Political Ideologies Contexts, Ideas, and Practices
Professor Arvind Sivaramakrishnan
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology Madras
Nationalism Lec 5/5 - Worked Examples 42:25

Well, hello everyone, hello again. We're about to conclude our eleventh topic, nationalism on this NPTEL ideologies course 2019-20. We're going to look at three examples of different forms of nationalism which are currently very much in the public eye at this time. The three examples, one is I've taken this from the German news magazine, *Der Spiegel International*, and it's a lengthy account of the movement within Germany's right-wing or far-right party, the, the AfD, the Alternative für Deutschland, of a movement, as *Spiegel* itself says, towards right-wing extremism, that's the first, that's the longest item we will look at.

The second one is a consequence of, of this. The *Spiegel* article was published in September 2019, it's freely accessible on the net and I shall send you the slide of course, put that up for you to, to gain access, with the lecture topic. But the second one is an article published in tthe *Guardian* on February the tenth 2020. That's two, two days ago. Today, it's the twelfth of February, There' s another long article in, in the British several long articles in the British press.

We will look at this one from the tenth of February, needless to say, the German press is full of reporters and comment on the fact that the leader, not the Chancellor of Germany, but the leader of the governing party in Berlin has resigned over the development, developments which led to a new coalition government in the Province of Thuringia after a recent state-level election.

The third article is by Joanna Kakissis, and it' s on National Public Radio in, in the United States, dated the fourteenth of January 2020. It was a broadcast and the transcript is, is on the net and it's freely accessible, freely accessible. The second and third articles we'll look at are both quite short. We will start with the, the *Der Spiegel* article by several members of the staff of *Der Spiegel,* which is a heavyweight German news magazine. The, the website is of course on, will be you know, in a PowerPoint that we send you, we'll make available to you.

And we'l, we will start by looking at this item, here we are, quite simply in recent state elections, the right-wing Populist Party Alternative for Germany, in German, Alternative für Deutschland, AfD or AfD, won almost a quarter of the votes. Their winning candidates were mainly from the right-wing fringe of this party. Newly elected state assembly members, they've been winning

substantial numbers of seats in state, state assemblies as well, provincial assemblies. Their members include, elected legislators at state level, include a tile setter, someone who, who sets tiles in, in buildings and houses, an electrician, and a lawyer, for example, who's been openly Islamophobic. The party claims to represent voters, to represent sections of society in a particular way. The German word it uses, that is the AfD uses or members of the AfD use is *bürgerlich*. The term connotes representation of the middle class and adherence to democratic and social norms.

But, as the *Spiegel* article says, most of the recent AfD candidates who were voted for example, into the Brandenburg and Saxony assemblies, into those respective assemblies, favour an extremist wing of the AfD. It is called the *Flügel*, which I think means 'wings' in German, and this wing is noted for racism and ethno-nationalism. This, this wing, this section, it's not a formal section of the, of the AfD, it's also under observation by the German state security service for potential hostility to the German constitution.

A member of an institute for research on conflict and violence, this, this researcher's called Wilhelm Heitmeyer, has used the term 'civic coarseness'. And by that he means a respectable-looking façade with ruthless rhetoric, and aggressively authoritarian tendencies. So, in fact, there's been virtually unprecedented discussion recently over this particular point - two points in particular.

One, one is whether or not the AfD have roots in the center of German society. Are they quite as *bürgerlich* as they say they are? The second is whether or not they should be excluded, because many of them do not even try to hide their earlier neo-Nazi links. Now there have been significant changes in the wider party political space. And that's one reason why the AfD, these questions are being raised about the AfD, because their position has itself changed very greatly.

What are the main changes in the party political space? First of all, the postwar space was effectively a three-party system, made up of the CDU, the Christian Democrat Union, the SPD, the SDP, the Social Democratic Party and the Free Democratic Party, the Freie Demokratische Partei. And they in effect formed a three-party system. Quite a lot of the time, particularly with CDU governments, such as that of Helmut Kohl in Berlin, the Free Democratic Party got seats in a coalition got, it formed part for a coalition with the CDU. That did mean holding significant posts in the central government in, in what was the in Bonn at the time - and that was the, the

Federal capital - for example, for at least two terms if I am not mistaken, if I am not mistaken, the FDP minister Klaus Kinkel held the foreign ministry in Germany in at least two of Kohl's, Kohl's governments from, from the, the 80s through the 90s.

Now, from the late 1970s onwards, changes started to appear. The Greens made an immense impact in the late 70s, winning substantial numbers of seats in the federal parliament and starting to win substantially more seats in the state assemblies. After the unification of Germany in 1992, with the, with the fall of the Berlin Wall in, in I beg your pardon, in, in German unification took place in the early 90s, yes, but the fall of the Wall dates from late, well, 1990 thereabouts if I am not mistaken, and after unification more parties, for example, Die Linke, the Left Party, which had partial connections to the old Communist Party in the former German Democratic Republic, the former East Germany, started to appear - and started to win seats, particularly in state assemblies.

And this range of parties has in effect created a space which the AfD think they can fill. Now, let's look back at what happened when the Greens started winning state-level seats in the 1980s. Well, the reactions were, were quite revealing. The other parties saw the Greens, you know, not just the other parties but some of the media, saw the Greens, as I quote, "chaotic political incompetents who posed a threat to Western culture."

They actively advocated significant redirection of the whole economy, significant legislation to protect the environment, in effect, a rethinking of our human relationship with, with the environment, our recognition of our place in it. We've seen these kinds of issues in, in the ecologism topic. And the Greens turned up in parliament, in the federal parliament, in casual clothes, in casual jackets, with long hair, and in leather slippers. They said they represented the public and nobody had any right to demand that they wore formal dress in Parliament. There were some very formidable figures and they included Joschka Fischer, later Foreign Minister of Germany and one of the most formidable figures in German politics, indeed in the world of European politics. Now, the criticisms of the Greens, well, started to be moderated as the policies started to make more and more sense and came to be adopted by the other two parties.

Many Green policies in Germany are now mainstream politics. This is true in other, particularly Northern European, countries as well. Similar things happened to Die Linke over its East

German origins; they were often described as dangerous communists from the old East German days, from the GDR days, but they have continued and are winning seats in state assemblies.

They came close to forming, to being part of a coalition government in I think 2004 or 2005 when the federal election, the central parliament, the election to the Bundestag, the federal parliament, was inconclusive, and the, the broad left; that is the, the CDU, the no, I beg your pardon, not the CDU, the SDP, the Social Democratic Party and the Greens had to decide whether to invite Die Linke, the Left Party, into a coalition.

Now it did not happen, the two other parties decided not to invite Die, Die Linke in and various other coalitions have, have held office in, in Berlin since then. But there's one common element here. In Germany, almost all parties until very recently joined in persistent criticism of the rising right. I'll just give you a bit of background here. The unification of Germany was not a straightforward matter, a great deal of industry in the former GDR simply could not compete with West German industry. There were social tensions as well, we'll meet those again as we, as we proceed. In the early to mid-90s, unemployment in the former GDR, in the provinces which had been in the GDR reached over 25 percent and as the German ambassador in New Delhi at the time publicly acknowledged, publicly said that level of unemployment did give opportunities to, to a hard right, to hard-right sections of opinion in the former East Germany, the former GDR, including the reemergence or the emergence of neo-Nazi movements.

But the AfD have over the last few years made a significantly greater impact throughout Germany. This results in relatively unusual coalitions which it turns out, nobody wants; for example, one province has a coalition between the CDU, that is the Christian Democrat Union, the SDP or (S) SPD in Germany, the Sozial Partei Demokratische, and, and the Greens.

Now, it is not surprising that the SPD and Green policies are often significantly at variance with those of the CDU, the Conservative Party. But the result is that the coalition agreements have to be, have to be very detailed. And they take a long time to work out, they're tricky to work out, they require a lot of manoeuvring, some might even say horse-trading, between the parties. And it means there is very little space left for any other policies or projects.

One result is, as the *Spiegel* article says, stagnation; it looks as though nothing's moving. I will add a, an evaluative point here that may in fact confirm that stagnation isn't quite the (wrong

way) right way to look at it. This could convey an element of achieved stability on the broad agreement, with the broad agreement in the background, that the far-right and neo-Nazis are not to be allowed a space - are, are to be kept out of it.

And there are good reasons why any democratic polity might need to think in those terms; I take it further and say needs to think in those terms. But this, this kind of detailed negotiation over policy between three-party coalitions in various provinces results in what looks to the public very much like stagnation. It looks as though nothing is happening, all the politicians are sitting around, trying to reach agreement and they finally come up with what may look like, you know, compromise policies.

It has been said - this is just a rough, very rough analogy - that a camel is a horse designed by a committee, now it's just occurred to me to say that. It may look to sections of the German public that the policies resulting from these odd-looking coalitions are a bit like a camel, of course, a camel is a perfectly good natural phenomenon and it's a bit unfair to call it a horse designed by a committee, but the analogy may serve to convey the kind of thing that is occurring in provinces with these rather odd coalitions, or perhaps previously unpredictable coalitions.

But it is this kind of stagnation, as we've seen with fascism, that gives the far-right an opportunity, say yeah, they're all stalled, they're all quarrelling with each other, we get neglected or words to that effect, and as a result a group was proposed, started in 2013 partly in response to proceed stagnation in many of the state assemblies, and partly in response to concerns about the Euro, the currency devised by the European Union under the Maastricht Treaty, which requires forms of political and economic union and requires a single currency. Member states don't have to join the single currency – the United Kingdom is an obvious example. I understand that, that Sweden hasn't either, and so on. Germany, of course, and France, are very much members of the Eurozone and have the Euro as their currency.

The AfD, the Alternative für Deutschland, started in 2013. And it was started by economics professors who opposed the Euro; and that did, I mean, some of their commitments to, certainly in hostility to the what they saw as the imposition of largely macro-economic policies and fiscal policy by the European institutions, of the European Union, and did attract many more people from what we would call the hard-right or far-right.

Now, at first, they were - such new entrants into the AfD were not, not exactly mainstream. Economics professors and hard-right supporters didn't necessarily go together. But the hard-right members of the AfD didn't mind being marginalized within the party, probably because the centrist, the economics professors and those who weren't quite as hard-right and so on, the centrist gave the party as a whole more respectability or if I have got the term right *bürgerlichkeit*, they look, made them look more respectable.

Then bit by bit, a hard-right takeover of the party occurred, this may well have been planned. There was a takeover. And now the focus is on identity, on assertions of identity, on nationalism, a nationalist tone, an authoritarian understanding of the state, a racist and exclusionary view of society, even when that is based on hearsay evidence. People may say, “Oh, nothing has happened in my town or village, but you know, so many kilometres along the road, I have heard stories that things have happened in the towns and cities and so on.”

And that's been publicized that has received public documentation, that's been certainly been documented publicly. Hearsay evidence has contributed to the attractiveness of the AfD’s racist and exclusionary view of society. Local failures have also been part of this. One interviewee reported in the *Spiegel* article says, “Oh, you know, the local council, the local corporation haven't built the bike path they, they meant, they said they would build, I very much like commuting to work by bicycle, on my bicycle and they have not done this. The AfD says they will do it. Well, I'm going to vote against the other lot and for the AfD because the other lot haven't carried out their promises to, to improve our local facilities and amenities”. So the focus, I'll go through that list again, the AfD focus is now on identity, on nationalism, on an authoritarian understanding of the state, an (exclude) a racist and exclusionary view of society, even where there may be no hard evidence to support it even where there isn't, and on failures to carry out local promises this does widen their appeal this has had the effect of widening their appeal very considerably.

A further result is an overall lack of trust - and this means that the AfD’s appeal is much stronger in the East, in the former East Germany, the GDR than in West Germany. First of all, the 1989 protest brought down a long-established and fairly hardline communist government. So the power of the 1989 protests has not been forgotten. People know that if they get out on the streets and protest - and they protested peacefully - they could achieve huge things. Secondly, reunification or unification, as it is often called in Germany, was a great shock, brought about

the near destruction of the East German or the GDR economy, created significant unemployment, and introduced East German society to, what would no doubt have looked to them like much tougher and more demanding conditions of life in, in West Germany.

Things like family life - and East Germans have said this, they found their own marital relationships suffering under the pressures of working in the new economy. Secondly, the change in work conditions was also a great shock, and unequal work conditions across the West (Germ) across from West Germany, across West Germany and therefore East Germany certainly contributed to a feeling of alienation following the unification.

The younger generation often started to emigrate in search of work, and as members or citizens of the European Union, which came into being in 1992, and of course of the former EEC, they could do so quite freely.

Thirdly, everyday life in the former GDR continued to be well, rather less easy than it, apparently easy than it was in West Germany, in what had been the Federal Republic. Supermarkets were much fewer in number, daycare facilities which had been run by the state in the GDR were now much fewer in number, medical practices – again - seemed to be much fewer in number. The change in healthcare systems was no doubt a great surprise to, to citizens of the former GDR. If I'm not mistaken German healthcare is based on an insurance system in which those in work, their employers, and the state pay into an insurance fund, which people can draw on when they need treatment. In the GDR, of course, it was the state that provided child care facilities, crèches, and so on, and medical care. And no doubt this was of, I am sure this was of a very high standard. So - former citizens, citizens of the former GDR, now German citizens in, in the Federal Republic started to feel left behind. Many also had a profound hurt over being seen by many West Germans as rather backward, as having perhaps not moved with the times, because they had been in this, in this rather rigid fixed communist society in the past.

They started to feel like losers in the process of modernization. This has created a very deep sense of resentment, perhaps even of exclusion and of being, how shall I put it, second-class in Germany, one of the most highly developed and modern countries in the world, and one of the most stable in many of its political and social systems. Now this has undoubtedly contributed to, to the rise of the AfD, and there we are; we need to mention a, an additional feature, which is that for people that position and no doubt for a great many West Germans as well, people in the

former West Germany, there is a great deal of, of uncertainty, disquiet about what they perceive as a substantial (infra) influx of refugees from, from the Middle East, from the many wars in the Middle East.

We know very well that those wars have been initiated by the United States and United Kingdom, in particular the invasion of Iraq in 2003. But Germany did open its doors to refugees from Syria in particular and the culture shock on both sides - for the refugees as well as for, for Germans - has been considerable. Now, all these factors have (con) have contributed to a sense of exclusion, resentment, and neglect, on the part of a great many Germans.

Now the perception of stagnation in the official political process and the official party system has then meant that the AfD were probably starting to move into fertile ground when they moved from, from largely opposing the Euro to addressing these social and political resentments or claiming to address them and express them when none of the other parties seems to do so.

A sociologist named, a professor named Holger Lengfeld has said the AfD represents values that I quote, “nobody else is offering,” including many positions formerly held by West German conservatives, who, for the most part, had distanced themselves from, from Nazi or quasi-Nazi or neo-Nazi tendencies throughout Germany for a very long time.

Now that's the *Spiegel* article. We can see how the AfD look as though they could fill a space that a great many voters want filled. They now hold something like 25 per cent of seats in the federal parliament and between 25 and 30 in many of the state assemblies. We're going to look at some consequences, and we shall now look at an article in the British newspaper the *Guardian*, I'll just summarize it - obviously I can't put the text up for you.

We'll look at that now and see what, well, startling effects have occurred very recently. Let's take a look. Okay. Yes, I'll have to call this up. Here we are. I'll just summarize this for you. I obviously can't put the text up, so I'll just summarize this. Here we are. Two days ago. Right, I'm sorry about the delay.

Two days ago, the leader of the party of government in Berlin, that is the CDU party, the leader is not the chancellor, but the leader Annegret Kramp-Kartenbauer, who was also Angela Merkel's, Chancellor Merkel’s designated successor, announced that she would not run for the German Chancellorship at the next federal election, and she was going to step down as leader

of the Christian Democrat Union, that is the Christian Democratic Union, the CDU, provably conservative governing party.

That was reported on Monday morning, that was the tenth of February. Now the reason seems to have been, or the precipitating factor seems to have been a fierce political controversy in the Province of Thuringia, where there had been a provincial election and CDU, elected CDU members in the state assembly, the Landtag, of Thuringia decided that they would cooperate with AfD in forming a (co) coalition provincial government.

This cut across a ban issued by the party, the party's central headquarters on cooperation with The AfD. That ban has been called a firewall and it has been a feature of postwar German politics, (si) of course since the end of the war, that firewall has clearly been breached. Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, the leader of the CDU, she won the contest to succeed Chancellor Merkel as leader of the CDU, that was (last) December 2018 - and yet she has decided that this was too much. She said she would not run for, run for Chancellor, although the coalition government, the Grand Coalition between the Social Democrats and the CDU, will continue in Berlin. So the body of government in, in Berlin continues as a grand coalition.

But the difficulties were actually located in Thuringia, in the Province of Thuringia. What happened there was that the, the CDU branch in Thuringia, after the recent state election, voted together with the AfD to oust, to remove, the state premier Bodo Ramelow. Now Ramelow is from Die Linke again, you know, from the, the former GDR Left Party or the GDR (left) with its roots in the GDR.

And this was too much, that a CDU provincial party could cooperate with the AfD to remove a state premier; instead a premier was installed from the, from the FDP and under the provincial - proportional electoral system the, this particular person from the FDP had only got 5 percent of the vote. He had got a seat, but to have someone as chief minister of a state, Minister-Präsident in Germany, was well, of course, fierce controversy itself, it was a controversy itself.

Now Chancellor Merkel also intervened here and said it was unforgivable, that is, that is the actual word she used, for democratic parties - meaning the CDU - to win majorities with the help of the AfD. Now that has also been seen as sharing how little personal authority, the CDU

leader Kramp-Karrenbauer had - that - you know, [is] something German politicians or observers have been commenting on.

Now, the upshot then is that Karmp-Karrenbauer resigned as leader of the CDU. The Province of Thuringia had a Minister-Präsident, a chief minister, who had only got 5 percent of the vote when he stood for election; it's a (pro) fully proportional system in the state elections. Since then, that particular Minister-Präsident has resigned - that I think happened yesterday, the eleventh of February. But the issue for us is something that, that could present itself in almost any democratic system.

To what extent do non-far-right parties consider, or have to consider, or have to collaborate, consider collaborating, or have to collaborate with far-right parties? The question there is the kind of message far-right parties project and the kinds of support they get. That's an issue that certainly, you know, with the AfD getting between 25, about a quarter of the votes across Germany is something that German parties really have to face.

They also will have, yeah, I mean, no doubt they will do this. They will also have to face, as do parties elsewhere in other systems, the kinds of resentment that are being expressed in these, in this increased support for far-right parties, whether these are only resentments, or have to do with substantive issues of policy and so on; well, we have to see, it certainly is a serious predicament.

And of course, as we've seen with fascism and with nationalism, appeals to extreme forms of nationalist unity, whether ethnic, linguistic, racial, religious, and so on, do often fall on very fertile ground when people have a generalized sense of (re) resentment, neglect, and stagnation.

Well, it doesn't always have to be like that. We're going to look at an item which shows a considerable contrast. So, the item we're going to look at is this one. It's a short broadcast on National Public Radio in the United States, we'll send you the link; the link is freely acceessible. The heading is ‘The Scottish National Party Is Espousing a Multicultural Brand of Nationalism.’ Okay, the host of the particular programe is Ari Shapiro. He goes across to one of their reporters.

In this context he goes across to one of their reporters, that's Joanna Kakissis, and the context is this, Shapiro sets the, sets the scene, pointing out that the British Prime Minister Boris

Johnson has rejected the Scottish government's request for another referendum on independence. Scotland had a referendum in 2014 which was lost I think, by 53 to 47 or so, if I've got the figures right, there has, there's been changes in opinion since then.

Scottish nationalists wanted this vote because, this second referendum, because the UK well, has now left the European Union and has done so against the wishes of 62 percent of Scots who voted to remain in the EU. And a lot of Scottish independence supporters are saying that Scotland has been dragged out of the EU against the wishes of a majority of people in Scotland. They say, Scottish nationalism - or observers and participants in Scottish politics - say that Scottish nationalism reflects an, I quote, “international and inclusive culture.”

So at that point Shapiro goes over to the reporter, who may or may not have been in Scotland and I think she was, I get the impression she was at the time, and says, well, certainly SNP, Scottish National Party, supporters march for Scottish independence often wearing tartan kilts and playing bagpipes. And Teresa Dufficy of the independence group Aye Aberdeen says Scots are very serious about being Scottish, and she goes to the interviewee, who says “this all the tartan, the bagpipes, the this, that, certainly the accents, whatever, that is true, the history so on, but there is a phrase in Scotland, ‘We're all Jock Tamsin's bairns’” which means, I quote, “it does not matter where you are from, we're all part of humanity.”

In effect Scotland cannot live by these, truly live by these words unless it breaks away from the UK. And the interviewee points out, it's not just independence for the sake of it, she says, if the UK was a fair democratic place which was more welcoming I wouldn't be so bothered.

That's a fair point to make. A lot of people in Scotland are deeply troubled about the tone and tenor of public life in, in the UK, in the whole UK, particularly south of the border in, in England.

Now another member is interviewed - Leo Marwick, and he says, well, many voters believed that the UK would remain in the EU and not turn against migrants. And he says, he wants people to feel welcome from every corner of the world, just as they, they should feel this is their home just as it is my home. And he's a Scot talking. Okay, Ben Jackson of Oxford University is joking, he says, “Oh, yes, but they want this unless you know, feel as your home, unless you are unless you are English” - but he was joking, I repeat, he's joking.

He's actually writing a book about Scottish nationalism, he's based at Oxford University, and he says, well, Scotland, Scots who want independence are trying to define themselves against England, rather than against Europe, while English nationalism is defined against Europe, and the tone of English political, life public life rather should, rather confirm that these days.

Now, according to Ben Jackson of Oxford University, Europe is, the term Europe is used almost instrumentally by Scottish nationalists to provide an alternative framework. They may or may not be right but that is what he says, that's his way of reading it. And the interviewer on behalf of NPR says, well, the word nationalism does carry some ugly quotations. And here's someone studying nationalism at the University of Edinburgh, his name is Nasim Meer, he says yes, those connotations are nasty, racially exclusive, exclusive, and involve thoughts blood and soil.

We're familiar with those from our coverage of the topic of fascism. So here's someone who's studying nationalism at the University of Edinburgh, and who points to governments in Hungary, he does mention India as using nationalism, to marginalize ethnic or religious minorities. I don't doubt that if we asked him for evidence he would provide plenty of authoritative evidence to support his argument.

So - here, Nasim Meer says well, you find in Scotland that ethnic minorities claim a sense of ownership over Scottish national identity, if you're Scots, in effect. The Scottish National Party sees Scotland as being kind of a, a rainbow nation, a mosaic, that is Nasim Meer, Meer's own words. Language is one reason, all Scots speak English according to the interviewer Joanna, Joanna Kakissis. All Scots speak English well, other separatist nations like Catalonia hang on to their own language.

And there's agreement here from Nasim Meer, language does often underpin a claim to nationhood but that's, you know, that's not remotely a challenge in Scotland; it's not an issue in Scotland. You know, Gaelic is yes, spoken or sung by fewer than 60,000 Scots, but apparently, and apparently, more Scots actually speak Punjabi and Urdu than speak Gaelic.

And they then cut to somebody who's speaking, I presume in Urdu, it may be Punjabi or Hindi, but who switches to English for the interview and says, I've lived in Scotland for 19 years, I am 100 percent with Scotland. And he says he moved there, this is somebody called Muhannad Subtain Mughal.

And he says, I've lived in Scotland for 19 years, I moved here, he says he moved from the north of England where he never did feel English, and he now feels totally Scottish. Another interviewee, an engineer, says Scotland feels just as comfortable as the country where he was born, Ghana. He calls himself Afro-Scot and laughs at it and the interviewer says, well, an independent Scotland may not exist anytime soon, quotes, quotes Mr. Emmanuel, Archie Emmanuel saying this, but Scotland is here to stay.

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