I will make three points in decreasing order of disciplinary competence. My first point is about what economics/economists have to say about right-wing populism and migration in Germany. One recent study by Davide Cantoni, Felix Hagemeister and Mark Wescott "Persistence and Activation of Right-Wing Political Ideology" suggests, perhaps surprisingly, that there is little influence of local economic conditions, as measured by local unemployment rates, or recent immigrant influx on AfD, the right-wing Alternative für Deutschland, vote shares. By contrast, the vote shares of the Nazi party in the 1920s and 1930s appear to have much higher explanatory power. This suggests that long-run cultural factors are important to explain at least regional differences in right-wing populism. This adds to the more casual observations that (i) right-wing populism appears to be stronger in East Germany, a part of Germany with less tradition in both democracy and liberal openness and instead a longer tradition of authoritarianism; and (ii) right-wing populism appears to be particularly strong in the Federal State of Saxony, a state, whose kings have prided themselves in their independence from other German kingdoms (a bit like the Bavarians in the South). For completeness, it should also be said that empirical economics has not reached a general consensus on the effect of migrants on right-wing vote shares: for example, Christian Dustmann, Kristine Vasiljeva and Anna Piil Damm, using Danish data in their study "Refugee Migration and Electoral Outcomes", do find causal effects from migrant influx on right-wing vote shares, at least for non-urban areas.

From a more macropolicy point of view, I think that immigration policy in Germany has been largely inept since the guest worker programs in the 1960s. For too long a time, the (conservative) fiction has been: these people work a bit and then go home. A similar story was told during the Syrian refugee crisis: they go back, once it gets better in Syria. This is idiocy, they will not go back. This means that no matter what the fine legal arguments are about their precise reason to stay initially – asylum seekers, Geneva Convention refugees, or economic migrants – once in Germany they should be viewed, from an economic point of view, as human capital projects to be invested in, especially in a situation where the German government can borrow at historically low interest rates. Of course, this also means that some kind of border control at the EU external borders and a certain limitation of migrant streams are necessary.

My second point is about polls. I think it is fair to say that polls asking about attitudes towards migration, the migration policy of the government or the handling of migration policy by the agencies in charge are all over the place and little can be gauged from them. What is clear is that, after Chemnitz, two national polls (Infratest dimap from 09/20/2018 and INSA from 09/24/2018) had the AfD leading the SPD, the Social Democratic Party of Germany, although within the margin of error. It is also clear that in a poll (ARD Deutschland Trend) from 09/18/2018 Germans overall are almost evenly split in their opinion that the government takes the concerns of the population with respect to migrants seriously (49% agree). However, there is a clear East-West divide in this regard: 33% versus 53% agreement.
Thirdly, and finally, the recent events in Chemnitz have revealed the remarkable fragility of a political system that has been traditionally regarded as a paragon of stability. The somewhat misleading and indeed ill-advised public statements by Hans-Georg Maßen, the head of the German Verfassungsschutz (the domestic counterintelligence agency in Germany), about Chemnitz, an important but ultimately subaltern civil servant, left Chancellor Merkel’s Grand Coalition government at the brink of fracturing for almost two weeks. Also, the diminished power by Merkel, considered once one of the most powerful women in the world, is exemplified by the fact that her close ally in the Bundestag, her party’s majority leader, was voted out of office a few days ago. More generally, the parties in Germany are largely in programmatic disarray: Merkel’s CDU has lost all political substance and is just about clinging to power; in the SPD there is a conflict between the globally-oriented functionary class and the traditional working-class rank and file as well local politicians who are not xenophobic but want a strong social safety net inside the nation state and have sympathies for slowing down immigration and globalization; there is a similar conflict inside the socialist party Die Linke, because the traditionally Eastern Germany-focused party has lost many votes to the AfD. Only the Greens and the AfD are unapologetically what they are: the former liberal (in the American sense) and globalist with not more than a boilerplate adherence to traditional redistributive causes, and the latter having built a sizeable coalition of working-class, regionally oriented voters with some traditionalist conservatives (including Catholics), all the way to right-wing nationalists and outright Nazis.