

RENAISSANCE OF THE NEW RIGHT IN GERMANY?

*A Discussion of New Right Elements in German
Right-wing Extremism Today*

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ABSTRACT

Right-wing extremism in Germany has recently undergone considerable changes with a new right-wing party, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) successfully entering several local state parliaments as well as the European Parliament, “Pegida” demonstrations representing a new type of public action in terms of social movements, and the emergence of institutions like the Library of Conservatism and magazine projects like *Sezession*. This article considers whether such developments could be seen as a renaissance of the “New Right”, representing a long-term success in its strategies. Since the 1970s, the strategy of the New Right has been based on promoting a culturally conservative metapolitics in the pursuit of “cultural hegemony”, meaning to influence public opinion in the Federal Republic of Germany and shift it to the right—which at first glance might seem to have succeeded in light of recent events. The developments seen in German far-right extremism, however, have been neither monocausal nor monolithic. Therefore, this article will take a closer look at various aspects of the idea that recent changes in Germany’s right-wing extremism might represent a successful implementation of this New Right strategy.

KEYWORDS

Alternative for Germany, cultural hegemony, New Right, Pegida, right-wing extremism

In the scholarly research on right-wing extremism, the term “New Right” is one that has been used in very different ways, and often rather vaguely. This term has at least three different understandings, which frequently overlap. First, in very broad terms, it refers to purely temporal changes in right-wing extremism; second, in very narrow terms, it refers to all the strands of



the far right that consider themselves to be neo right wing; and, third, primarily in analytical terms, it refers to a category going beyond the self-description of individual actors to also consider the functional question of who or what can or should be described as the “New Right” in the larger grouping of right-wing extremism. The common factor shared by all these ways of differentiation is that they distinguish between a “New Right” and an “old” one (no matter how one might define this), be it in temporal, phenomenological, or systemic terms.

In a purely phenomenological sense, the term *Neue Rechte* (New Right) has been used in Germany since the 1970s, organizationally connected to the 1972 founding of the group Aktion Neue Rechte (New Right Action), which affiliated itself with the French Nouvelle Droite. This self-description of a New Right was in agreement with its external analytical categorization, because there actually did exist substantial differences between this New Right and other strands of far-right thought, not only in terms of political strategy, but also worldview. Moreover, the heyday of domestic and international discussions about Germany’s New Right was in the 1990s, although important studies had already appeared in the country somewhat earlier.¹ Internationally, it was the works of Tamir Bar-On, Michael Minkenberg, Michael O’Meara, and Roger Woods that have proven pivotal.²

One reason for taking another look at the New Right today is that right-wing extremism in Germany has been reshaping itself—once again—in far-reaching ways. These include the establishment of new media outlets in the New Right spectrum, the development of novel forms of action and agitation strategically connected to New Right ideas, and the emergence of a new right-wing party that formally dissociates itself from neo Nazism. All of this leads to the question of whether these developments should be interpreted as a renaissance of the New Right. Such efforts even perhaps signify a successful implementation of its political goals through step-by-step achievements in the struggle for a right-wing cultural hegemony, an attempt to achieve influence in the pre-political sphere.

Therefore, the central task of this article is to systematically develop the arguments that speak for and against a renaissance of the New Right in Germany. I begin with 1) a background sketch of the emergence, ideology, and strategy of the New Right; 2) an analysis of the rise and fall of the New Right in the 1990s and early 2000s; this, then, forms the basis for 3) a discussion that incorporates an analysis of recent developments in German right-wing extremism. This includes an examination of primary source materials from the far-right scene, in order to weigh the arguments for and against the existence of such a renaissance, while also relating these to the

history, ideology, and strategy of the New Right. In fact, these recent developments are quite open to interpretation, since not every temporal change in right-wing extremism need necessarily be seen as a New Right phenomenon—it might simply be just another change or innovation, without any particular influence from the New Right.

The Emergence, Ideology, and Strategy of the New Right

The political goals of the New Right can largely be summarized by two central concepts: the intellectualization of right-wing extremism through the formulation of an intellectual metapolitics, and the pursuit of a (right-wing) cultural hegemony.³ Here, metapolitics denotes efforts to take intellectual control of public debates, shaping them on a theoretical meta-level by coining particular ideas, terms and meanings. The metapolitical focus of the New Right highlights the intellectual weaknesses manifested in the large parts of the far-right scene that reject theory and cultural engagement, and counters this by emphasizing the need to intellectually substantiate political ideas in order to legitimize them. This intellectualization is built upon the idea of a metapolitics that strives towards a conservative cultural revolution, one in which the New Right:

... is prepared to ally with a “modernity” faithful to Europe’s daring spirit—that is, to a modernity that frees Europeans from what is dead in their culture. At the same time, though, it rejects everything seeking growth not in Europe’s expansive spirit, but in its negation—specifically in the functional—and ethnocidal—culture fostered by liberal market societies.⁴

Here, the metapolitical intellectualization of the New Right also means that *völkisch* (ethnonationalist) positions, which are also supported by the New Right, are to be rigorously justified along with supporting references from the history of ideas, whereby—as Roger Griffin has rightly emphasized—the metapolitical ideas of the New Right “still contains a residue of fascist ideology in its call for cultural regeneration.”⁵ For the New Right, as a loose movement that does not actually want to achieve political power through party politics and assuming governmental responsibilities, the goal here is to achieve cultural hegemony, in aiming to establish its positions as the hegemonic ones in society, although this struggle for cultural hegemony always includes culturally pessimistic traits as well.⁶ While a political party might also (in a subtle way) take on its positions, the New Right is still more oriented towards influencing attitudes and value judgments on a wider social level.

The emergence of the New Right can be historically traced back to the parliamentary failure of the neo Nazi Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD or National Democratic Party of Germany) in the late 1960s. In the West German Bundestag elections of 1969, the NPD failed by a slight margin to pass the five percent minimum hurdle for parliamentary representation, thus proving unable to extend its previous successes in having entered the local parliaments of several states. As a result, the far-right scene divided into two camps, primarily distinguished by their contrasting analyses of this failure. One camp, represented by extraparliamentary, paramilitary, and terrorist organizations, felt that the NPD had been too legalistic, and that in striving toward neo Nazi goals, it was a mistake to play by parliamentary rules at all. Instead, democracy itself had to be eliminated through violent overthrow, in order to establish a dictatorial regime. The other camp traced the NPD's failure to its inadequate intellectual basis, and strategically oriented itself not to a battle on the streets, but a battle for minds.⁷ Activists needed to persuade people to accept far-right viewpoints, and had to first conduct a struggle for cultural hegemony—to borrow a concept from the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci—thus also employing the strategy of political mimicry (as exemplified by the adoption of this term), meaning to copy the terminology and strategies of political opponents and work them into one's own public discourse in a camouflaged way.⁸

Therefore, the New Right in Germany also emerged as a conscious counterpart to the New Left (itself developing in the late 1960s among student movement activists and Vietnam War protesters), adopting certain strategic approaches from them and even plagiarizing them. One of these approaches was to gather the diverse strategies, loose circles, and groups and give them the advantages of a large common organizational front. Another was to focus strongly on intellectual debates within the media sphere. Finally, grouping under a New Right umbrella also meant that existing organizations could preserve their fluid character more so than if they joined a party structure, for example. So it was little wonder that although Aktion New Rechte, founded in 1972 as a spinoff of the NPD, soon faded into insignificance, the ideas of the New Right continued to be further discussed and promoted in other forums.

The 1970s were a decade that witnessed the founding of numerous publications, some of which developed into important mouthpieces for the New Right scene (for example the conservatively oriented magazine *Criticon*), while others hosted influential debates before eventually losing currency, sometimes even disappearing without a trace. One example was the nationalist revolutionary magazine *wir selbst* (we ourselves), whose chief

ideologist Henning Eichberg was an important influence not only on ideological development in the early phase of the New Right movement, but also on building bridges to the green/alternative scene.⁹ Another factor that should not be underestimated, even though it did not really become influential in the Federal Republic of Germany until the late 1980s and early 1990s was the French Nouvelle Droite, anchored by the GRECE organization with its chief thinker Alain de Benoist.¹⁰ In regards to terminological politics, he was particularly influential with his concept of *ethno-différentialisme*¹¹—a terminological variation on the far-right ideology of ethnic inequality, but one that argues in terms of culture rather than race and is connected to the idea of ethnopluralism, whose formulation in Germany is largely attributable to Eichberg.

Building on the aspect of being (mostly) free of organizational structures while also adapting left-wing cultural techniques, the political strategy of the New Right is characterized by a political mimicry and an attempt to advance an intellectual metapolitics aiming at a conservative cultural revolution. Here too, the terminological appropriations from the political left are obvious, especially those taken from Gramsci. The strategic goal behind the quest for cultural hegemony is to disguise one's own intentions through the use of mimicry, meaning the use of superficial (terminological) adaptations for the corresponding environment (e.g. for politics or media). This is a way to slip into the social mainstream—not in order to change it in terms of specific details, but to shape and define in metapolitical terms the basic mindsets of a society, thereby occupying the zone of (political) culture. This should then lead in the medium to long term to a political new order along New Right lines. It thus represents a more indirect route, but one that also includes seemingly apolitical (or pre-political) spheres like art and music, as a strategic component beyond the formation of far-right political parties.

With regard to the ideological foundations of the New Right, it should first be emphasized that this “new” label is a rather misleading one, since—with the exception of the ethnopluralism concept—there is nothing in the New Right worldview that is actually new.¹² In fact, it expressly and explicitly borrows a great deal from the Weimar Republic's “conservative revolution” (as it was called in a 1950 book by Armin Mohler, a key figure in the effort to unite the various camps of the far-right milieu),¹³ whose protagonists have been rightly seen in retrospect as the ideological forerunners and precursors to National Socialism, while also being intellectually superior to it. Therefore, the intellectual and historical sources referenced within the New Right are the same intellectuals of the Weimar period who shaped—whether directly or indirectly—the basic ideological framework of National

Socialism, including thinkers such as Max Hildebert Boehm, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Oswald Spengler, Othmar Spann, Carl Schmitt, Martin Heidegger, Georges Sorel, Edgar Julius Jung, Ernst Niekisch, and Ernst Jünger.¹⁴

Political Goal	
Cultural hegemony and intellectual metapolitics	
<p>Origin and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Inspiration from France's Nouvelle Droite * Failure of the NPD (late 1960s) * 1972: Aktion Neue Rechte in Germany * 1970s: founding of numerous magazines 	<p>Organization and Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Counterpart to the New Left * Intellectual metapolitics and conservative "cultural revolution" * Loose circles and groups * Political "mimicry"
<p>Ideology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Anti-universalism, dictum of inequality * Emphasis on difference (friend vs. foe dichotomies) * Postulate of homogeneity, sociobiology * Ethnopluralism (as a scheme for Europe) * <i>Völkisch</i> nationalism * Authoritarian statism * Spirituality and holistic thinking 	<p>Historical References</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Weimar Republic: "conservative revolution" * Formal dissociation from National Socialism

Figure 1: The New Right in Germany

The New Right (like every other stream of right-wing extremism) assumes the fundamental inequality of people, an idea that continues to seek its justification on ethnic grounds, if no longer on explicitly racial ones. Here, its anti-universalism leads not a concept of extermination (as in Nazi ideology), but rather to one of segregation or ethnopluralism, meaning the strict spatial separation and geopolitical division of people according to ethnic and cultural criteria. This separation by ethnic categorization is based on a notion of difference that is both homogenizing and sociobiological in nature, looking at people only in terms of ethnic/cultural identity and not their subjectivity or individuality. They are always just part of a collective (which is unalterable), one that stands apart from and in opposition to other collectives. This also implies a hawkish friend-versus-foe dichotomy that solidifies into a heroically masculine ideal of the "manly nation."¹⁵ In regard to social structure, there dominates—in terms of domestic politics—a *völkisch* nationalism combined with an authoritarian statism, which translates—in terms of foreign policy—into an ethnopluralist concept. Another significant factor in New Right discourses is the aspect of spirituality and holistic thinking, which not only includes organizing the state along organic and hierarchical lines, but also involves a strong turn towards religious concerns. This

extends from Christian and/or fundamentalist agendas and in particular to (neo) heathen, nature-centric, and/or Germanic polytheism in a “quest for a new religion of politics.”¹⁶

The Rise and Fall of the New Right

Without a doubt, the heyday of the New Right in Germany was the 1990s. This was partly a consequence of the *geistig-moralische Wende* (intellectual and moral turning point) that the conservative/liberal federal coalition government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl (Christian Democratic Union or CDU) had been promoting since 1982, with which the New Right became deeply involved during the 1990s in terms of both personnel and ideology. Indeed, during the Kohl era, the agenda of taking a *völkisch* national self-conception and making it socially acceptable (once again), while also revising official historiography in regards to National Socialism and casting oneself in the victim role, were major political projects not only of the far right, but also within the official policy of the German federal government. Although the notion of a *geistig-moralische Wende* was officially promoted by the government, however, the various cabinets under Kohl were certainly contradictory about it and not always very consistent in applying it. While it could not be said that the policies of these conservative-liberal coalition governments were explicitly following the ideas of the New Right, governmental policies nonetheless did open the door to mainstream politics for New Right positions, because these could now be seen as seemingly acceptable. Therefore, the opportunity structures were quite favorable for the New Right in that the basic climate in Germany was right-wing conservative on an official level. Moreover, the right to asylum was so radically curtailed in 1993 (with the support of almost every party) that many contemporary critics considered it a de facto abolition. Racist murders as well as arson attacks against asylum-seeker lodgings were tolerated for a long time by state authorities, which often only expressed concern that Germany’s international reputation might be adversely affected. The early 1990s were thus dominated by a political climate in which New Right positions could take root outside the far-right scene.¹⁷

Within the media, several New Right intellectuals managed to establish a network of mutual and reciprocal public interaction, helping to promulgate their ideas to a wider audience.¹⁸ In the wake of the 1980s *Historikerstreit* (historians’ quarrel), one of the most important mentors of the New Right in Germany, Karlheinz Weissmann,¹⁹ managed to insert his views on National

Socialism into the ranks of the renowned book series *Propyläen Geschichte Deutschlands* (Propyläen History of Germany)—although his volume was then taken off the market soon after publication in 1995, due to its historical-revisionist positions. Similarly, New Right and far-right intellectuals spearheaded widely read advertisements such as the one published on 7 April 1995 in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation from National Socialism, entitled “8. Mai 1945—Gegen das Vergessen” (8 May 1945—Against Forgetting), a text whose intention was to stylize the Germans as victims while playing down German responsibility for National Socialism. This in itself was nothing unusual for the far-right scene, but it was noteworthy for having been published in an opinion-leading national daily and not some minor right-wing rag. The advertisement also highlighted the strategy of blurring the borders between right-wing extremism and the political mainstream, as the article also included signatures by numerous politicians from the right-wing conservative wing of the CDU/CSU and the national-liberal wing of the FDP.²⁰ Regardless of whether this article really had much influence on the broader public, it still does illustrate the metapolitical strategy of trying to influence the discourse among decision-makers and power elites by shaping it in a New Right direction. While changes in thinking only happen in small steps and over a long time frame, they always do begin with the political and media elites.

The 1990s also saw great efforts by the weekly paper *Junge Freiheit* (Young Freedom), considered to be the flagship of the New Right,²¹ to conduct intensive, intellectually ambitious debates and promote topical ideas. Meanwhile, monthly magazines in the New Right camp, such as *Criticón* and *Mut* (Courage), succeeded not only in repeatedly attracting authors from outside the right-wing spectrum, but also in going beyond political and historical topics to intensively examine aesthetic and cultural issues too. During the mid to late 1990s, however, the differences within conservatism once again became more apparent—this may have to do with the fact that one of Germany’s domestic security agencies (in North Rhine-Westphalia), charged with monitoring right-wing extremism, began to intensively scrutinize the New Right as a part of this spectrum. There was also a marked increase in scholarly studies focused on specific components of the right-wing intellectual movement, with in-depth German-language investigations into (neo) heathen and esoteric aspects,²² ecological and “protection of life” concerns,²³ *Männerbund* or “men’s association,”²⁴ and historical revisionism.²⁵ Nevertheless, the central factor may have ultimately been that the “intellectual and moral” dominance of right-wing conservatism within the CDU/CSU was not only politically broken by the 1998 change of govern-

ment to a new coalition of the Social Democrats and the Greens, but also by the fact that the openly racist wing of the CDU/CSU (represented among others by large parts of the CSU in Bavaria, along with leading politicians from the Hesse state-level CDU, such as Alfred Dregger, Manfred Kanther, and Erika Steinbach) had become increasingly overshadowed (once again) by more pro-American voices, so that it lost influence within party ranks.

Furthermore, one cannot ignore the fact that within the New Right media itself, the level of intellectual argumentation had collapsed in dramatic fashion—publications like *Junge Freiheit* underwent a massive deintellectualization, and all across Germany, the right wing now saw long periods where it failed to recapture the intellectual prowess it had displayed in the 1990s, simply because the standards of debate had become (once again) much more primitive and simpleminded. One of the biggest, most ambitious works of the New Right, the 1996 *Lexikon des Konservatismus* (Lexicon of Conservatism edited by *Criticón* chief Caspar von Schrenck-Notzing),²⁶ which was particularly distinguished by its attempt to completely erase the lines between conservatism and right-wing extremism while also trying to develop a dominant voice in the aesthetic/cultural arena, was not only relegated to a minor Austrian publishing house, but its reception also largely fell flat in the right-wing scene. In a review dated 5 May 1997 in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*—which just a few years earlier had still functioned as an important soapbox for New Right intellectuals to publicize their ideas—it received just a few lines of notice pouring scorn on its one-sidedness, even coining a word *schwachbeinig* (weak-legged) to describe it.

After the late 1990s, the significance of the New Right continued shifting, which was also reflected in social science literature, with volumes such as *Rechtsextremismus und Neue Rechte in Deutschland: Neuermessung eines politisch-ideologischen Raumes?* (Right-wing Extremism and the New Right in Germany: the Remapping of a Political/Ideological Space?)²⁷ and *Die Neue Rechte—Eine Gefahr für die Demokratie?* (The New Right—A Danger for Democracy?),²⁸ examining in particular the functional aspects of the New Right. For example, did it function as a bridge or a connective link between the far right and conservatism? Should the New Right be seen as a far-right strand of conservatism or was it a strand of right-wing extremism, originally independent of conservatism? Or was it actually fluctuating between all these scenes, essentially focused on inserting and positioning its culturalist and *völkisch* viewpoints within as many political scenes as possible? Was it, therefore, to borrow a term from the relevant debates, perhaps a “political chameleon”?

Here, the debate led back to a topic that had been repeatedly discussed by researchers investigating right-wing extremism in Germany—the topic of

the so-called “gray zone” or “bridging spectrum.” In other words, the spectrum of organizations that do not consider themselves part of right-wing extremism, but which agree ideologically with far-right positions on many significant points, and through overlapping organizations and memberships, consistently build bridges between conservatism and right-wing extremism. The concept of the “gray zone” emphasizes the continuous (ideological) gradation from right-wing extremism to the political mainstream (but is an analytically weak concept, since a gray zone could ultimately be anything, making it de facto nothing),²⁹ while the concept of the “bridging spectrum” emphasizes the function of certain groups in establishing right-wing extremism within the mainstream of society. The two most important social milieus that structurally fall within this spectrum while also possessing a longer ideological and organizational tradition are the *Vertriebenenverbände* (expellee associations)³⁰ and certain student fraternities, particularly the *Burschenschaften* (brotherhoods) the *Gildenschaften* (guilds) and those belonging to the *Verband der Vereine Deutscher Studenten* (Federation of German Student Associations).³¹

Both milieus share a strong (and *völkisch*) respect for tradition, a reactionary family and gender-role paradigm that is both antifeminist and homophobic, an adherence to organizational and social hierarchies, a rejection of universality stemming from racist and/or ethnopluralist views resulting in a *völkisch* conception of humans and society, as well as a marked tendency towards historical revisionist positions, particularly in terms of inverting perpetrator/victim relationships. Both scenes, which also frequently overlap with organized right-wing extremism in terms of membership, thus concur with major aspects of the New Right worldview; although their ideas may not descend from the same traditions, they nonetheless fulfill the same sociostructural functions as the ideological agenda pushed by the New Right. Research into German right-wing extremism has thus increasingly turned (once again) towards the concept of an intellectual bridging spectrum—one that may not describe itself as part of the New Right, but is nonetheless very close to it in ideological terms.³²

The New Rise of the New Right: Strategies between Metapolitics and the Pursuit of Cultural Hegemony

Although the late 1990s and early 2000s were a time of decline for the New Right in Germany, as reflected in its marginalization in the public sphere, it was also a time of internal regrouping that saw the reorganization of New

Right structures. Far from the public spotlight, new organizations and magazines were founded, new forms of activism were developed, and there were serious discussions about how right-wing cultural hegemony might be achieved through an intellectual metapolitics aimed at a conservative cultural revolution. These developments can be systemically categorized into two general areas. On the one hand, there was the founding and cultivation of new publication outlets and organizational structures within the New Right spectrum, along with the development of new forms of public action and agitation—such as a radically modified public demonstration strategy—that helped reestablish public awareness of New Right positions. On the other hand, there emerged a new right-wing party called the Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany, AfD) that formally dissociated itself from neo Nazism.

These two areas, however, also reflected substantial differences of opinion within the New Right scene (and still do), because there are clear contradictions between a strategy purely oriented towards changing the cultural framework and one oriented towards parliamentary party politics. Since the 2000s, Germany's New Right spectrum has seen a growing conflict between two central paradigms: while the paradigm of intellectualization through metapolitics ultimately implies an unconditional eschewal of parliamentarianism, the paradigm of achieving cultural hegemony ultimately aims at the unconditional pursuit of influence, no matter how. As a result, it is hotly debated whether a right-wing party can be a valid component of New Right strategies.

Intellectualization through Metapolitics: The Paradigm of Unconditionally Eschewing Parliamentarianism

In the milieu surrounding the weekly newspaper *Junge Freiheit*, which in the 1990s was the flagship of the New Right and heavily responsible for spreading *völkisch* nationalism within the public sphere, after a temporary intellectual decline at the paper several projects aimed at a reorganization of the New Right developed in the early 2000s. As before, *Junge Freiheit* itself took on the function of structuring debates and integrating different right-wing strands, while also fulfilling the role of a leading right-wing media outlet with over 25,000 copies sold weekly (as of 2015) compared to a little over 15,000 in early 2008.

The further evolution of the New Right after the turn of the millennium took place in two distinct stages. The first involved the creation of new institutions and organizations, particularly the Institut für Staatspolitik (Institute for State Policy, IfS) and the Bibliothek des Konservatismus (Library of

Conservatism), as well as the founding of new magazine projects, particularly *Sezession* (Secession) and *Blaue Narzisse* (Blue Narcissus). The second stage involved the development and implementation of new forms of social movements from the right, particularly in the adaptation of the “identitarian movement” for the German context and the emergence of the racist Pegida movement (an acronym meaning “Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West”). The phase of reorganizing internal structures in order to remedy the real-world marginalization of the New Right around the turn of the Millennium was thus followed by a later phase that translated the resulting ideological and strategic redevelopments into concrete social movements. In all these cases, the paradigm of unconditionally eschewing parliamentarianism retains its central importance, although Pegida has objectively softened this stance by cooperating with the AfD, thus also becoming part of a more ambiguous strategy of metapolitics—one that remains controversial within the New Right scene.

The two most important, new sites of New Right strategy were and are the Institut für Staatspolitik and the Bibliothek des Konservatismus. The Institut für Staatspolitik, which has absolutely no connection to any university (the word Institut is used in Germany almost exclusively by universities, although it is not a legally protected label; its use by the IFS is an example of strategic mimicry by the New Right, implying—especially to the uninformed observer—that it works academically on the university level), was founded in May 2000. This was largely the initiative of three *Gildenschaft* members: Dieter Stein, chief editor at *Junge Freiheit* and member of the Freiburg *Gildenschaft*; Karlheinz Weissmann, leading ideologue of the New Right and member of the Göttingen *Gildenschaft*; and Götz Kubitschek, a longstanding spokesperson of the *Deutsche Gildenschaft* and sometime chief commentator in the area of “Security and Military” at *Junge Freiheit*.³³

Kubitschek became the general manager of the IFS, as well as the chief editor of both *Sezession* and of newly established publishing house Edition Antaios. The IFS focuses on five core subject areas—“State and Society,” “Politics and Identity,” “Immigration and Integration,” “Education and Training,” and “War and Crisis”—while also conducting summer and winter academies on a regular basis and publishing the most important lectures held there in the form of essays and brochures.³⁴ Within the New Right spectrum, the Institut für Staatspolitik has the function of “scholarship and education, as well as political and media consulting,” as stated by Helmut Kellershohn,³⁵ an expert in far-right media and New Right networks. The IFS has also undertaken an operational division of labor with *Junge Freiheit* and Edition Antaios, in which *Junge Freiheit* creates media publicity, while

Edition Antaios focuses on the “publication of research results that have emerged in the context of this network.”

Another building block of the New Right institutional network in Germany is the Bibliothek des Konservatismus, which was also founded in 2000. The Bibliothek des Konservatismus was created at the instigation of Schrenck-Notzing, former head of *Criticón*, who established the nonprofit Förderstiftung Konservative Bildung und Forschung (Foundation for Conservative Education and Research, FKBF) in 2000, before interlocking it with *Junge Freiheit* by passing on the foundation’s chairmanship in 2007 to Dieter Stein, the newspaper’s chief editor. The FKBF initially presided over some 15,000 volumes from Schrenck-Notzing’s private library, in addition to the archive of *Criticón*, but after attracting a number of donations, in 2011 it inaugurated a new venue in central Berlin, which now holds extensive holdings of literature on three floors while also organizing lecture events, releasing its own publications, and pursuing the long-term goal of setting up “a conservative think tank with various types of events, perhaps even with an academy or a higher-education offshoot.”³⁶ The stated goal is to equip the “conservative elite of tomorrow” with the appropriate “intellectual tools,”³⁷ for the New Right project, which here receives the “conservative” label. There is a strong conceptual orientation towards the Weimar Republic’s “conservative revolution” with the clear intent of creating a space for an intellectualization through metapolitics.

After media outlets like *Criticón* and *wir selbst*—two magazines that had deeply and decisively influenced the intellectual debates of the New Right, particularly in the 1980s—ceased publication, there emerged a glaring gap in the New Right scene, so that in the early 2000s, there was no longer a media platform that could organize and structure the deeper intellectual discussion of New Right topics, away from the distractions of momentary short-term concerns. This gap would be filled by *Sezession*, published by the IFS since 2003, starting with four issues per year, later expanding to six. As an intellectual and metapolitical debating platform for the New Right, it works towards updating the theories of the Weimar Republic’s “conservative revolution” while integrating its ideas into today’s political and social debates. The first edition of *Sezession* appeared in April 2003, with an editorial that opened with a sentence reminiscent of Schmitt: “The benefit of the emergency situation is that it makes the facts more clearly visible.”³⁸ Even though Weissmann only wrote this to introduce an issue that was nominally focused on the topic of Ernst Jünger—but was in fact more generally about war—this sentence could be read as emblematic of *Sezession*’s overall concerns. True to the opening sentence in Carl Schmitt’s *Political Theology*,³⁹

according to which sovereign is he who decides on the *Ausnahmestand* (a word that can be translated as both “exceptional case” and “state of emergency”), Weissmann points here to the concerns of the German and European far right about the “emergency situation” in which it sees itself ever since the world’s political and geostrategic cartography was forever altered by 9/11. This is, in fact, the same anti-American and Eurocentric concerns of a New Right intelligentsia, one that is confronted by fundamentally new challenges posed by Islam and Islamism, not only in religious terms, but especially in political ones. In this context, the general goal of *Sezession* is a resacralization of politics, which is not the same as simply taking back or reversing the processes of the Enlightenment and secularization in Germany and Europe. Instead, it incorporates these into the formulation of its worldview, by turning not only against the process of secularization, but also against the individualization of religion. The agenda of *Sezession* is directed against both a “godless world” and a “‘Judeo-Christian’ inspired German reformation,” standing instead for a “a catholicity formulated in ‘political form.’”⁴⁰

A similar agenda, if however on the intellectual level of an ambitious school newspaper, is pursued by *Blaue Narzisse* (in fact originally founded in 2004 as a school newspaper in the east German city of Chemnitz), which also promotes the popularization of New Right ideas. But, instead of addressing readers who are already convinced by New Right ideology and firmly integrated into its scene (like the readers of *Sezession*), it speaks to younger people who may be receptive to New Right ideology but are not yet committed to it or integrated into its milieu. Even though *Blaue Narzisse* has occasionally appeared in print form, its main field of operation is actually online, where New Right views can be communicated in a low-threshold manner. It thus finds recipients who might have never intentionally come into contact with the New Right, but in this way get their first exposure to the scene, almost as if by accident. Therefore, in the New Right network of today’s Germany, *Blaue Narzisse* represents a kind of gateway institution for spreading agitation and propaganda, one that offers a potential entry point to the New Right on a lower intellectual level, while still covering the main topics and strategies.

A similar assessment could be applied to the emergence of Germany’s “identitarian movement” that—like Germany’s New Right in the 1970s—was strongly inspired by developments seen in France. Naming itself Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland, it first emerged as a virtual presence in October 2012 on Facebook and considers itself an offshoot of the French youth organization Génération Identitaire, proclaiming—true to the New Right strategy

of mimicry—a formal dissociation from openly Nazi positions and also from left-wing positions. But, since this is already obvious and self-evident from its agenda, this latter aspect simply reflects a conscious strategy of treating both ends equally through analogy. In any case, the main concern is still to avoid giving observers any impression of closeness to right-wing extremism.

Gudrun Hentges et al. have recently conducted a systematic analysis examining the online and offline activities of the Identitäre Bewegung in Germany. Just like at *Blaue Narzisse*, the identitarians are mainly focused on the internet, which in itself shows that this is not truly a social movement, due to its paucity of real-world political practice. As a medium for agitating otherwise non-participatory persons who nonetheless share fundamentally right-wing worldviews, however, the internet is an ideal tool for binding them more closely to New Right ways of thinking. Here, the strategy of the identitarians is to orchestrate real-life actions (especially against immigration) that are as spectacular as possible, in order to film them for online marketing. These are staged in ways that make it hardly noticeable that the actual “movement” can barely manage to draw more than a handful of activists to its events, but these are nonetheless framed by the camera as a large movement:

The internet allows people with more modest organizational resources to simulate a constant flow of protest happenings that are maintained both within and beyond the local region—and even networked both transnationally and internationally—so that a discrepancy emerges between the actual actions “on the streets,” which are sometimes conducted by no more than a dozen activists, and the virtual impact that these actions enjoy through viral distribution.⁴¹

Whereas the Identitäre Bewegung therefore represents something like the direct-action arm of the New Right, intended to make New Right topics such as identity politics, homeland politics, and anti-immigration agitation particularly attractive for youth by adapting modern communication methods to this end, Pegida functions as a propaganda tool against immigration and encouraging *völkisch* nationalism, also with enormous media effectiveness, due to the fact that Pegida demonstrations are staged as large-scale events. The two leading media outlets in the right-wing spectrum have even outdone themselves in their superlatives, which say more about New Right dreams than political reality. *Junge Freiheit* calls Pegida a “mass movement” that is “driving the political world forward,”⁴² while the *Preussische Allgemeine Zeitung* even claims that “Germany is taking to the streets,” predicting that the year 2014 will have “revolutionized Germany’s political landscape in a potentially more fundamental way than people have been willing to recognize until now.”⁴³

An interesting aspect is that both the identitarians and Pegida have tried to present themselves as mass movements: the identitarians suggest this in the framing of their activist events and Pegida members through their ability to mobilize several thousand people, at times even ten thousand, to attend real-life demonstrations over several weeks in one city, Dresden. Nevertheless, measured against the eighty million citizens of Germany, this still remains a marginal phenomenon in objective terms, especially since this “movement” has basically been limited to one city (all attempts to demonstrate in other cities have ultimately fizzled out, with participant numbers ranging from two to three figures). It may not be so surprising that the east German city of Dresden was the crystallization nucleus for the racist Pegida movement, considering that the city is a stronghold of right-wing extremism. For example, the city gave 27,861 of its “second votes” (German voters have two votes, the first for a constituency representative and the second for a party list) to the far-right NPD and AfD parties during the latest state parliament elections of August 2014. The votes for the NPD and AfD thereby amounted to 11.5 percent of all valid “second votes” cast in Dresden.⁴⁴

The new thing about the Pegida demonstrations in Dresden was that they took place on a weekly basis, with the activists initially refusing to speak to the media, let alone academic scholars because in the fantastical conspiracy theories of Pegida followers, the mainstream media was made up of the “*Lügenpresse*” (lying press). Whereas these mainstream media outlets were vilified simply because they did not shy from labeling self-interested racists as such, propagandistic media outlets such as dubious blogs and Russian television were glorified because these declared Pegida’s delusions to be true. Moreover, Pegida founder Lutz Bachmann was also open to giving full-page interviews in *Junge Freiheit*⁴⁵ and *Sezession*⁴⁶—but certainly not to mainstream media outlets.

While they did include the participation of numerous organized right-wing extremists and neo Nazis (who also assisted with further mobilization), Pegida’s demonstrations were not a genuinely New Right project (in contrast to the activist actions of the identitarians). Nonetheless, they did in fact promote New Right concerns with great public impact: *völkisch* identity and protectionist nationalism, and against immigration, Enlightenment values, and feminism. In this context, Pegida’s use of the catchword “Islamization” was only a pretext for inserting racist and *völkisch* positions back into the public sphere.⁴⁷ In December 2014 and January 2015, Hans Vorländer of the Dresden University of Technology led an empirical study conducted at several Pegida events, which showed that the “typical” Pegida demonstrator

is middle class, well educated, employed, and has a slightly above-average income for the region. Furthermore, he is male, forty-eight years old, and has no religious or party affiliations. Only a quarter of the interviewees, however, are actually motivated by the topics of “Islam, Islamism or Islamization.”⁴⁸ An exploratory study led by Franz Walter at the Göttingen Institute of Democracy Research has essentially confirmed these findings, showing that the political sympathies among Pegida followers lie overwhelmingly with the AfD.⁴⁹

Therefore, while Pegida is a movement generally characterized by racism and conspiracy fantasies, it is nonetheless a very heterogeneous one, uniting many different right-wing sectors. It cannot be simply bracketed with the New Right. Still, the New Right has vested immense hopes in movements like Pegida. *Junge Freiheit* predicts that in the future, Pegida could:

form a kind of pre-political space; not identical, but similar to the AfD support base. A gathering place for those who no longer feel represented or understood by the established parties; a kind of German “Tea Party,” which could very well gain political influence through its agenda setting.⁵⁰

Blaue Narzisse hopes that from Pegida will “emanate an impetus for the political culture in Germany: come out on the streets and show what you support!”⁵¹

Cultural Hegemony: The Paradigm of the Unconditional Pursuit of Influence

Although the New Right of the Federal Republic of Germany has constantly experienced both highs and lows in its history, there certainly have been specific instances of success, particularly in terms of shaping public opinion. The most obvious has been the New Right rallying cry against an ostensible “political correctness,” which was introduced as a campaign by the weekly *Junge Freiheit* in the 1990s, with claims that certain things could not be openly said in Germany. Since then, this idea has found currency far beyond the right-wing scene, becoming completely disconnected from its far-right origins as an element in the New Right strategy of pursuing cultural hegemony. Nevertheless, the successes of the New Right have thus far been limited to a creeping insertion of certain paradigms into the general discourse and has never extended to an actual acquisition of political power. This changed with the emergence of the Alternative für Deutschland, as the right-wing fringe is now witnessing for the first time the establishment of a party that formally dissociates itself from National Socialism (unlike the NPD), while at the same time incorporating a whole series of New Right ideological set pieces into its worldview (although this is also a very heterogeneous and anything but consistent).

With the European Parliament elections of 2014, the AfD won 7.1 percent of German votes, thus entering the assembly with seven seats; this was followed by further successes in several state parliament elections, in Germany's eastern states of Saxony (9.7 percent, 14 seats), Brandenburg (12.2 percent, 11 seats), Thuringia (10.6 percent, 11 seats) and Saxony-Anhalt (24.3 percent, 25 seats), as well as the western city-state of Hamburg (6.1 percent, 8 seats), Baden-Württemberg (15.1 percent, 23 seats) and Rhineland-Palatinate (12.6 percent, 14 seats). Whether this means that the party is now well established is debatable,⁵² as the right-wing fringe of Germany's party spectrum has already seen politically similar, decidedly anti EU projects often enough. Examples include the Bund freier Bürger (League of Free Citizens), the Republikaner (Republicans), and the Pro Deutsche Mitte–Initiative Pro D-Mark (Pro German Center–Pro Deutschmark Initiative), but these have always had much smaller financial resources and much less media influence than the AfD enjoys today.

The framework of the AfD platform is built on the claim of ideological freedom. The AfD presents itself as the party of expertise and economic competence. Even the biographical blend of party head Bernd Lucke, as a macroeconomics professor and devout Reformed Church member, points to the party's ideological amalgamation of market fundamentalism and right-wing conservatism. The ideology of the AfD is comprised of highly diverse set pieces from different schools of thought in neoliberalism and conservatism, but they are all connected by their support for market fundamentalism and opposition to government intervention, alongside positions that are anti-egalitarian and opposed to social welfare.⁵³

The ideological foundation of the AfD is not simply neoliberal, but also incorporates elements of conservatism, so that its market fundamentalism is not paired with a political liberalism. While the freedom of the market and the freedom to realize company profits are radically promoted (alongside an agitation against banks and governments, tinged with streaks of conspiracy theory), the freedoms of the individual are to be highly restricted—shown in terms of immigration policies, the rejection of same-sex civil unions, and the glorification of traditional family models. The AfD champions freedom of opinion only in regards to its own campaign against an ostensible “political correctness,”⁵⁴ while challenging this right to free opinion when exercised by its opponents during demonstrations and protest rallies against the AfD.

Meanwhile, the AfD wants to leverage and privatize profits while nationalizing the associated costs and risks, as a way of ostensibly disburdening the “common man.” In fact, this simply increases the profits of corpora-

tions, while ultimately burdening the average taxpayer.⁵⁵ Here, the rhetorical trick of the AfD is to style itself a party of anti-ideologists, technocrats, and experts. In this context, David Bebnowski⁵⁶ has astutely pointed out that economic questions are of course never “non-ideological,” and that, on the contrary, the economic school of thought ideologically supported by the AfD is precisely what caused the current economic crisis—a predicament caused not by too much governmental control of the economy, but rather, too little. According to Bebnowski, there is no such thing as “neutral economic expertise” or “non-ideological economic truth.”⁵⁷

At the same time, these ideologues of economic technocracy based upon an ostensibly neutral expertise have also been flirting with the concept of a guided and directed democracy in which decisions are made by ostensibly neutral experts and not by general majorities. In fact, there is no way to democratically legitimize such experts, which stands in direct contradiction with the AfD desire to increase legitimacy through direct democracy. These two stances are mutually exclusive, while also highlighting the inability of the AfD to acknowledge that its own position of conservatism and market fundamentalism is actually a hegemonic one, instead, insinuating that this stance is actually the “true” will of the people.⁵⁸ In terms of the history of ideas, this argument in which direct democracy is demanded by those who also pretend to know in advance what the direct democratic voting results should be and will be, is based on the ideas of Schmitt, the most important protagonist of the Weimar Republic’s “conservative revolution” and one of the key mentors of National Socialism. Schmitt was highly critical of the Weimar parliamentary system, and positioned two concepts in opposition to representative democracy: a demand for increased direct democracy, and a figure who was capable of sensing the “people’s will” so that the people would no longer need to vote at all, precisely because its will could be “sensed.” Such a model results in not only the suspension of broad-based participation, but also the installation of a powerful leader in opposition to democracy.⁵⁹

A major element in this kind of suspension is the economization of politics. The foundation of democracy is conflict itself, since society contains mutually conflicting interests that cannot be simply neutralized. Whoever argues in favor of economizing politics is ultimately proposing to restrict the democratic power of legitimized bodies, meaning political parties, parliaments, and governments. This stance is most obvious in the slogan seen on an AfD campaign poster for the 2014 European Parliament elections: “All power emanates from the people. When will that happen here?” Here, the AfD is suggesting that Germany is a place where power does not emanate from the people, ignoring the fact that party pluralism is in itself the expres-

sion of popular sovereignty. In contrast, those who would delegate decision-making to an ostensibly neutral “expertocracy” are ultimately establishing against the *demos* a pseudo-expert exorbitance of power that has been legitimated by nothing. In the European context, the AfD strives for a “strong and self-confident Germany,”⁶⁰ as stated in its EU election program, a Germany whose political and especially economic dominance is to be strengthened in its relations with the European Union. The desire, however, is to only profit from the opportunities of Europe, and not to shoulder a share of the risks, as illustrated by the text of yet another election poster (also underlain with conspiracy fantasies): “Greeks suffer. Germans pay. Banks cash in.”

Kai Arzheimer has shown through his quantitative and qualitative analysis that “the AfD is indeed located at the far-right end of Germany’s political spectrum because of its nationalism, its stance against state support for sexual diversity and gender mainstreaming, and its market liberalism.”⁶¹ Sebastian Friedrich describes a “neoconservative hegemony project” pursued by the AfD, while highlighting in particular the AfD “media alliance” with *Junge Freiheit*, as well as far-right blogs such as *Politically Incorrect* and *Die freie Welt* (The Free World).⁶² Friedrich also points out the AfD’s close cooperation with Pegida, making it the first and only party in federal German parliamentary politics to publicly seek direct dialogue with the racist Pegida movement, thereby successfully positioning it as a publicly acceptable interlocutor.⁶³

Indeed, as Kellershohn has also pointed out,⁶⁴ the *Junge Freiheit* has effectively “offered itself as an unofficial mouthpiece of the AfD,” which is demonstrated by the fact that it regularly publishes full-page interviews with AfD officeholders,⁶⁵ alongside guest articles⁶⁶ and the party’s advertisements. The chief editor of *Junge Freiheit* also sees the AfD as an expression of growing “signs of a huge deficit in political representation,”⁶⁷ while Weissmann, a regular columnist at the paper and a key thinker in Germany’s New Right scene, highlights not only the “legitimacy in principal” of a movement like the AfD, but also considers the party to be the expression of a “portent of major changes, one that is as necessary as it was predictable.”

What is meant here is not only the oncoming economic collapse, or the latency of the Euro crisis, but also the gradual questioning of the fraudulent *modus vivendi* upon which the state doctrine of recent decades has been based: Europe and ties to the West as a definitive solution to the German Question, the nation-state as an anachronism, checkbook diplomacy and the creation of peace without weapons, an existence hemmed in by friends, economy as destiny, the welfare state as a matter of course, immigration as an asset, consumerism as a sedative, Auschwitz as a founding myth, the *Sonderweg* [Germany’s “path of uniqueness”] as the cause of all evil on Earth. None of this will endure,

and in the upcoming struggles for resources, it will be not only over material resources, but also and especially intellectual ones.⁶⁸

With these words—which include an openly antisemitic stance—Weissmann brings New Right calls for a conservative cultural revolution as an anti-Enlightenment counterrevolution into direct relationship with the AfD, while also going a step beyond New Right hopes for the party, beyond its hopes for a shift in cultural hegemony.

Besides *Junge Freiheit*, the other right-wing weekly newspaper is the *Preussische Allgemeine Zeitung* (Prussian General Newspaper, which is the mouthpiece of the Landsmannschaft Ostpreussen (Compatriots' Association of East Prussia), one of the major groups within the Bund der Vertriebenen (Federation of Expellees). With its longstanding ties to the expellee milieu in the Federal Republic of Germany and thus its structural influence in a large scene ranging from conservatism to right-wing extremism, the newspaper has not only enjoyed stable circulation numbers in the five-figure region for the past few decades, it also speaks to a broad spectrum on the right-wing fringe, although always in competition with *Junge Freiheit* for the role of opinion leader in right-wing intellectual circles.

The *Preussische Allgemeine Zeitung* favors the AfD in its rejection of the “established parties,” which are allegedly ignoring the “worries of the voters” and writes of an “alienation from established parties.”⁶⁹ The newspaper states that the AfD stands for a “new self-confidence to the right of center,” representing those who “no longer believe in the media’s diversity of opinions anyway” and who consider themselves neglected by the “concentrated network of the ‘system-supporting media.’”⁷⁰ Here, the AfD represents the starting point for a “reorganization of the German party system”⁷¹ and an “epoch-making transformation.”⁷² Since “immigration has almost completely slipped away from political control ... most Germans will be motivated to elect the new party,” because the AfD is responding to the “uncontrolled stream of immigrants”⁷³ and an “immigration and asylum practice going out of control.”⁷⁴

In the two opinion-leading weekly newspapers addressing the right-wing milieu between conservatism and right-wing extremism, both of which have repeatedly functioned as important mouthpieces for New Right positions and still do, there has been massive support for the implementation of New Right ideas by and through the AfD. Yet, there still remains a fundamental note of skepticism, more at *Junge Freiheit* than at the *Preussische Allgemeine Zeitung*, which can be entirely explained by the fact that the AfD could still experience parliamentary failure at any time, indicating that one has bet on the wrong horse. In the case of *Junge Freiheit*, this would not be the first time

that a small right-wing party is declared the shining hope for New Right fantasies of cultural revolution and cultural hegemony. The Republikaner, followed sympathetically for years, have now faded into insignificance, while the Bund freier Bürger, in which *Junge Freiheit* invested much hope in the 1990s, never achieved structural significance and so was not even noticed outside of Germany.

The splitting of the AfD in the wake of its July 2015 party conference has further reinforced this same skepticism in regards to the potential for success of both the AfD and the new splinter party built around former AfD head Bernd Lucke. The prospective constituency that these two parties might address is ultimately the same as the one that the AfD as a single party was previously able to mobilize, meaning that the split is contributing in practice to a long-term weakening of the New Right hopes that had been placed in this political project. Contributing further to this is the change of course of the new AfD under the leadership of Frauke Petry, with the party setting forth openly racist and anti-intellectual positions since July 2015, so that the last traces of a liberal veneer have disappeared and the New Right strategy of establishing power through camouflaged means has also faded away.

With the intense public debate surrounding the influx of refugees into Germany, and the wider climate of a highly polarized society—one side very open to the world, supporting refugees and fighting racism, and the other increasingly loud in its racist sentiments and rejection of immigration—the AfD, having lost influence in the wake of a party schism, has managed to regain it, translating it into electoral successes. In March 2016, the AfD entered three more local state parliaments (Saxony-Anhalt, Rhineland-Palatinate, Baden-Württemberg), in each case winning two-digit percentages of the popular vote. It remains to be seen how much this represents a new level of establishment, especially since Saxony-Anhalt is the one German state (besides Saxony) where far-right and racist culture is already widespread in everyday life and that has seen the most attacks on refugee housing. Even Baden-Württemberg has traditionally shown some potential for right-wing politics, having given electoral support in the 1990s to the Republikaner party, which was similarly anti-EU and nationalist. In any case, the electoral achievements of the AfD are seen as an overall success in the New Right scene, particularly because this is tied to the hope of achieving cultural hegemony for *völkisch* sentiments, as well as the hope of installing a kind of “opposition” against the established parties and parliamentarianism itself. This was reflected in a *Junge Freiheit* article, which stated: “With the AfD, there is suddenly an appreciable political opposition”.⁷⁵

New Right hopes may well be justified by the fact that the AfD really does pursue New Right strategies, as it tries to shift the entire public discourse towards the right with its breaking of taboos. Examples of this are its attempts to rehabilitate the Nazi term *Volksgemeinschaft* (people's community, in the sense of an ethnonationally defined body politic), as well as its leader's call for gunfire against refugees on the borders. Such AfD stances are expressed loudly and with great media effect. When they are condemned as racist and inhumane, they are not recanted but relativized instead, thus keeping them in the discourse. Here, the goal of the AfD is to achieve a cultural hegemony over what is acceptable for discussion in a democracy—purportedly with the hope that such words might later turn into action.

Conclusion: Does the New Right Still Exist—or Exist Again—in Germany?

In analyzing New Right politics, there is a cardinal error that must be avoided: mistaking appearance for reality. After all, part of the New Right strategy involves never admitting to its own marginalities, even where these can be substantiated, while generally marketing its own activities to the public as only being successful. In this sense, institutional projects like the Institut für Staatspolitik and the Bibliothek des Konservatismus, as well as media projects from *Sezession* to *Blaue Narzisse*, could also be interpreted as self-reflecting vanity projects whose primary purpose is to support the narcissistic belief of New Right protagonists (in most cases having intellectual biographies marked by failure) that they possess omnipotent intellectual greatness after all. Beyond this sober realism, however, it can also be said that the New Right in today's Germany once again possesses institutional structures disseminating ideas that can either directly initiate social movements, such as the identitarians, or else significantly influence them, as in the case of Pegida. This is not because these movements are themselves intellectually oriented, let alone metapolitically so. Indeed, Pegida is anything but intellectual in its open racism, and the identitarians have been conducting actions that are in fact more or less openly neo Nazi in character, albeit with modified and modernized marketing strategies. In any case, both movements have been intensively engaged with operating in the public sphere, thereby creating a disproportionately large media presence for New Right concerns, which in itself corresponds to its actual strategy of deploying a conservative cultural metapolitics. The fact that the AfD is now represented—at least for the time being—as a party in several of Germany's

state parliaments, where it can stand for the central demands of the New Right, should be considered as ambiguous in regards to New Right successes. While its interests in the struggle for cultural hegemony are further consolidated with the help of the AfD, the party itself can certainly not be seen as an expression of intellectual metapolitics. Its agenda is too incoherent and its personnel structure is too open to neo Nazi actors, even more so since its schism in July 2015.

Therefore, it must be acknowledged that the New Right in Germany, after a phase of decline and temporary insignificance, has restructured itself in terms of organization and agitation while reorganizing itself in various operational fields of activity (public impact, ideological and strategic discussions, agitation and publicity, propaganda and self-marketing), in regards to both internally interconnecting factors and externally mobilizing ones. With the AfD, as well as movements like Pegida, a public channel has been created that can open perspectives for a quantitative expansion of efforts to encourage the acceptance of New Right positions. However, these organizations in no way fulfill New Right aspirations to intellectuality, let alone cultural metapolitics, so that it will be interesting to see whether the short-term successes of New Right strategies will falter on precisely this contradiction, when the camouflaging strategy—according to which personal sympathies for National Socialism need to be hidden from public view—finally collapses. After all, it is no accident that Pegida founder Bachmann was publicly toppled by a photo in which he had styled himself to look like Hitler (with toothbrush mustache and side parting), further adding the caption “He’s back!”—thereby revealing his true motives behind the Pegida facade, with its initial veneer of public respectability. This shows that behind the mask (which also borrows from New Right strategies in terms of camouflaging one’s own terminology), aspects of National Socialism often peek through—mostly in an openly affirmative way, but almost always as a kind of historical foil for one’s own political fantasies, without necessarily entailing an ability to see one’s own nationalist identitarian goals in the context of Auschwitz.

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Notes

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4. O'Meara (see note 2), 51.
5. Griffin (see note 3), 35.
6. See Roger Woods, *Germany's New Right as Culture and Politics* (New York, 2007), 25.
7. See Samuel Salzborn, *Rechtsextremismus: Erscheinungsformen und Erklärungsansätze*, 2nd ed., (Baden-Baden, 2015), 31ff.
8. See Assheuer and Sarkowicz (see note 1); Wolfgang Gessenharter, *Kippt die Republik? Die Neue Rechte und ihre Unterstützung durch Politik und Medien* (Munich, 1994); Wolfgang Gessenharter and Thomas Pfeiffer, ed., *Die Neue Rechte—Eine Gefahr für die Demokratie?* (Wiesbaden, 2004); Friedemann Schmidt, *Die Neue Rechte in Europa. Zur ideologisch-strategischen Funktion intellektueller Zirkel bei der Erneuerung der extremen Rechten in der EU* (Brussels, 2001).
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11. See Pierre-André Taguieff, *Sur la Nouvelle Droite. Jalons d'une analyse critique* (Paris, 1994); Alberto Spektorowski, "The New Right: Ethno-Regionalism, Ethno-Pluralism and the Emergence of a Neo-Fascist 'Third Way,'" *Journal of Political Ideologies* 8, no. 1 (2003): 111-130, here 111ff.
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