, 2017, 53).

The AfD also has external others. Since the party is a defender of the sovereign nation-states, they see international organizations and the European Union as external enemies. For instance, Höcke said that “I know the German people want to be free of EU slavery” and a spokesman of the party called Brussels a ‘bureaucracy monster’ (Express, 2016). Similarly, NATO is another enemy, and the party demands withdrawal of Allied troops stationed on German soil (AfD, 2016, 7).

Also, like other populist parties, the AfD considers itself as the true representative of the people and places the general will of the people above everything. Petry on her twitter account claimed that “established parties are responsible for the people’s disenchantment with politics – AfD brings fresh air to the political landscape” (The Local, 2016). The slogan of the party “Mut zur Wahrheit” (Courage for Truth) strengthens its populist position that established parties are guilty of lying to the people. According to the party, only the AfD is the voice of the people, and other parties, especially CDU and SPD, ignore the concern of the people.

3.3 The AfD and Euroscepticism

The Alternative for Germany was established as a single-issue party with a Eurosceptic stance during the third phase of Euroscepticism. Despite the softening after the 2015 European refugee crisis, anti-EU and anti-integration discourse is still an indispensable component of AfD. Since its establishment, one of the driving forces of the party’s European criticism was towards the EU’s fiscal and monetary regime and the failure of the Maastricht Treaty to establish the European Monetary Union (EMU). However, over time, the AfD’s Eurosceptic discourse has been strengthened with nationalist, xenophobic, and populist rhetoric in parallel with its ideology. This chapter will examine the Alternative for Germany’s perspective on the European Union

and European integration. The 2019 European Parliament election declaration will be used mostly, as it is the most up-to-date document provided by AfD and contains quite clear arguments on the subject.

The economic concern is still a significant element in the party position; however, nationalism-based Euroscepticism seems to be the most dominant factor in the party agenda. The AfD, as a radical right party, attaches great importance to the German nation and the sovereignty of Germany. It does not accept any kind of international or supranational entity over the nation-state. As it was stated before, the AfD believes that nation-states are created with a painful history, and only they can provide to their citizens the necessary and desired framework for the identification and greatest possible rights of individual and collective freedom. The substitution of communities or international organizations for a nation-state is a utopia and causes great suffering to humankind (AfD, 2017, p. 16). Therefore, the AfD is strictly against the current structure of the European Union and in favor of returning to “an economic union based on shared interests, and consisting of sovereign, but loosely connected nation-states” (AfD, 2017, p. 15). According to the party, forming a state-like structure with 28 or even more states with their own languages, cultures, and historical experiences is an attempt to fail (AfD, 2019, p. 7). The party believes that the political, economic, and social strength of Europe comes from the diversity of national cultures and traditions. This is why the party refuses to transform the EU into a state with legislative power and separate government or establishing a United States of Europe (AfD, 2019, p. 11).

The AfD argues the EU acts not as an association of sovereign nation-states, but as an illegal federal state (AfD, 2019, p. 29). Furthermore, the party claims that the deepening process, which intensifies with the Schengen (1985), Maastricht (1992), and Lisbon (2007) Treaties, has neglected the national sovereignty of the member states. These treaties led to increasing centralization

and policy transfers to the European Union. However, according to the party, centralization entails the loss of sovereignty of individual member states. In the 2019 European Parliament (EP) election declaration, the party states that “the increasing centralization of sovereignty rights, and attempt to create a European federal state, is irrational and not sustainable” (AfD, 2019, p. 16). Therefore, the party rejects further centralism and persistence and demands partnership-based cooperation with the member state to guarantee prosperity and peace.

The party rejects the influence and intervention of the European Union on member states in almost all areas to guarantee the protection of national sovereignty. One of the major demands of AfD is to end the EU involvement in nation-states’ fiscal and monetary policies. The party strictly opposes further integration in this area; in fact, the party demands to collaborate with the other European nations only in a free trade zone like the EEC (European Economic Community) introduced. From the very beginning of the establishment of the party, one of its primary purposes has been the orderly dissolution of ‘the Euro experiment’ and reintroduction of Deutsche Mark (DM). The party argues that after the reintroduced DM, German economy will regain its high purchasing power, and the enormous cost reduction on the import side associated with this increase in purchasing power would again lead to rising real incomes, which would benefit everyone in the entire German economy and not only some export companies (AfD, 2019, p. 31). Moreover, the party maintains that the Eurozone has been a region with economic, monetary, political, and cultural differences. Because of all historical experience, a single currency area is not suitable to a heterogeneous region, and it should never have been expanded beyond the free-trade zone of EEC (AfD, 2017, p. 17). According to AfD, the Euro actually jeopardizes the peace among the European nations and even threatens to destroy the European cultural heritage because they are forced into sharing a common destiny by the common currency. The launch of this currency has caused resentment and confrontation among European countries.

“Countries incurring economic difficulties within the single currency area are forced to restore their competitiveness by such measures as internal devaluation and associated budgetary constraints (austerity policies), rather than exploiting the tool of currency adjustments” (AfD, 2017, p. 18-19). The party believes that the Euro created a donor and debtor countries in Europe and caused social and political tensions among the members (AfD, 2017, p. 18).

Based on the necessity of protecting the sovereign rights of the member states, AfD believes that the impact of the European Central Bank on national banks should be reduced and “the supervision of banks has to remain entirely under national jurisdiction, irrespective of unified EU standards” (AfD, 2017, p. 20). Besides, the party is against the taxation policy of the EU. They argue that the practice in the EU of adopting a budget plan for seven years, which is even beyond an EU election period with a de facto binding effect for the national parliaments, undermines national budget sovereignty and they demand that the German share of EU spending and income in the federal budget be ended (AfD, 2019, p. 23).

Another area that the AfD believes the EU interferes with national sovereignty rights is the judiciary. The party accuses the European Court of Justice of interfering in the sovereignty of the nation-states and demands an end to this (AfD, 2019, p. 13). In addition, the party emphasizes that the influence of EUROPOL and EUROJUST institutions should be reduced and opposes further integration in this field, arguing that European Public Prosecutor’s Office is not needed and that the right to sovereignty cannot be transferred anymore (AfD, 2019, p. 50).

Other areas that the AfD believes that the EU should not interfere are environment and energy policy, education policy, family, and culture policy. According to the party, the environment and energy policy should be the responsibility of nation-states and securing the energy supply of one country

must not be done at the expense of other countries (AfD, 2019, p. 79). Besides, in the eyes of the AfD, the EU has failed in the climate crisis because its climate policy is based on the hypothesis of human-made climate change, which affects all areas of society. As a result of this policy, people of Europe cannot access to cheap energy (AfD, 2019, p. 8).

As for the education policy, unsurprisingly, the party is against any influence of international organizations, corporations, or lobby groups. They believe that education should be under the nation state's responsibility and reject a centralized education policy. "The standards of the education system should be based on the requirements of other relevant national educational institutions for the desired transition to be successful" (AfD, 2019, p. 71).

The AfD considers family as the nucleus of society, and that should be a national business. According to the party, the EU's interference into socio-political and family policy fields violates member states' sovereignty rights. The party says, "the EU does not need to make decisions on ethical and moral matters. Legal competence should remain in nation-states, in particular with regard to all ethical and family policy issues relating to the right to life, self-determination, marriage, and divorce law" (AfD, 2019, p. 66). In addition to this, the AfD requests withdrawal from Amsterdam declaration, which makes the implementation of gender mainstreaming mandatory for all EU members. According to the party, gender ideology is the denial of biological differences between men and women and trivializes the family, indispensable for the existence of society (AfD, 2019, p. 74). Therefore, the party does not accept any involvement of the Union into the family and gender politics of the nation-states.

Additionally, the party believes that the cultural policy is a matter for the federal state. It is stated in the 2019 EP election declaration that cultures, languages, and national identities have arisen through centuries of historical

developments (AfD, 2019, p. 11). “The multi-million euro cultural framework programs of the EU, which work openly towards the ‘United States of Europe’ and often fight against the leading national culture, are poison for a free cultural life” (AfD, 2019, p. 74). In the same line with this understanding, the party is against the notion of European identity and European citizenship by arguing that gradually replacing national identities by European ones is an illusion and there is neither a European folk that would be constitutive for such a project nor is it recognizable that it will develop in the foreseeable future (AfD, 2019, p. 11).

Another area that the AfD believes that should be the responsibility of nation-states is foreign policy. “Core competencies and decision-making powers, including in the field of foreign and security policy, must remain the responsibility of the member states” (AfD, 2019, p. 17). The party emphasizes that the aim of German foreign policy should be the preservation of a sovereign Germany, and it should consider only German interests. Therefore, the party rejects the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy and a Common European Foreign Service. Instead, they request strengthened interstate agreements among European partner nations (AfD, 2017, p. 17).

Also, as a defender of a strong state notion, the AfD objects to the idea of a combined European military. Instead, they call for a well-equipped and trained German Armed Forces with a larger budget and more personnel. In addition to this, the party favors the establishment of a national German Border Police under the auspices of the German Federal Police. The party claims that the protection of Europe’s borders is inadequate; therefore, asks for the reestablishment of operational border crossing points (AfD, 2017, p. 26).

Another reason for the AfD’s Euroscepticism is that it has adopted a xenophobic ideology. Firstly, the party demands strict regulations for the people coming to Germany from other European countries. The right to

freedom of movement has led to a flow of migration from countries with low welfare to high ones. The AfD argues that these people are coming to Germany with the purpose of obtaining social aid and abusing the ‘generous German welfare system’ (AfD, 2017, p. 60). The party accuses the Free Movement of Persons Directive of giving to EU citizens in Germany a legal status that corresponds almost entirely to German citizenship. As a result, permanent social assistance recipients and serious criminals are almost never deported. The AfD demands to end this. “EU citizens who are a burden on another EU country or do not comply with the law must be able to be expelled from the country easily and permanently” (AfD, 2019, p. 41). Also, in some cases, EU citizens living in Germany enjoy even more rights than Germans and the party defines this as national discrimination and calls for an end. Therefore, the party is asking for new regulations at the EU level. There should be “a comprehensive and thorough realignment of EU legislation to regain a national course of action and to put an end to widespread misuse of rights related to the Free Movement Directive” (AfD, 2017, p. 60). If this does not work, they demand a restriction of the free movement right within the EU and authorization of the host country to control the immigration of job seekers and their family members. Moreover, according to the party, all EU countries must be allowed to place a restriction on the entitlement to tax-funded social benefits. “Direct immigration into social systems of host countries has to be stopped” (AfD, 2017, p. 61).

Secondly, the party demands restrictions for the people coming from the third countries, especially from Islamic countries. The AfD claims that the European Union has failed in the migration crisis, similar to the economic and climate crisis. “Although the founding treaties have transferred the internal and external border regime of the EU states and the asylum and immigration policy to the EU, no provision has been made for the foreseeable migration problems” (AfD, 2019, p. 8). Failure in crisis management caused citizens to lose confidence in the functioning of EU institutions. The Charter of Fundamental

Rights of the European Union postulates “respect for the diversity of the cultures and traditions of the peoples of Europe and the national identity of the Member States.” However, the AfD accuses the EU of not keeping this promise and criticizes by arguing the political elites and institutions of the EU pursue an asylum and immigration policy that puts European civilization in existential danger. “A further opening of Europe to immigration from other countries will inevitably lead to a marginalization of the local population in a relatively short period of time” (AfD, 2019, p. 37). Furthermore, according to the party, the policy of opening the border will result in a cultural demolition, and immigration, especially from Islamic countries, will put Europe’s principles of developed popular sovereignty and democracy at risk.

Therefore, the AfD demands radical changes in the migration policy in line with the needs of the member states. “All immigration to Europe must be limited and controlled in such a way that the identity of the European culture nations is preserved under all circumstances” and in order to protect the nations, asylum and immigration policies must be returned to the responsibility of the member states (AfD, 2010, p. 37-38). This is why the party strongly rejects the Common European Asylum System and binding refugee admission quotas for the member states. They also consider the EU’s involvement in the members’ migration policies as an encroachment on national sovereignty and reject international regulations and obligations to accept migrants.

In addition, the AfD says that because of the Schengen Agreement, the external borders of Europe are not protected properly. “The Schengen Agreement in its current form poses a threat to the security and prosperity of EU citizens and needs to be reformed” (AfD, 2019, p. 40). According to the party, “Europe without borders” increasingly poses a threat to the internal security of the individual nation-states and creates considerable risks in the area of terrorism. The party says, in Germany, the number of violent crimes and threats has increased significantly since 2015, and refugees coming illegally to the

country, have become disproportionately criminal (AfD, 2019, p. 49). Also, the AfD claims that despite the lack of security caused by the Schengen Agreement, the EU border protection agency FRONTEX does not protect the external borders, and it supports illegal immigration by bringing illegal migrants who have been caught at sea to the EU. Thereby, according to the party, FRONTEX provides assistance services for human smugglers. (AfD, 2019, p. 39-49). That is why the member states have to be responsible for securing the borders, and if a member state is not able to protect, it can be temporarily or permanently excluded from the Schengen area (AfD, 2019, p. 39). As a result, the AfD calls for a fundamental regulation in the Schengen Agreement alongside with reintroducing the national border controls, so that the nation-states can guarantee their own internal security.

Another driving force behind the Euroscepticism of the AfD is its populist ideology. It is not only the established parties or politicians that the party directs its populist accusations, but the EU also gets its share from these accusations. According to the AfD, EU policies are determined by bureaucrats who have no democratic accountability so that the EU has become an undemocratic entity, and the nontransparent structure of the EU makes it unreachable for the citizens. Moreover, the party says the impact of the Brussels bureaucracy is frightening because sometimes directives and draft laws are drawn up directly by the lobbyists. In the 2019 EP election declaration, the AfD's perspective on the EU summarized as follows;

The European community has developed into an undemocratic construct, which is occupied by the political actors of Europe and is shaped by non-transparent, uncontrolled bureaucracies. The principles of subsidiarity and the prohibition of state liability for the debts of other countries set out in the European treaties are ignored. The policies of the EU institutions, in particular, the European Council and the European Commission, are dominated by the haggling over particular interests of individual states and lobby groups. Excessive European regulations are increasingly strangling competition. The democratic control of the EU

institutions is completely inadequate, and the European Court of Justice (ECJ) does not play this role, but persistently extends EU powers at the expense of the sovereignty of the nation-states (AfD, 2019, p. 11).

It is clear that the AfD sees the Union as an entity that is ran by a group of unreachable bureaucrats who always intervenes in the affairs of the nation-states. The party is accusing these bureaucrats of creating an unnecessary financial burden on the citizens' shoulders. The party says the EU, with its twelve institutions and thousands of personnel, causes enormous expense in the budget. Therefore, the party demands a budget cut in the EU and to stop the disproportionate pay and supply for the EU bureaucrats (AfD, 2019, p. 12). In addition to this, they request to abolish the European Parliament "with its currently privileged 751 MPs" (AfD, 2019, p. 12).

The party also claims that the EU ignores its citizens' will. The Maastricht and the Lisbon treaties were significant steps to a more centralized Union. However, the party highlights that this centralization was rejected in France and the Netherlands in the popular referenda. "Nevertheless, the political leadership of the major EU nations wishes to enforce this project against the obvious majority will of the peoples within the EU" (AfD, 2017, p. 16). Therefore, the AfD demands a referendum not just for the treaties but also for all supranational projects such as the monetary union or even to stay in the EU.

In summary, the AfD is against any further integration and centralization within the EU and strictly opposed to a United States of Europe. They even want to abolish the Union's existing structure by reducing the impact of several institutions as well as abolishing the EP. The party believes that only independent and sovereign nation-states can guarantee peace, freedom, and security in the continent. Therefore, they demand to collaborate with the other European nations in a free trade zone united with only neighborhood relations. If their fundamental reform approaches in the existing EU structure cannot be

implemented within a reasonable period of time, they would like to initiate the DEXIT process and leave the Union or request an orderly dissolution of the EU (AfD, 2019, p. 12).

As it is seen in the arguments of the party about the European Union, it is reasonable to say that the AfD is a hard-Eurosceptic party. Although, as discussed previously, there is a grey area between hard and soft Euroscepticism, and it is not easy to label a party like the MHP, placing the AfD's position is not that difficult. Also, while the MHP does not have clear arguments about the EU institutions, the AfD as a party from a member state, takes an explicit stance. The Maastricht Treaty created the European Union as a single body with its three pillars; European Communities, Common Foreign and Security Policy, and Cooperation in Justice and Home Affairs. The AfD is clearly against the last two. The party does not accept the transfer of national sovereignty in neither foreign and security policy nor immigration and domestic policies. Considering European Communities, the party would like to keep one of the main areas of the pillar, which is the European Economic Community; however, it is strictly against other main areas such as social and environmental policies and economic and monetary union. Therefore, based on Szczerbiak and Taggart's works, there is a clear, principled opposition to the EU and European integration in the party discourse. The AfD is against the current structure of the Union as well as its future. The party not only against the EU institutions or demands German exit from the EU, they even see the Union as a danger to all European countries and suggest an orderly dissolution. Similar to the MHP's case, these findings support the two ideas raised by Szczerbiak and Taggart (2002) and Vasilopoulou (2009). The AfD, like the MHP, is a radical right party with authoritarian characteristics and clearly a hard-Eurosceptic party. Therefore, it confirms the ideas that the radical or extreme right parties (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2002) and the parties which display authoritarian characteristics (Vasilopoulou 2009) tend to be hard Eurosceptic.

Considering these arguments, the AfD can be placed as a Euroreject party in Kopecký and Mudde's (2002) categorization since the party is pessimistic, even rejective about the ideas underlying the process of European integration and the European Union. Similarly, Vasilopoulou (2009) argues that if a party is against all aspects of the integration, namely refuses principle, practice, and future of the integration, this party is an example of the 'rejecting Euroscepticism' type of parties.

CHAPTER 4

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MHP AND THE AfD

In the previous chapters, first, the questions of how the Nationalist Action Party and the Alternative for Germany placed the six characteristics of the Radical Right Parties into their party programs and how these features shape their political positions were discussed. Secondly, the motivations behind the two parties' Eurosceptic behavior were explained. In this chapter, the relation between party position and Euroscepticism will be discussed by examining the two parties. In this way, the question of whether Euroscepticism in the radical right parties is an ideological orientation or a strategic reaction will be answered.

As it is seen in the previous chapters, the two parties have a lot in common, and both of them show the main six characteristics of the RRP. The foremost commonality between the MHP and the AfD is that both parties attach the highest significance to the nationalism, cultural values, unity, and sovereignty rights of the nation-state. None of the parties accepts any policy or any action that might jeopardize national unity and strictly against transferring sovereignty rights. In addition, their commitment to cultural values such as religion, traditions, and language consists backbone of their ideological stance. Also, both parties have expressions that highlight the importance of being a citizen of their own countries. For example, while the MHP says, 'How happy is a man who says I am Turk!', the AfD asks 'What is wrong about being German?' in order to show that they are proud to be German.

Another similarity between the two parties is that they both have racist and discriminatory rhetoric. Both the MHP and the AfD demand to limit the rights given to the minorities. For instance, while the AfD is against foreign financing of mosques in Germany (AfD, 2017, p. 48), the MHP stresses the danger of

allowing non-Muslim communities to establish a foundation, thereby gaining legal personality status (MHP, 2015a, p. 71). Moreover, they even ask the minorities that if they want to be a part of the country, they have to adopt the national values. For example, the MHP argues that if Kurdish people want to live in Turkey, they have to abandon their identity. Similarly, the AfD says the best way to live together is the assimilation of the newcomers. Also, because of their xenophobic behavior, both parties see immigrants as a security matter for their countries. The MHP and the AfD agree that immigrants are a burden and they damage the social fabric. As mentioned before, the AfD has a tougher xenophobic discourse than the MHP. The MHP has a lower xenophobic voice on the current migration crisis partly because Turkey hasn't experienced such a refugee influx before and partly because the immigrants are Muslims coming from former Ottoman countries. Nevertheless, there are clear examples of xenophobia in both parties' rhetoric.

Furthermore, the two parties believe in a strong state notion. For both parties, strict law and order, a strong police force and a deterrent army are essential elements of the nation-state. Especially for the MHP, there is nothing more important than the state, and individuals living in the state have to serve their country at all costs. Also, both parties demand to have strict border control and longer sentences for those who violate the rules. Therefore, besides being in favor of a strong state, they also exhibit authoritarian behavior.

As two radical right parties, populism is a significant part of both the MHP and the AfD. Both parties label established parties, foreigners, or minority groups as 'others,' and they believe that they are the true representative of 'the people.' The MHP's policy has always been built on targeting an enemy. Until the end of the Cold War, the enemy was communism. During the 1990s, the party attacked the PKK. After 2011, YPG/PYD organizations have become the enemy. Finally, after the coup attempt in 2016, the FETÖ took its place in the enemy list. At the same time, in the eyes of the party, the AKP, until 2018, and

the CHP have been responsible for all those decisions endanger the national values and unity. Furthermore, Kurdish people constitute one of the significant elements that are hazardous to the nation. However, from the beginning of the relations, the MHP has always been skeptical of the European Union. For the MHP, the EU is a Christian club whose goal is to keep Turkey under control by provoking minorities living in Turkey and undermining the Turkish nation. Considering all of these, the MHP sees itself as the true representative and guardian of the people.

In a similar vein, the AfD has its own enemies. As a party that was founded as a single-issue party with a hard-Eurosceptic agenda, its biggest enemy is the European Union. Like the MHP, the AfD believes that the EU endangers the national values. According to the party, the Union consists of 'bureaucracy monsters,' and for the sake of the nation-states of Europe, the Union has to be orderly dissolved. Besides the EU, the established parties, especially CDU/CSU and SPD, are the enemies of the AfD. While arguing that the number of immigrants will soon exceed the number of Germans and cause ethnic-cultural changes in society, the AfD blames these parties for being the reason for the migration crisis. Moreover, Turkish people living in Germany are the others for the AfD. The party demands that Turks have to live according to German values or go back to Turkey. Like the MHP, the AfD sees itself as the true representative and guardian of the people against all these harmful elements.

In addition to their ideological stances, both the MHP and the AfD have a similar perspective towards the European Union. Although the AfD is a party from a member state and the MHP from a candidate state, both parties' arguments show similarity. Mainly, both parties reject transferring any sovereignty to the Union and argue that the EU has no right to interfere with the nation-state. Therefore, they oppose to the deepening process and centralization in the EU. The main difference between their position is that the

AfD as a member state's party has quite clear arguments about the EU policy areas. For example, the AfD accuses the Union of interfering with Germany's finance, environment, education, or family policies. On the other hand, as a candidate state party, the MHP does not have a specific opinion on these issues. The MHP did not fully encounter strict EU policy arrangements, apart from the adaptation of the *acquis* policies. The reason for this difference might be that even if it is a remote possibility, Turkey always has the option to end the accession process. However, when the EU implements a policy, Germany's hands are tied, and leaving the EU has more vital consequences. Therefore, the AfD has more serious and clear arguments about the EU policies.

As discussed before, the AfD is without dispute a hard-Eurosceptic party and the MHP, although it states that it supports the EU membership in principle, the proper place of the party on the hard-soft Euroscepticism scale is very close to the hard edge. However, the question is whether ideology or strategy determines the Eurosceptic stance of the radical right parties. In other words, does the RRP position on the European Union changes whenever it is deemed strategically convenient, or does the party strictly oppose the Union because of its ideology?

When the Eurosceptic discourse of the MHP and the AfD is examined, is it seen that most of the motivation behind it is their ideology. Both parties have a Eurosceptic position because of their non-negotiable criteria. The MHP and the AfD, with nationalist, racist, xenophobic, strong statist, anti-democratic, and populist characteristics as part of their ideology, believe that a supranational union like the EU is a threat to the nation-state and their ideology directly correlates with their Euroscepticism. As nationalist parties, both the MHP and the AfD are against transferring sovereignty rights to the EU. They argue that the EU policies and its involvement in the nation-states' decision-making process are a violation of sovereignty rights, national unity, and

integrity. They strictly reject EU involvement in any part of the policy-making process in order to protect the national values.

Having racist and xenophobic characteristics also influences parties' position towards the EU. Both parties criticize the EU's migration policy and accuse the Union of making the nation-states to accept more refugees than they can afford. In addition, parties' opinion on the minority rights explicitly conflicts with the EU values indicated in the Lisbon Treaty. Article 2 of the treaty states that "the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities" (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007). However, both parties demand to assimilate the minorities, and they regard refugees as invaders and a security problem. This kind of stance contradicts EU values. This is also connected with their anti-democratic characteristics. Both parties have a tendency to limit human rights if the action endangers the state. For instance, the AfD requests prison sentences for aggression against state officers (AfD, 2017, p. 25). Similarly, the MHP requests restrictions on means of communication and the right to the association if there is a risk to jeopardize national integrity or security (MHP, 2015a, p. 65; 2018, p. 37). Also, as stated above, the MHP accuses the EU of weakening Turkey by asking to change the article on insulting Turkishness and the anti-terror law.

Moreover, the parties' populist ideologies shape their Eurosceptic behavior. For both parties, the EU consists of a bunch of undemocratic, nontransparent, and hypocrite bureaucrats who works with lobbies behind the close doors and ignore the interests of nation-states. For the MHP, the main goal of the EU is to keep Turkey under control and make it a satellite state with blackmails, ultimatums, and unfair demands. Similarly, according to the AfD, the EU undemocratically interferes with the politics of the nation-states and extends its power at the expense of the sovereignty of the member states. For both parties, they are the true rescuer of the public from the evil European Union.

When two RRPs' ideologies and Eurosceptic stances are examined, there is an undeniable connection. As Szczerbiak and Taggart (2002), Kopecký and Mudde (2002), and Vasilopoulou (2009) argue, ideology is the essential factor that shapes RRPs' Euroscepticism. Even if the party is from a member state or candidate state, the influence of ideology on Euroscepticism is quite clear. The MHP and the AfD examples show that ideological orientation motivates RRPs' Euroscepticism. However, while the AfD's arguments are strong and steady when the MHP's arguments are analyzed, it is seen that being a party of a candidate country has an impact on its position against the European Union. On the one hand, the MHP often states that it supports the EU membership in principle because it is a state policy. On the other hand, the party rejects the fundamental reforms of the accession process, although these reforms consist of the principal values of the EU. In other words, despite the fact that the MHP is a hard-Eurosceptic party and against the EU in principle, it does not express this openly because of strategic matters. For example, during the golden age of the Turkey-EU relations, the MHP was clearly against the reforms of the accession process however, the party always emphasized its support to the membership as long as the EU meets party's demands. As the EU support declined in Turkey, the MHP's Eurosceptic discourse has become stronger, and the party members have mentioned ending the process more often.

In conclusion, this work supports the idea in the literature that ideology is the driving force behind radical right parties' Euroscepticism by examining two RRPs, the MHP and the AfD's ideologies and their Eurosceptic stances. The findings show that strategy plays a role in Euroscepticism of the radical right party of the candidate state. While strategic reactions determine the intensity in the Eurosceptic rhetoric, ideology is always the main driving force of the radical right party Euroscepticism.

CONCLUSION

Euroscepticism was once considered as a British disease; however, it has spread to all member states, as well as the candidate states. As Euroscepticism continues to spread, interest in the subject has increased in the literature. Various questions have been raised about the motivations of public and party-based Euroscepticism. One of the reasons for increasing Euroscepticism is the increase in the support of radical right-wing parties because many of these parties show a Eurosceptic trend. Therefore, this thesis specifically focuses on party-based Euroscepticism in the radical right party family and contributes to the literature by answering the question of whether RRP Euroscepticism is an ideological orientation or a strategic reaction. Two radical right parties, one from Germany and one from Turkey, were examined based on their ideologies and Eurosceptic attitudes. Having these two parties from a member state and a candidate state enabled us to approach Euroscepticism from different perspectives and helped to understand whether the integration level is important. German AfD and Turkish MHP were the best examples to study this area both because of their clear ideological stances and attitudes towards the European Union and the similarities between them.

While examining the ideology of the MHP and the AfD it was found out that both parties have the five ideological features of the RRPs that have been agreed in the literature. These features are nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy, and strong state/authoritarianism. In addition to these five features, populism is also a common characteristic of the two parties that motivates their attitudes towards the EU. These six features mainly constitute the ideological orientation of the MHP and the AfD. Some of the features are more dominant than the others, but all the six features shape parties' behavior towards the EU.

When ideologies of the MHP and AfD and their attitudes towards the EU are examined, there is a clear connection. Their Eurosceptic stances come from their ideology. In other words, these two parties are Eurosceptic because they are nationalist, racist, xenophobic, anti-democratic, populist, and believe in a strong state and both parties' criticism or rejection of the EU policies and institutions is a result of their ideology. For example, the MHP and the AfD are against any kind of EU involvement in the nation-state policies thus, the deepening process, because it jeopardizes sovereignty of the state.

Although the parties come from different integration levels, one from a member state and the other one from a candidate state, their ideologies directly affect their Euroscepticism and both parties have very similar stance towards the Union. This means that the level of integration actually does not have a clear influence on the radical right Euroscepticism. However, it does affect the level of criticism. While the AfD has quite clear arguments on specific EU institutions and policy areas, the MHP mainly criticizes the accession process rather than institutions or common policies such as the monetary union, the common agricultural policy or the European Court of Justice. This is because Germany and the AfD are directly affected by the EU policies and institutions. When a decision is made in the Union, Germany has to act accordingly. Therefore, the AfD has much more material to criticize the EU compared to the MHP. On the other hand, the MHP has experienced only the accession process and hasn't been directly affected by the EU rules. This is why the party has a clear opinion mostly on the accession process. However, when the MHP's intensity of criticism and the similarities with the AfD are considered, it could be said that if Turkey becomes a member someday, the MHP will have the same arguments as the AfD on specific EU institutions and policy areas.

Taking all these findings into consideration, this thesis argues that the Euroscepticism in the radical right party family is an ideological orientation and it is unlikely to disappear over time. Therefore, future studies should be

conducted to overcome radical right party Euroscepticism. If the RRP's continue to increase their support, it will pose a major threat to the existence of the European Union. In order for the EU to survive in the future, there has to be a common understanding and reconciliation between these parties and the European Union.

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