



It's the culture, stupid!

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Almost two weeks after the federal elections, Germans are still searching for explanations for the soar-away success of the far-right AfD (alternative für Deutschland) and the sour decline of the two main parties, the CDU and the SPD.

In [his remarkable speech](#) on the occasion of the national commemoration of the German unification on October 3rd, the President of the Federal Republic, Frank-Walter Steinmeier brought to his fellow citizens the issue of new psychological walls building up in our societies.

This is one of the most pertinent analyses of the state of our societies in Europe and elsewhere. Hence the German election result is not only to be seen in the pure analysis that populists are gaining support with their nationalistic slogans. It is no longer the appealing slogan of Bill Clinton of the nine-ties that catches the voters' attention. Economic issues are absolutely still in the centre of citizens' concerns. But more than 75% of the German population thinks that their economic and social situation is best that they have experienced since unification! Therefore the political discourse and the societal debate must encompass a new forward-looking narrative that builds a renewed trust, because citizens' faith in traditional state has reached new lows.

In order to restore hope in the hearts and minds of the people, politics has to provide the means to improve capabilities in addressing first and foremost the cultural and societal requests. President Frank-Walter Steinmeier is absolutely right when he stipulates that not all who are turning their back are immediately enemies of democracy. But they are missing out on the democracy. Hence our parties and democracies need to think about a narrative which encompasses not only economy but, first and foremost, the overall societal questions. Therefore: [***It's the culture, stupid!***](#)