By gathering 39 local scholars, experts, and civil society activists specialized in racism and human rights, the fourth edition of the European Islamophobia Report addresses a still timely and politically important issue. All 34 country reports included in this book follow a unique structure that is convenient, first, for comparing country reports and, second, for selected readings on a particular topic such as politics, employment, or education with regards to Islamophobia across Europe.

The present report investigates in detail the underlying dynamics that directly or indirectly support the rise of anti-Muslim racism in Europe. This extends from Islamophobic statements spread in national media to laws and policies that restrain the fundamental rights of European Muslim citizens. As a result, the European Islamophobia Report 2018 discusses the impact of anti-Muslim discourse on human rights, multiculturalism, and the state of law in Europe.

This fourth edition of our report highlights how European societies are challenged by the rise of violent far-right groups that do not only preach hatred of Muslims but also participate in the organization of bloody terror attacks. The rise of far-right terrorist groups such as AFO (Action of Operational Forces) in France or the network Hannibal in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland confirms Europol’s alarming surveys on the growing danger of right-wing terrorism.

This year, SETA worked in cooperation with the Leopold Weiss Institute, an Austrian NGO based in Vienna dedicated to the research of Muslims in Europe. In addition, the European Union has funded the European Islamophobia Report 2018 through the program “Civil Society Dialogue Between EU and Turkey (CSD-V)”.

About SETA
Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) is a non-profit research institute based in Turkey dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional and international issues. SETA is the leading think tank in Turkey and has offices in Ankara, Istanbul, Washington D.C. and Cairo. The objective of SETA is to produce up-to-date and accurate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy, and society, and inform policy makers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Through research reports, publications, brainstorming sessions, conferences and policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and business, and contributes to informed decision making mechanisms.
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Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union and Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Directorate for EU Affairs.

Executive Summary

This year’s report revolves around the intimate entanglements between race, class and empire and will tease out links between European border regimes, social welfare politics, and Islamophobia in a 2018 Germany. Against the latter’s backdrop, the topic of migration is the prime prism through which elaborations on racialized exclusions took place. In the context of how racialized exclusions affect different groups, it is noteworthy that experiences of being Black and of being Muslim/Arab have come to resemble each other in Germany – whether that is in contemporary discussions around anti-Semitism mirroring black U.S. American experiences; sudden incarceration politics with possible life-threatening consequences; precarious labor conditions up to the point of total exploitation; border politics that close off Europe against Africa and the Middle East; or simply in the cultural politics of rap music and sports.

The year 2018 has furthermore shown that “migration” and “asylum politics” have become the predominant sites where a deathly trinity of migration, asylum and race come together when people chanted “[Refugees] Drown! Drown! Drown!” at a public AfD event.

Islamophobic discourse over the past 70 years in Germany conceptually changed its naming practice from “guest worker”, to “foreigner”, to “Muslim”, to today’s “economic migrant” and/or “refugee” and, finally, to physical (Islamist) “threat.” This development exposes an underlying racial economy, which continuously de-values and re-defines the Other: today, the contributions of national reconstruction of former guest workers are discursively de-valued and linked to those of “Muslims”, “Terrorists”, “Refugees” generally. Today, all those groups fill this racialized vessel with changing name-tags, whilst being charged of being on the spectrum between economic “free riders” and/or existential “threats”.

Although official state statistics of physical violence against German Muslims, refugees, and migrants have gone down, it is the political and economic professionalization, the social media presence, up to military training and music events of the so-called conservative revolutionaries of the new and old right that leave elaborate space for concern.

The forms of political violence we witnessed in 2018 are characterized by mob manhunts coordinated via the Internet, such as in Chemnitz, with (white) Western victims of globalization chasing the victims of Western imperialism and war. In 2018, Islamophobia was still a dangerously successful policy in Germany, with a growing tendency to mob-like street violence.
Zusammenfassung

Country Profile

Country: Germany
Type of Regime: Federal and Representative Democracy
Form of Government: Federal Republic, Chancellor
Ruling Parties: Christian Democratic Party (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD)
Opposition Parties: The Greens, the Left, the FDP (The Liberals), the AfD, independent candidates.
Last Elections: 2017 elections – CDU/CSU 33% (246 seats), SPD 20.5% (153 seats), AfD 12.6% (94 seats), FDP 10.7% (80 seats), Die Linke 9.2% (69 seats), Grüne 8.9% (67 seats).
Major Languages: German
Official Religion: Christianity

Statistics on Islamophobia: According to police statistics only there were 678 attacks on German Muslims, 40 attacks on mosques, 1,775 attacks on refugees, 173 attacks on asylum homes, and 95 attacks on aid workers. That is less than 2017, which saw around 2,200 attacks on refugees and asylum homes and 900 attacks on German Muslims over the course of the entire year. In 2016, there were around 3,500 attacks in total.

Statistics on Racism and Discrimination: 2017 - 6,434 xenophobic criminal acts; 794 violent xenophobic criminal acts; 1,277 racist criminal acts; 158 racist violent attacks. All data is inconclusive and only police statistics. (BMI, Politisch Motivierte Kriminalität im Jahr 2017, Bundesweite Fallzahlen)

Major Religions (% of Population): 2016 – 82,521,700 million: Christianity (45,504,000), Judaism (99,000), no number for Muslims. (Federal Office for Statistics, Germany)

Muslim Population (% of Population): Between 4 and 5.2 million people. However, there is no official and reliable statistic available. (See Laura Cwiertnia und Kolja Rudzio, “Islamdebatte: Wie viele Muslime leben in Deutschland?”, Die Zeit, 18 April, 2018)

Main Muslim Community Organizations: Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB); Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Germany (AMJ); Islamic Community Milli Görüş (IGMG); Central Council of Muslims in Germany (ZMD); Union of Islamic Cultural Centers (VIKZ); Islamic Community of Shia Communities in Germany (IGS).

Main NGOs Combating Islamophobia: Several small NGOs in local cities. There is a lack of larger nationwide initiatives.

Far-Right Parties: The Alternative for Germany (AfD – Alternative für Deutsch-
ISLAMOPHOBIA IN GERMANY


Far-Right Movements: Identitäre Bewegung (IB - Identitarian Movement), Reich Citizens’ Movement (Reichsbürgerbewegung)

Far-Right Terrorist Organizations: Reich Citizens’ Movement (Reichsbürgerbewegung)

Limitations to Islamic Practices

- Hijab Ban: A ban on the hijab exists for people holding official offices such as at court (or being a lawyer), in school (schoolteacher), or entering the police, for instance. However, most reported cases of discrimination against the hijab come from private business, which is legally not a site for exclusion according to the law, but vigilante justice.
- Halal Slaughter Ban: No
- Minaret Ban: No
- Circumcision Ban: No
- Burka Ban: No
- Prayer Ban: No
Introduction

In 2018, conflating fantasies of race with fantasies about class have come to the fore in three public debates: (1) A debate around anti-Semitic German hip hop and rap (see Media); (2) A debate around national football player Mesut Özil and the picture he took with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (see Politics); (3) And the racist attacks on people of color in Chemnitz after a young German man of color was killed during a fight with three asylum seekers (see Verbal and Physical Attacks).

Furthermore, the marks of racial capitalism were also again felt in the discursive eclipse of security (& anti-terror laws) and migration (& asylum laws) debates, with more and more people demanding, if not even outrightly voting for, their own fantasy to be economically and politically secure in an all-white nation. In this vein, it was in particular fears of Islamist and anti-Semitic refugees/Muslims ostensibly destabilizing Germany’s peace that successfully eclipsed the categories of “asylum” and “security policies.” Already at the beginning of the year a political demand to expel anti-Semitic foreigners from North African and Arab “breeding grounds” (Nährboden)1 was embraced by most mainstream party factions of the German parliament.

A battle continues to be fought over who gets to represent Germany’s future: is it the politically right-wing movements and parties (i.e. the party Alternative for Germany, AfD) or is it the “We are more!” anti-racist demonstrators taking to the streets in post-Chemnitz times? Or will it be a comeback by more mainstream parties struggling for voters’ attention? In this battle, fought with verbal and real pyrotechniques, the figure of the “firecracker” at racist demonstrations is hovering above society almost reminiscent of a bad omen. And whilst white Germans were chasing people of color and so-called “Muslim criminals” on the streets of Chemnitz, Chancellor Merkel traveled to Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria in order to maintain what is presently dying on the stages of world politics: diplomacy along with neoliberalism’s luring but delusive foresight to trade in (European-supported) economic prosperity for African states with an African politics to put an end to people coming to Europe.2 The latter strategy is commonly called “combating the causes for flight” (Bekämpfung von Fluchttursachen) and includes economic partnerships, educational exchange programs, know-how transfer in military, police and incarceration tactics, and, last but not least, social affairs.3


2. At least since the Berlin West Africa Conference in 1884-85, colonial ventures were primarily formed by liberal ideas, with the signatories vowing to establish and maintain humanitarian ethics (such as “moral and material well-being” of their subjects, an end to slavery, education, freedom of conscience and religious tolerance, etc.) in order to serve humanity.

cordingly, the already unstable concept of “class” collapsed into that of the “nation” upon her visit in Ghana, where Merkel stated, “I strongly believe that a prosperous European Union is only possible, if we learn to deal with questions of migration and a partnership with Africa.”

All the while, AfD MP Petr Bystron (former FDP member) busied himself training for future “race wars” on a paramilitary shooting-range of the white supremacist group Suidlanders in South Africa, the haunting paradigms of empire and race inside of Germany (i.e. Chemnitz) unfolded against the broadening of the economic precariat. According to the National Poverty Conference (Nationale Armutskonferenz, NAK), 16.2% of the population are seen as poor with precarious labor conditions, a single-parent household (primarily women and around an additional 2 million children that are not in the statistics), or older age as the main risk factors. The low-pay sector, which is globally around 80% of the world population, employs 7.5 million people (almost every 4th employee and 22.6% of the population, according to the NAK report); this is more than double the number compared to the 90s. Around 1.2 million people in Germany have to supplement their low-paying income with government subsidiaries (NAK report); around 1 million are wageworkers, but only around 2.2 million people are officially registered as unemployed. The contradiction of the so-called invisible hand of the free market thus emboldens a system of governance where “[o]ver the past years, poverty is solidified in Germany, whilst unemployment is [statistically] decreasing.”


“Race” is what we fantasize the other to be, “class” is what we fantasize the other to have. When combined this was expressed in rants about the “many cell phones” refugees ostensibly possess, which seemingly testifies to their unjustified status of being in need of asylum generally, or as in the case of Palestinian German politician Sawsan Chebli, who was attacked online over a (five-year-old) photo that shows her wearing a Rolex watch.12

In an economic system that made everyone exchangeable, the wages of whiteness can be demanded and appealed to from several angles (via tropes of class, race, sexuality, or others). Whiteness can thus also be seen to give a name to the little social appreciation (and appeasement) of white worthiness, which is left to a precarious white population. After neoliberalism has put a price tag on democracy, sociopolitical supremacy is not granted anymore for merely being “white”, “German”, or “European” (as in colonial times),13 but becomes something in need of proof, something to be trans-/nationally fought for, or physically defended - if need be. Popular sites for said struggle are citizenship debates, economic possibilities, legal and public rights, welfare support, or the right to refuge. In conclusion, in a 2018 Germany, it was the struggle (and its normalization)14 over who owns the property rights of whiteness in times of economic and political crises. Pursuing Islamophobic and racist policies and acts thus earned people the right to re-/claim “belonging” and “representation,” but its roots are fueled by deep structural desires to re-/organize society spiritually and materially.

Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Physical and Verbal Attacks

An incitement to report men of color that seem to or indeed are intruding on white female bodily security has been created legally and discursively ever since New Year’s 2015/2016. In 2018, the case of 26-year-old Syrian refugee Amad Ahmad who burnt to death in his cell made the news in the second half of the year. The story starts at the beginning of July with a few young German women and Ahmad at a lake. The four women filed a police complaint of harassment against Ahmad who allegedly

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13. I am aware that racial and ethnic minorities such as Jews, the Irish, the Huguenots, and others have not simply held the status of “being white” even during colonial times, at least not in Europe itself. The colonies, however, often offered a way for Europeans to “become white” together within and through the practices of settler-/ colonialism. Instead, it is rather the historical dis-/continuities for a “white majority” that I want to give expression to with this maybe oversimplified statement.

gesticated and glanced over in an inappropriate way – no physical transgressions were reported. Ahmad was immediately incarcerated, whereupon the story becomes increasingly bizarre: his file in Cleve, where he was first taken into custody, was eventually confused with that of another man who was on the run from the police in Hamburg, a young male refugee from Mali. Both men were listed as “Amed Amed,” the main similarity. Only after Ahmad’s death it turned out that he was unjustly held in custody for a crime he didn’t commit due to an ostensible bureaucratic “mix-up.” This follows another mix-up before his death, where Ahmad was also mistaken for another Syrian who was charged with “rape” – the case was dropped, however, because the victim admitted that she made up the rape. However, after all this, it is not clear how two very different police files with very different data, from two different police stations in two cities in the northern part of Germany (Hamburg and Cleve), including two totally different people (one from Aleppo in Syria and another one from Timbuktu in Mali) could have been “confused.” Also unclear are the reasons for the fire in his prison cell, just as much as it is unclear why the police didn’t answer the emergency call that came through the intercom out of Ahmad’s cell the moment the fire broke out. This case is an extreme example of how quickly even minimally transgressive behavior by men of color (and in particular by refugees) can quickly lead to punitive consequences as well as death at the hands of the police and the judicial system.

Overall, the violent and violently verbal attacks on German Muslims counted as Islamophobic by the police accumulated to the number of 621 attacks in total until the end of 2018 – out of those, 31 attacks targeted mosques (as a building) and 48 people were physically hurt. The small number might be due to the change in registering cases – see Islamophobia in Germany: National Report 2017 – where now the near vicinity of the mosque is not counted anymore, nor are prayer rooms or other private institutions (i.e. airports). The attacks on German Muslims have to be seen in conjunction with attacks on refugees, their asylum homes as well as NGOs in the

17. Ahmad’s case is reminiscent of a similar one, where a young refugee from Sierra Leone, Oury Jalloh, was – given the overwhelming evidence – most likely burnt to death by police officers in his cell in 2005 (the chief public prosecutor in Naumburg declared the Jalloh case as “forlorn,” recommending its closure in January 2019) Das Erste “Der Fall Oury Jalloh: Ermittlungen sollen ausbleiben”, 17 January 2019, www.daserste.de/information/politik-weltgeschehen/monitor/videos extern/der-fall-oury-jalloh-ermittlungen-sollen-ausbleiben-100.html, (Access date: 2 September 2019).
18. See: “Islamfeindlichkeit und antimuslimische Straftaten”, Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 19/2315, 24.05.2018 (1. Quartal); Drucksache 19/3917, 22.08.2018 (2. Quartal); Drucksache 19/6333, 07.12.2018 (3. Quartal); Drucksache 19/8854, 29.03.2019 (4. Quartal). The vast majority (around 95%) of incidents were motivated by right-wing violence and in a negligibly small number of cases the perpetrators were caught/found.
service of refugees and their problems. Until the end of 2018, around 1,775 attacks on refugees took place, with around 329 adults and 15 children hurt. At the same time, around 173 attacks on asylum homes and around 95 attacks on aid workers were counted. Overall, we observe a decline in the reporting and/or registration of physical attacks compared to the previous years.

Pegida demonstrations took place regularly in Germany, with 68 demonstrations until end of 2018 and 49 of said demonstrations taking place in Berlin. Three chapters (Nuremberg, Munich, and Mittel-Franken) are currently surveilled by the intelligence services. In June 2018, at Dresden’s Pegida demonstration a speaker talks about an organization saving refugees on open waters. The crowd cheered “Drown! Drown! Drown!” whereupon the speaker answered, given the media presence, “No, we still need the boat to send them all back!”

On Saturday, 25 August, 2018, the 200th anniversary of Karl Marx’s birth, the city (called “Karl Marx City” in the GDR) celebrated its 875th birthday whilst late at night, at around 3 o’clock in the morning a fight ensues between two groups. Three men are (critically) wounded and one man, Daniel H., a German man of color, eventually dies. Within one day, news spreads on the Internet that Daniel tried to rescue German women from the attacks of “foreign invaders,” becoming a stylized hero who was killed in defense of German security. On Sunday afternoon at 4:30 pm of the same day, an “illegal” demonstration took place, with more than 800 participants – amongst them also children. Meant as a so-called funeral march for the victim, the chants stated the opposite: “Foreigners out”, “We are the Volk”, and “One dead foreigner for each dead German” were heard on the streets of Chemnitz for the days to come. On Saturday, however, several right-wing neo-Nazi groups and the AfD mobilized via the Internet a demonstration for the next day – Monday, 27 August 2018. According to several media outlets, the secret service informed the police of a possible right-wing mobilization that could easily amount to the 10,000s. However, despite the warning, on Monday it was only 591 police officers that faced around 6,000 right-wingers and their supporters, and around 1,500 counter demonstrators on the other side. People of color were being chased or beaten up, “Heil Hitler” signs and chants were heard, drunken men showed their naked bottoms, while the police was unable to protect the non-white passersby or counter demonstrators – or so they claimed – and thus recommended people of color go home, instead. That evening,

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20. See “Islamfeindlichkeit und antimuslimische Straftaten”, Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 19/2315, 24.05.2018 (1. Quartal); Drucksache 19/3917, 22.08.2018 (2. Quartal); Drucksache 19/6333, 07.12.2018 (3. Quartal); Drucksache 19/8854, 29.03.2019 (4. Quartal).

20 people were hurt. On Wednesday, the police warrant for the two accused men who killed Daniel H. is leaked by the judicial officer Daniel Zabel (see more in Internet section).22

Events such as the one in Chemnitz or Dresden in August where a demonstrator (an employee of Saxony’s State Office of Criminal Investigation as it turned out later)23 violently stopped journalists from working at a Pegida demonstration, set forth a debate about sympathizers within the police, propelling the word “Pegizei” – a portmanteau of “Pegida” and “Polizei” (Police). On 5 September, Saxony’s head of government Michael Kretschmer (CDU) drew attention and criticism toward himself by stating, “There was no mob, there was no manhunt, there was no pogrom” (in Chemnitz). Shortly after, the head of one of Germany’s most prominent and only “public” intelligence services (Verfassungsschutz), Hans-Georg Maassen, was put in the limelight with similar statements that went even further. Maassen even questioned the authenticity of the footage of the manhunt that went viral online. As though this was not enough, Maassen found himself guilty of sharing sensitive intelligence service intel about neo-Nazi movements with politicians of the AfD. In all that political mess Minister of the Interior, Building and Homeland Affairs (Bundesminister des Innern, für Bau und Heimat) Horst Seehofer (CSU/CDU) not only uttered sympathy for the demonstrators in Chemnitz and claimed that “migration is the mother of all problems,”24 he also supported Maassen and eventually even protected him from being ousted from the state apparatus. His intervention of giving him a job in his Ministry of Homeland Affairs instead of ending his political career entirely caused additional friction within the CDU/CSU and with the SPD.

However, not only did Chemnitz show a tryst of famous right-wing politicians, it was also a hub for well-known neo-Nazis: Maik Arnold (National Socialists Chemnitz) who supposedly has ties to the NSU was present during the demonstrations in Chemnitz; Yves Rahmel the right-wing extremist music producer of PC Records who published the “Döner Killer” song, a glorification of the NSU murders, was present; and Christian Fischer, former head of a now illegal paramilitary youth organization that trained young followers militarily, with the Hitler Youth as a role model. The different demonstrations eventually joined forces with the AfD demon-

In a well-researched document of the Antifa Committee Leipzig (Antifa-Komitee Leipzig, AK) about the origins and developments of mass movements such as PEGIDA and HoGeSa (Hooligans against Salafism), the Antifa observed a “change of tactics” (Stellungswechsel) in mobilization strategies from rather old-fashioned neo-Nazi movements to the more populist movements of PEGIDA and HoGeSa: [...] “the rejection of an ‘Israel Connection’ seems to present a reliable and flexible dividing line between neo-Nazis and an entire spectrum of so-called right-wing populism [Pegida, HoGeSa, but also the AfD].”

The pro-Israel, or rather pro-Zionist, dividing line in politics also marks the moment through which the AfD was able to maintain its position as a people’s party in a democratic system marked by the Holocaust. However, it is not only the appeal to and of more mainstream policy stances such as imperial and/or ethno-nationalist policies, it is also an appeal to patriarchal fantasies of national and military prowess, and heteronormativity (especially in terms of marriage and gender issues) that are advanced by a well-connected transnational and professionalized network of so-called conservative revolutionaries in high positions who are apt at wooing the single-issue voter disgruntled by a too large state tax on public TV, who oppose abortion, or other issues, for instance. The question for policymakers is thus: how can we tell a narrative that takes capitalist-induced poverty of white people in one of the richest countries in the world serious, whilst not neglecting the deeply embedded racism so prevalent all over Germany?

**Employment**

One of the interesting events concerning empire and class is the debate surrounding the German military in 2018. Due to a severe shortage in staff, the German Bundeswehr (military) has been debating to make it possible for non-Germans to be employed in their final march around Björn Höcke, who stated his party wants to “intellectually refine the ‘brute’ ways of civil protest.”

25. It is apparent, especially from Höcke’s last statement, that street violence is always also class violence. As mentioned in the report of 2017, the AfD prime voters’ constituency as well as its political elite is primarily middle to upper class, now showing their presence in Chemnitz as a way to gain more legitimacy and further their “outreach” program. The many firecrackers thrown at police, journalists and civilians, as well as the many naked bottoms shown to police and TV cameras are also reminiscent of struggles over masculinity and power.

26. Of 250,000 inhabitants in Chemnitz, 10,000 of them were demonstrators who also came massively from other parts of Germany. Chemnitz, thus, became a site of social unrest, attacks on journalists and racist violence. Thus, from October 2018 onward, the entire inner-city route taken by the demonstrators in Chemnitz was (pre-emptively?) installed with video cameras.


29. Over the past decade mainstream politicians have recurrently declared Muslims as stupid (Sarrazin), multiculturalism as failed (Merkel), or migration as being the mother of all problems (Seehofer) to name just a few examples of the recent decade.
employed. In this scenario, eligibility however only extends to EU citizen foreigners who have already lived in Germany with fluent German skills. The target countries are seemingly Romania, Italy, and Poland, while the targeted professions named in the media were doctors and IT specialists. Looming over tropes of a military reconstruction is the more than a decade-old SPD and CDU proposal to invest into a unified EU-led armed force, which surfaced again this year. It might be safe to attest that despite an overall unease and insecurity as to what role and path the German or European forces will take in the future, there have nevertheless been steady and exigent debates about new forms of trans-/national European defense strategies. In a Europe in crisis, we thus witness two divergent but interconnected debates and policies: the new right movements are rather interested in international white solidarity networks and policies (open to be ruled from local constituencies and direct mandates), whilst the liberal European elite is rather geographically oriented to maintain and defend a “strong Europe.” At the same time, the Protestant anti-Semitism delegate of the German government, Dr. Felix Klein, aims at institutionalizing prayer rooms and religious counsel for Muslims (around 4,000) and Jews employed by the German military.

In the wake of the military’s attention to employment records, it is also noteworthy that an investigative report by the left-leaning newspaper taz was published, uncovering an entire network of right-wing motivated individuals and planned actions within the Bundeswehr. This comes as yet another disclosure of right-wing activities within the executive forces writ-large, which recurrently vibrates through German public discourse – almost every time with a lot of spectacle, but few consequences when it comes to structural or employment reform. In the case of the uncovered Bundeswehr network by the two taz journalists, media and political networks have barely picked up the findings so far in order to have a more structural debate about right-wing activities that extend from high-ranking military personal, to intelligence offices and others. According to the newspaper taz, the accused Mister

33. Interview with Dr. Felix Klein, Beauftragter der Bundesregierung für jüdisches Leben in Deutschland/ appointed delegate of the government for Jewish life in Germany, at Heimatministerium Berlin, 7 December 2018.
S., operating under the pseudonym “Hannibal,” was born in 1985 in Halle (an der Saale; former GDR) and is a member of the Special Operations Forces (Kommando Spezialkräfte) of the Military in Calw, Southern Germany. Allegedly, Mister S. was responsible of organizing and managing a network in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria: “Members in these groups are police and soldiers, reservists, civil servants and intelligence officers who have a plan under conspiratorial conditions: if they see the signs when ‘Day X’ arrives, they want to take up arms.”

 Allegations such as these weigh heavily on a German state apparatus that is interested in presenting itself in liberal ways. In November 2018, news made rounds in Germany in which Sinan Selen, formerly an anti-terrorist agent of the German Federal Office of Criminal Investigation (Bundeskriminalamt), became the new vice-president of the German intelligence service called the Federal Bureau of Constitutional Protection (Bundesverfassungsschutz) and thus the first high-ranking intelligence officer with a so-called migration background - specifically a Turkish Kurdish one. The appointment also attracted considerable hate attacks from AfD politician Johannes Huber on social media in general.

 Neo-Nazi preparations for a “Day X,” the day organized society supposedly collapses as we know it and which also represents the day of “revolutionary and systemic change,” have resonated for the past 30 years through a unified Germany (and Europe). Its actual importance became urgently real again during the National Socialist Underground trials (NSU trials), which ended in July 2018. Therein, “preppers” preparing for “Day X” also played a pivotal role in the workings and networking of the neo-Nazis on trial. Being one of the biggest political trials and scandals of postwar Germany, detailed recordings can only be read from the antifascist initiative “NSU watch,” which took it upon itself to document what is otherwise not recorded for the public during the trial. One of the most sobering facts of the trial was that the actual network of helpers, neo-Nazis and members of the intelligence services, were insufficiently touched upon and primarily treated as negligible (read also Islamophobia in Germany: National Report 2017). The Central Council of Muslims and the Central Council of Jews have voiced their critique of the final verdict. The relatives of the murdered have filed law suits against the government and the federal states of Bavaria and Thuringia, stating they are willing to take the case all the way to the European Court of Justice, if need be.

The European report on anti-Muslim racism published by FRA in 2018, which is only based on a very partial selection of Muslim subjects in the EU, has found that the labor market is still one of the most important sites for discrimination with women being the primary victims due to their attire.40 Hence, as mentioned in previous reports, the issue of covered Muslim (women’s) heads continues to be a legal, political, and personal spectacle and problem for many. A detailed report focusing specifically on discrimination on the labor market against women wearing a hijab in Germany was published in 2018.41 Cited in this report is a 2017 study claiming that 71.3% of hijab-wearing women believed they weren’t hired due to their headscarf (only 23% of all Muslim women in Germany wear the hijab regularly).42 The results of several reports thus clearly show that easy demarcations between anti-Muslim racism and racism generally are hard to draw – after all, having a Turkish- or Arab-sounding first name or surname can lead to discrimination no matter what. The intersections of gender and race, however, put religiously devout Muslim women with a headscarf clearly on the losing end of employment prospects. The year 2019, however, might signal a new legal debate and consequences: whereas the ban on headscarves in Germany was legally bargained with when it comes to civil service jobs (teachers, police, court), a young woman sued her employer Müller, a famous German drugstore chain, in Ulm (Bavaria) for firing her after she decided to wear the hijab. The drugstore chain argued that as a chain and company it wants to remain “politically and religiously neutral.” The judges decided to pass the case on to the European Labor Court in Luxembourg.43 This will not only be a question of whether in the future it will be allowed for Muslim women with a hijab to be discriminated in the private business sector, but its consequences can set a precedence for the whole of Europe.

Education

In November 2018, for instance, a study cited a teacher working in Berlin’s migrant quarter of Neukoelln who claimed, “Only one out of 103 children speaks German at home.”44 This utterance was used to demarcate the borders of respectability and ac-

42. Ibid.
ceptability in Germany, making working-class multilingual families (of color) a sign of deviance and deficiency. The head of school is also quoted in the headline with the subtitle “We Are Arabized,” whilst showing a photograph where a blond female teacher is speaking to a class of “black-haired” first-graders.45

Neukoelln and Wedding, for instance, the two poorest color neighborhoods, structurally part of the most unequal quarters of Berlin, are already defined by the social inequalities brought about by race and class: 45% of children growing up in Neukoelln have parents who are recipients of social welfare support and the average income per (adult) person is 1,025 Euros — around 920 Euro/month was the official demarcation for being at risk of poverty in Berlin in 2017.46 Having less than 769 Euros/month is categorized as poor (around 420 Euros was the social welfare support granted to an adult EU citizen in Berlin, exclusive of rent).

A report was published in Berlin by the appointed delegate of the city of Berlin against discrimination in schools in 2018. It highlighted that over a period of one year, 183 cases of discrimination were reported: 106 of those were categorized as “racism” with Muslims and black students as prime targets; 10 cases were based on gender- and/or sexuality discrimination; 4 cases based on class; and the large number of 20 cases based on (bodily) ableism - 36 cases could not be counted. Overall, these statistics seem to be very low given that there are around 350,000 pupils in Berlin. The new study for 2018 is not out as of yet; however, it might be reasonable to assume that with the new possibility to report cases of discrimination at schools in Berlin, the number of reported cases will increase. What is important to mention from such a small sample is that most cases of discrimination (108 out of 170) were committed by the adults present (teachers, principals, educators, police, youth welfare personal, pedagogical staff) and only 20 were committed in a peer-on-peer situation.48

49. Here: Arbeitslosengeld II, also called Hartz IV.
50. The study took place between 09/2016 and 07/2017. It reported 36 cases as anti-Muslim racism, 24 as anti-black racism, 12 as anti-Sinti and Roma racism, and 9 as anti-Semitic.
Trouble was caused in 2018 by various AfD politicians who took it upon themselves to intimidate schoolteachers or university staff all over Germany to call on students to “report” their teaching staff (via mail or online) in case “non-objective comments” were made by teachers, or, also, if negative comments about the AfD were uttered. The way to go about that was by referencing the “Law of Neutrality” (see Islamophobia in Germany: National Report 2017), which decrees that no “ideological” statement should be made in educational state spaces – a law that has usually been used to bare hijab-wearing Muslim women from entering the state educational sector is now used to also demarcate “political deviance” of (white) Germans. The AfD argued that “left-wing radical ideology” is being spread and young students cannot defend themselves – their online registration for radical teachers should be seen as a new “strategy of self-defense,” and the results should be sent to the respective federal school board authorities.

Politics

One of the most prominent debates erupting around race and Islamophobia in 2018 was caused by national football player Mesut Özil. It stirred excessive debate when Özil announced his retreat from the German national football team in July due to racism, as he tweeted. The latter happened on the one hand after the publication of a picture on Twitter, which shows Mesut Özil, Ilkay Gündoğan (another German football player) and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in May 2018. More importantly, however, it also happened after the defeat of the German national team at the World Cup 2018. Already toward the end of the German team’s participation, several sports


54. According to the AfD, students would be left to “self-define” what neutrality means and then report it accordingly. This idea is comparable to calls that the Gestapo put out and introduced after 1933. In fact, the majority of Gestapo Nazi laws came out of (ordinary) citizens reporting to the Gestapo what they (personally) deemed would violate the “order of society.”


56. Heike Klövert, “Aufsichtsbeschwerde und Onlineplattform: Müssen Lehrer die AfD fürchten?” Spiegel Online, 9 October 2018, www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/afd-plant-meldeportale-gegen-lehrer-und-schulen-die-wichtigsten-antworten-a-1232276.html, (Access date: 4 September 2019). Ironically, or maybe symptomatic of the given debate, is that a retired high school teacher (and child of a former Jewish émigré resistance fighter) already sued the German intelligence service Protection of the Constitution in 2017 for her continuous surveillance due to her ostensible closeness to radical left-wing groups. She was denied tenure, kicked out of her job for a year, and, then again, surveilled in later age for once being a member of the Communist party and for still being in active “contact with radicals,” aka anti-fascist organizations, according to the intelligence service. Whether the state is truly helpless in the face of “radical left-wing thought” is hence questionable. For more information on the retired high school teacher see: “Verfassungsschutz Ex-Lehrerin wehrt sich gegen Beobachtung”, Spiegel Online, 17 January 2017, http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/silvia-gingold-lehrerin-wehrt-sich-gegen-verfassungsschutz-a-1129722.html, (Access date: 4 September 2019). For more information of the decree against radicals, see: Gerard Braunthal, “Political Loyalty and Public Service in West Germany - The 1972 Decree against Radicals and Its Consequences”, 1990, Amherst: UMass Press.
commentators such as Mario Basler made fun of Özil’s body language, former German national player Lothar Matthäus even claimed that it seemed Özil wasn’t comfortable wearing the German tricot, followed by racist vitriol during games by fans in the stadium – Matthäus’s pictures with Vladimir Putin during the World Cup didn’t even cause nearly as much political critique as Özil’s and Gündoğan’s. After the German team’s defeat, vitriol continued until Özil eventually tweeted his delayed but famous response to the national debate from England and in English: “People with racially discriminative backgrounds should not be allowed to work in the largest football federation in the world that has players from dual heritage families. Attitudes like theirs simply do not reflect the players they supposedly represent.” He continued: “It is with a heavy heart and after much consideration that because of recent events I will no longer be playing for Germany at international level whilst I have this feeling of racism and disrespect. I used to wear the German shirt with such pride and excitement, but now I don’t. I feel unwanted and think that what I have achieved since my international debut in 2009 has been forgotten.”

Özil was born and grew up in Germany and received German citizenship at the age of 18, in 2007. In a special meeting with Germany’s president Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the latter posted on Facebook after his meeting with Özil and Gündoğan that the former stated “I was born here and I stand up for my country.”

In 2010, Mesut Özil was awarded with an Integration Bambi, a prize that usually goes to special achievements in media but which introduced an “integration” award after the spectacular goals Özil achieved and for being the first German Turkish player in the national soccer team. Özil went from an “integration role model” to a “football scapegoat” within 8 years, with the general suspicious questions surfacing positing whether he is Turkish or German. Foreign Minister Heiko Maas even questioned whether a multimillionaire living abroad would be able to say anything about “integration” and the national public broadcasting sta-


58. In German: “Ich bin hier aufgewachsen und stehe zu meinem Land.”

tion ARD journalist Rainald Becker even called for Özil to return his Integration Bambi award.60 All the while, the national magazine *Spiegel* commissioned a survey on 24-25 July, within which only 27% of respondents regretted Özil’s exit, whereas 58% didn’t think that the way he was treated was racist – it was the same *Spiegel* issue that had him and his face on the cover with the headline “Alienation – The Özil Affair and the Problem with Integration.”61

The profound sense of dislocation that racism can inflict was brought to the fore by Mesut Özil’s public reaction. The debate about him, however, also triggered another nationwide moment, which took place on Twitter. Therein, a new hashtag by Ali Can called #MeTwo came into being.62 The hashtag calls on people to share their experiences of racism and it became a national online spectacle and public debate.63 Thousands of people took to Twitter to share their former or present experiences of racism – from everyday racism to violence. Also here a debate ensued whether a discourse on integration and racism is beneficial writ-large, if people of color in Germany highlighted only the “negative” experiences of living in Germany. An argument well-known from the #MeToo debate, upon which the #MeTwo campaign was modeled.

Whilst the summer was busy with Özil and the #MeToo Twitter campaign, the parliament debated (immigrants’ or Muslims’) anti-Semitism prior to the summer break and the AfD and Chemnitz after the summer break. Dr. Felix Klein, the delegate of the government on questions of anti-Semitism and Jewish life in Germany, mentioned in an interview with the *Islamophobia Report* that it was debated to install a delegate of the government on questions or racism as well, however, after an Israeli flag was burnt in Berlin during demonstrations against Trump’s decision to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, the discussion went otherwise.64 Instead, the beginning of the year 2018, witnessed a new resolution petitioned by fractions of the CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP, and the Greens in the parliament dealing solely with anti-Semitism. The document asks

64. Interview with Dr. Felix Klein, *Beauftragter der Bundesregierung für jüdisches Leben in Deutschland* / Appointed delegate of the government for Jewish life in Germany, at Heimatministerium Berlin, 7 December 2018. It is also noteworthy to mention that the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution has categorized demonstrations against Trump’s decision to move the embassy to Jerusalem as “Islamist anti-Semitism.” This included, according to the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution primarily Palestinians, Turks, and other Muslim groups with “migration backgrounds.” See: BMI, „Verfassungsschutzbericht 2017“, p. 195.
the parliament to issue new legislations that are better able to deal with the eviction of anti-Semitic foreigners/refugees from North African and Arab “breeding grounds” (Nährboden) from Germany. It also demanded to install said special delegate on the issues of anti-Semitism (Felix Klein), who in fact took office only five months later in May. The document also demands legislation to investigate whether it was possible to declare the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS) against Israel as sedition and, thus, for any actions taken thereon as criminal offenses. The document’s political goal is stated on page two: “The absolute acceptance of Jewish life is the benchmark for a successful integration. Whoever rejects Jewish life in Germany or questions the right of Israel to exist, will meet resolute opposition.” Shortly afterward follows the definition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance: “Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

According to Klein, the chancellor’s office wanted that extra clause added, which states “Moreover, also the state of Israel, being understood as a Jewish collective, can become the target to said attacks.” A similar resolution was issued in May in Berlin this time including the party the Left.

In April and May 2018, Berlin Neukoelln also saw two demonstrations against anti-Semitism of white (non-Jewish) German men and women, all of them wearing kippot and Israeli flags – one of the marches was reported as a “Kippa Flashmob.” Yael Wilms, one of the organizers, has risen to fame in 2018 through her act of Jew-facing during demonstrating in Neukoelln, propelling the idea of anti-Semitism being a “Muslim” and/or “Arab/Turkish” problem.

According to Dr. Felix Klein in an interview with the author, the German Fed-

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70. What I mean with this is to take on a fantasized Jewish identity/look by – as in this case – wearing a dark-haired, curly wig, a David star necklace, a David star tattoo on her left chest, changing her name to Yael, as well as adopting a transnational and local Zionist political ideology, including marching against anti-Semitism in Neukoelln. Jew-facing however is way more common in Germany than just this one case and can even extend to people inventing Jewish family members or being Jewish themselves.
eral Office of Criminal Investigation (Bundeskriminalamt, BKA) informed him that around half of all violent attacks on Jews in Germany have allegedly been committed by Muslims, which could not be confirmed by Berlin’s State Office of Criminal Investigation (Landeskriminalamt, LKA).

In October 2018, Jewish members of the AfD in Wiesbaden (Hesse) formed a group called “Jews in the AfD,” in short JAfD. The group justified its own founding with an “uncontrolled mass immigration” of young men from an “Islamic culture” with “anti-Semitic socialization.” The document also cites the “destruction of the traditional, monogamous family” due to “gender mainstreaming.” The founding of the group wasn’t received well in the Jewish communities in Germany. Several organizations and individuals wrote collective public statements declaring their discontent, primarily accusing the AfD of racism and anti-Semitism as well as being a danger to democracy. After much debate and calls for the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Verfassungsschutz) to put the AfD on its radar, it finally responded to in January 2019 after presenting a 450-page expert opinion: the result is that the entire AfD is a test case (Prüffall) for the Intelligence Service and will not be surveilled, yet the right extremist wing (Der Flügel) around Björn Höcke and the youth organization (JA) of the AfD count as “suspicious cases” (Verdachtsfall). Neither of the two cases, however, means true surveillance, but rather an assessment of possible future actions.

At the beginning of the year, Kay Gottschalk, a high party official in the AfD,


72. Interview with Daniel Hiltmann and Anke Henke, LKA Berlin, 19 February, 2019. Original sentence in German: “Die Zahlen für Berlin belegen dies nicht. Vielleicht sind Statistiken mit eingeflossen von NGOs, die auch Sachverhalte unterhalb einer ‘strafrechtliche Schwelle’ darstellen und/oder Forschungsergebnisse, die das subjektive Empfinden von Betroffen mit abbilden, z. B. der Antisemitismusbericht vom „Unabhängigen Expertenkreis Antisemitismus“. The official data for anti-Semitic criminal offenses for 2018 were also shared with me: 78% were right-wing motivated; 15% were attributed to “foreign ideology”; 2% left-wing ideology; 4% religious ideology; 1% not categorizable. The publication of the yearly LKA report “Lagedarstellung politisch motivierte Kriminalität Berlin 2018” will happen around May 2019 and can be retrieved under: https://www.berlin.de/polizei/verschiedenes/polizeiliche-kriminalstatistik/.


77. At the same time, the left-wing newspaper jungeWelt and the Marxist coordination group Marx21, which publishes two magazines and organizes the yearly “Marx Is Muss” congress of left-wing youth organizations, have both regularly been included in the publications by the Intelligence Service for years. Marx21 is surveilled since 2013, the jungeWelt since 2014. See: BMI – Bundesministerium des Inneren/ Federal Ministry of the Interior, “Verfassungsschutzbericht 2017”, p. 160 and 161.
called for the boycott of all Turkish shops at the AfD New Year’s event in Krefeld (North Rhine-Westphalia), since German Turks all support Erdoğan.78

Another example of empire fantasies took place at the end of June 2018 when the AfD convened at the Kyffhäuser memorial with – amongst many others – Dr. Alexander Gauland, chairman of the AfD in parliament. The memorial was one built at the end of the 19th century in memory of Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm I and stands as a symbolic monument against the outer enemies of the (then) empire, but also the inner ones, such as Social Democracy. In his speech at the memorial, Gauland stated that “Orientals and Africans” are coming to Germany en masse in order not to work but have loads of children. Seemingly, their goal is a “population exchange” between Germans and “Orientals and Africans.”79 These statements by Gauland followed his infamous declaration just shortly before, at the party convention of the AfD youth organization, the Young Alternative (JA), on 2 June: “We have a glorious history and that, dear friends, lasted longer than those blasted 12 years, […] Yes, we avow those 12 years, yet, Hitler and the Nazis are just a speck of bird poop in more than 1,000 years of successful German history.”80

Media

In times of so-called fake news we are witnessing that perceptions can greatly diverge from actual reality, with some of said misrepresentations having a potential to become dangerous. If a country, for instance, believes that the population of a particular minority is proportionally a lot larger than what it actually is, then public opinion could easily tip over into violence by way of “conspiracy theories.” Or, in other words, if a majority perceives itself to be “overrun” and “taken over” by an actual minority, we do not need history books to draw the necessary conclusions. In the recent German case, a 2018 study found that Germans greatly overestimate the number of Muslims in Germany. According to public opinion, Germans believe that at least every fifth person in Germany is a “Muslim,” which would be 21% of the entire population. In reality, the percentage of Muslims in Germany reaches 4%, less than a fifth of what people actually thought.

The commodification of “gangsta rap” happened within the larger national framework of the defunding of the welfare state and narratives of a “failed mul-

ticulturalism” from the 2000s onward. In 2018, an emotive and transnational scandal erupted around the popular award show Echo, which gives out prizes based on the box office results of music artists in various categories. This year, Farid Bang and Kollegah, two well-known rap artists, were the winners in the category “Hip Hop/Urban – National” with their song “08/15.” One of their so-called punchlines was “My muscles are more defined than those of an Auschwitz inmate.” The artists had already justified their lyrics to the Echo ethics committee prior to the final event. During the event, Farid Bang, who wrote the line, apologized to the audience stating, “We didn’t want to cause any negative feelings.”

The critique of anti-Semitism, however, became so heated that several artists returned their decade-old awards (i.e. Westernhagen and Daniel Barenboim) and blamed Echo itself. The music company BMG cancelled the artists’ contracts in the same month (April), and, after 26 years, the entire organization was cancelled for good. Media debates ensued about anti-Semitism in German hip hop and rap. Two penal charges of “sedition” (Volksverhetzung) against the rappers were filed at the court in Stuttgart, which tried both the rappers’ present and former songs. The International Auschwitz Committee suggested Bang and Kollegah visit Auschwitz, which they did.

The infamous BILD newspaper was the main media instigator in this debate with titles such as “Dumb and Dumber,” for instance, as a reference to Bang and

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81. For around 20 decades, mainstream German hip hop culture represented primarily the (white) middle class (for example Fettes Brot, Freundeskreis, Absolute Beginner) or at least tried to appeal to it, whilst simultaneously employing fun, comical, or pseudo-/romantic lyrics, lifestyle and music style. The commodification of “gangsta rap” progressed quite rapidly from the beginning of the 2000s onward (primarily with the label Aggro Berlin and artists such as Sido, Bushido, Hafifbehl), and was presented by a different profile of artists aiming at provocative and transgressive expression to musically embody personal (and men of color) prowess.


Kollegah.Interestingly, the tabloid focused quickly on Kollegah in their accusations, although Bang was the one who wrote the line and sang it. According to Kollegah, anti-Semitism accusations became virulent after he went to Palestine in 2016 and shot a documentary during his trip.

So far, the German state or media have cared far less for the tighter surveillance and reporting of the ever-growing neo-Nazi and right-wing underground music and festival scene: only in the first half of 2018, around 131 music events took place all over Germany (around 1.4 events per day), with around 13,000 guests – what became more pronounced was the confidence with which guests of said events would show Hitler salutes even to police surrounding the events (the latter is illegal in Germany). In 2017, around 300 events took place with around 30,000 participants. Thuringia’s Ministry of the Interior even had to admit that it was difficult to deny the “right to free assembly.”

The right to free assembly thus stands in stark contrast to the freedom of expression in the arts when it comes to Muslim rap artists in Germany with a diverging political opinion on foreign policy and a seemingly aggressive performance. Finally, somewhere in the middle of class and race is the common consumer citizen who literally buys what they like, just like others vote for what they like.

**Justice system**

The Justice system, in particular migration and asylum laws, were the first ones to change with masses of racist or Islamophobic attacks against refugees or people of color. Inside of the CDU, debates about changes to the German Basic Right to Asylum were held during the succession fight for Merkel’s throne in 2018. Similar to said debate is the coalition’s “Pact for Migration,” presented by Seehofer. The homepage of the Ministry of Homeland Affairs states in a summary of the pact: “This master plan is based on the conviction that Germany can only assume its external

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88. At the same time, there exists a right-wing extremist rock band that calls itself “08/15.” Their songs are shared on YouTube by users that also share right-wing extremist bands such as the famous Othanasis (a word play on euthanasia). 08/15’s songs, however, are not as popular as the ones by Farid Bang and Kollegah (individually) - maybe also because of the music genre of neo-Nazi music (rock, hard-rock, and metal), which wasn’t as successful in marketing itself in a new, multicultural consumer landscape. It definitely wasn’t cool or appealing enough for the consumers. And/or Bang and Kollegah’s moral transgressions as commercialized “prototype Muslim gangsters” mirrored a social reality of a society, which didn’t sit well with its “takeover” by individuals coming from its margins. Especially not when being young, male, and formerly poor rap artists of a Muslim (Farid) or white Muslim-convert background (Kollegah). When looking at how the media debate unfolded, Farid Bang and Kollegah seemed still more “visibly offensive,” than right-wing extremist music culture. The saying and term “08/15” in German refers, on the one hand, to something “ordinary” in a derogatory way, and on the other hand, to a machine gun used during WW1. Both usages, however, go back to this very gun used by the then German imperial army.


responsibility, if at the same time domestic cohesion is maintained.” Further on the homepage it states that “a situation such as in 2015” should not repeat itself and the masterplan is one of the tools to “overcome the split in our society.” The master plan incorporates a “Marshall Plan for Africa”, an “Employment Offensive” for and in the Middle East that builds jobs, and emigration councils (for those interested in migrating to Germany) and Return Council Centers (for those interested in going back voluntarily) to Iraq, Ghana, Kosovo, Serbia, Albania, Tunisia, Morocco, and Senegal which are already in place.91 It also includes ideas that refugees or asylum seekers who committed a crime in Germany will be expelled, as well as a European-led police and Frontex force coordination to “secure” open waters.92 When looking at the actual numbers of people being allowed said statuses to begin with, it is however difficult to understand the political crises that unfolded: in total and at the end of 2017, in a population of around 83 million, 644,277 refugees93 lived in Germany with more than half coming from Syria. Added to that are 42,572 asylum seekers94 and 217,081 Jewish emigrants from the former USSR, at the end of June 2018.95

Fantasized tropes of crime created several hysterical moments around migration in German politics.96 In April 2018, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees was caught up in a scandal where apparently 1,200 applications for asylum were granted without any legal or political basis. The scandal led to a national debate, with Horst Seehofer at its center, to question the entirety of current asylum application policies. Political pressure also led to 18,000 cases of asylum applications being worked out again in hindsight.97 Public grievances and mass protests have used migrant/refugee crime as a foil to bolster their political positions, although public statistics clearly refuted an increase in crime.98

The political margins of security and asylum intersections is where (future) possibilities of state violence against the most precarious (i.e. refugees) come to the

91. See the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees website: https://www.returningfromgermany.de/en/
92. “Masterplan Migration: Maßnahmen zur Ordnung, Steuerung und Begrenzung der Zuwanderung”, Bunde
93. Legally accounted for according to, for example, the Geneva Conventions.
94. Legally accounted for according to the Dublin agreement and German Basic Law § 16a.
95. Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache, 19/3860, 17 August 2018.
96. Christopher Schuetze and Michael Wolgelenter, “Fact Check: Trump’s False and Misleading Claims about Ger-
98.  Marlene Grunert, “Das sagt die Statistik über Ausländer und Straftaten”, Frankfurter Allgemeine, 22 June 2018,

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fore, and where empire and class come together again.99 When mapping the margins of said discourse, Mariam Puvogel Chakib highlights in particular the plight of Chechnian refugees who have been for a long time marked on the intersections of crime and terrorism. Puvogel Chakib details cases in the summer of 2018, where young male “Chechnian endangerers” (Geährder) were randomly incarcerated after a fight broke out between a group of Afghans and Chechnians on a football field in Chemnitz the day before. After the fight, 26 Chechnian men were incarcerated without being given any legal reasons: there were no police questionings, people were forced to undress and sleep in their cells naked without blankets, and water was withheld, even to those who needed it for medication intake. During the police search of the asylum homes of the accused, women and children were forced at gunpoint to stand against the wall. And whilst the police shared the illegal and unjustified incarceration with the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, despite none of the incarcerated being charged with taking part in the violence on the football field, several of them shortly afterward received rejection notifications for their asylum applications.100

News about potential threats coming from the German police itself have kept the German nation busy in 2018. Already in 2016, the deputy prime minister of Saxony, Martin Dulig (SPD), declared quite boldly that he kept wondering if the political assessments of the police and the intelligence service (Verfassungsschutz) are always correct when dealing with right-wing violence or attacks on refugees and PoC generally. He went even further and stated that just employing more police personal against the racist violence of the past years doesn’t do justice to the entirety of the problem. Instead, Dulig declared, the police in Saxony has - qualitatively speaking - a problem with racism whilst being close to the AfD and Pegida.101 The year 2018, brought out a few cases of right-wing police activities: in December, a right-wing extremist police “cell” was uncovered in the Frankfurt (a.M., Hesse) including their racist WhatsApp chat group. A group of 4 policemen and 1 policewoman is accused, amongst other things, of being connected to a racist fax sent to a German Turkish lawyer, which included her personal address and the name of her two-year-old daughter, and contained the message of “slaughtering” her – the sender called

99. Another example is the appeal to the government of Saxony by Carsten Hütter (AfD) to know how many German and foreign Sinti and Roma live in the federal state of Saxony, supposedly, in order to know how many of said groups violate compulsory education, are registered as refugees, and live off of government support. See: Sächsischer Landtag, Drucksache 6/13730, 13 June 2018.


itself “NSU 2.0” using police slang and wording. Seda Başay-Yıldız was one of the lawyers defending the victims in the NSU trial that came to an end in autumn 2018. Mustafa Kaplan, another lawyer who also defended NSU victims in said trial, also received a letter signed by the “NSU 2.0” in December - for reasons unmentioned in the media the authorities, however, believe this letter came from a free rider. More letters were sent to other defense attorneys, media, and state agencies. This news was followed shortly afterwards by new cases of right-wing extremist cells in police stations in Wiesbaden, Fulda, and Offenbach in the federal state of Hesse – talks of an alleged “right-wing extremist network within the Hesse police” have been uttered. The latter is uncannily similar to the investigative report of a well-connected right-wing extremist network in police, intelligence, and military service by the two taz journalists Martin Knaul and Christina Schmidt – yet, no connections have been drawn so far. According to the government, there have been 71 criminal and violent offenses in Germany that referenced the NSU, from June 2016 until August 2018: 14 of them targeted refugees or people of color and, astonishingly, none of the attackers were allegedly linked to any right-wing extremist fraternity, party, or even organizations or network.

Internet
The Internet provides a viable platform for attacks on minorities. In particular, the transnationally well-connected and right-wing extremist Identitarian Movement (Identitäre Bewegung, IB, founded in France in 2002) is showing a thought-through Internet presence engaging in, as in the case of Germany, spontaneous “direct actions” coupled with a professionalized Internet presence (social media). As reported in the last Islamophobia report in 2017, the IB is part of the new right-wing movement of “ethno-nationalists” and views “liberalism” as part of today’s political problems. Beginning in 2020, several (left-leaning) newspapers (taz in Berlin, Frankfurter Rundschau in Frankfurt a.M.), the headquarters of national public broadcasting sta-

105. Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 19/3736, 8 August 2018.
106. IB shares members with the youth organization of the Alternative for Germany (JA), such as Jannik Brümer in Berlin. Other close ties to the AD from IB members are held, for example, by Götz Kubitschek, Herbert Mohr, Marc Vallendar, Joachim Berg, Thorsten Weiß, Mirko Riedel, Christian Schurig, Wilhelm Nolde, Julian Pazotka, Kai Laubach, Robert Timm, and Dominik Appold. IB is also well-connected to publishers and PEGIDA, and shows a monetary prowess that (older) right-wing extremist movements such as the NPD don’t have.
tion ARD, as well as the SPD headquarter were targeted with posters stating “When are you talking about left-wing violence?” One taz employee was pushed during an encounter.107 The IB uses social media in particular for fast uploads, video reporting, and communication and their protest style resembles direct actions from i.e. Greenpeace,108 Amnesty International, etc. They understand themselves as an international European movement to “defend Europe,” primarily against Islam and migration.109

The Internet also played a pivotal role in the racist riots in Chemnitz. Several right-wing neo-Nazi groups such as Kaotic Chemnitz, the local right-wing extremist party Pro Chemnitz, Pegida, and the AfD mobilized throughout the weekend leading up to Monday, 27 August, 2018. On Wednesday, the police warrant of the accused two men who killed Daniel H. is leaked by the judicial officer Daniel Zabel – a move that is not only illegal, but was justified by the representative of the law by his desire to “bring the truth to light.”110 The latter argument is reminiscent of the more common argument of contemporary right-wing movements claiming that the state and media either “cover up the truth” or “manufacture lies.” The warrant showed the name of the accused 22-year-old Iraqi including his address, the names of witnesses, and the presiding judge. According to his own testimony, Zabel sent a photo of the warrant to colleagues in the judicial apparatus, friends of the dead Daniel H., and to the right-wing extremist party and group Pro Chemnitz, which was primarily responsible for organizing the masses of people in Chemnitz. The warrant was first published on Facebook by AfD politicians and by Pegida’s founder Lutz Bachmann – both groups rode to prominence on the ticket of Islamophobia. The justification Zabel gave should thus be seen as a legal move by his lawyer, for Zabel’s legal training clearly prepared him to know the law much better. What is more plausible, but harder to prove, is that Zabel might have tried to position himself as a “warrior” against the system; a hero who is now tried by a “repressive Stasi system” alluded to

109. “Von Rechtsextremen gechartertes Schiff: Crew der ‘C-Star’ soll mittellos in Barcelona gestrandet sein”, Spiegel Online, 6 October 2017, www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/identitaere-bewegung-crew-der-c-star-mittellos-in-barcelona-gestrandet-a-1171611.html, (Access date: 5 September 2019). In 2017, with the help of crowd-funding (the rent is around 64,000 euros, the maintenance is around 200,000 Euros), IB rented the boat C-Star in the Mediterranean Sea and left the primarily Sri Lankan crew alone on the boat afterward (Catalan police found them in terrible health conditions, without water or food). SOS Mediterranée, an NGO set up to rescue refugees in open waters, commented on the seeming “war” in the Mediterranean Sea as a “humanitarian crisis.” IB member Patrick Lenart (Austria) had the idea to charter the ship to pick up refugees in order to send them back to North Africa; he even wanted to work together with the Libyan coast guard, but the latter refused. At the time of writing, there is practically no NGO ship allowed to leave ports in the Mediterranean to rescue refugees anymore.
by Pegida, Pro Chemnitz, AfD, IB, and others so often – or else, he was thrown under the bus in order to prevent an even larger network from blowing up. The reason for such assumptions is that Zabel’s lawyer, Frank Hannig, oversaw and directed the founding assembly of Pegida (but never officially joined) and was, ironically, a Stasi\textsuperscript{111} spy himself during GDR times.\textsuperscript{112}

What becomes apparent from both examples is that the new right-wing movements operate transnationally, are well-connected in terms of personnel and use the Internet in order to publicize their activities much like the New Social Movements of the 90s. Social media is used for orchestrated “direct actions” such as the ones in Chemnitz, Berlin, and Frankfurt. The Internet is a means to portray the power and prowess of those who feel “cheated and lied to.” The possibility to present oneself as more numerous as one might be is, thus, also a useful intimidation tactic in the world of anonymous algorithms and aliases. Additionally, the Internet also shows us that “old” forms of democratic participation exist alongside new forms of social organizing that primarily happen in the World Wide Web. The latter should thus be seen as more potent, vital and also dangerous for the strengthening of right-wing movements and Islamophobic networks.

Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network

Next to many people already named in the chapters above, this section will focus solely on those in prime power positions. At times it becomes hard to distinguish certain verbal manoeuvres from mainstream politicians from those of the far right.

Prominent CDU politicians such as MP Veronika Bellmann (CDU) stated that “there was no place for Muslims in her political party.” According to her, Muslims ‘today present themselves secular and tomorrow they present themselves strictly religious.’\textsuperscript{113}

The next in line in 2018 is Horst Seehofer (CSU), minister president of Bavaria from 2008 to 2018 and minister of the interior, building and community (Homeland Ministry) since 2018 under Chancellor Angela Merkel. His heads-on power challenges to Merkel ended in heated debates and only stopped when Merkel announced her withdrawal. All of a sudden, Seehofer came out in public cherishing Merkel’s politics and character, something he in fact had challenged entirely throughout 2018. One of the most poignant heads-on fights with Merkel was Seehofer’s comment that “migration is the mother of all problems,” which followed his remark in 2016 when he called

\begin{itemize}
\item Stasi – The Ministry for State Security. The Stasi worked in sync as an intelligence agency and secret police. It had its civil spies, called “IMs” (Informal Collaborators), working everywhere in society: amongst families, friends, neighbors, kindergartens, schools, at universities, work, in churches, etc.
\end{itemize}
Merkel’s decision to “open” the borders in 2015 the “rule of mischief.” Seehofer’s discursive topping came on his 69th birthday, when Seehofer presented his “Master Plan for Migration” and stated pleasingly in front of rolling cameras: “Of all things on my 69th birthday, 69 people - which was not my order - were returned to Afghanistan.” Overall, this report views Minister Seehofer as one of the main instigators of Islamophobia with a responsible public and political profile in Germany, in 2018.

**Observed Civil Society and Political Assessment and Initiatives**

The most prominent civil society commentary came from the “MeTwo” Twitter Hashtag after events surrounding the racist treatment of Mesut Özil. The hashtag became so famous, that it’s initiator, young journalist Ali Can became a symbol for a debate which otherwise happened either in academic or activist circles without ever becoming mainstream, rarely through politics, and even less so on social media - albeit the latter catapulted the debated into the center of society. The sheer flood of experiences tweeted by people of color made the nation stop for a short moment and contemplate its compliance.

A week after the racist mob chased People of Color in Chemnitz, the German tradition of throwing a big party to prove the opposite, took place (similar events took place in the 90s, apparently to no avail). The initiative called itself “We are more!” (“Wir sind mehr!”) and the concert took place in Chemnitz on 3 September with around 50,000 party-protestors. It was streamed live on YouTube and the French-German channel Arte.

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115. A satirical comment on Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism in the era of social media comes from the Instagram account “3fD ‘Arabs for Germany” / “3fD ‘Arabs für Deutschland” that comments on current politics via their own photo collages with an “Arab.” The account can be accessed under “arabsfuerdeutschland” and publishes, for instance, a photo from a school class ostensibly from the 1930s stating: “The school of the future / An end to science / An end to political correctness / An end to tolerance / It’s enough! / We want the cane!” For more see: arabfuerdeutschland “3fD Arabs für Deutschland”, Instagram, 18 August 2018, https://www.instagram.com/p/BmoSWI8n5Rd/, (Access date: 5 September 2019).


117. Wirblebenmehr “#wirsliebendmehr – Chemnitz”, YouTube, 3 September 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5zhHhkMosQ (The “Feine Sahne Fischfilet” concert starts at around 01:00:00min). Debates ensued over the performance of the left-wing punk band Feine Sahne Fischfilet claiming the event supported “left-wing extremism” and “propensity to violence” due to lyrics such as “We are back in our city / we will shit in front of your fraternity” and “The next police station is only a stone’s throw away.” German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier was publically criticized, amongst others by the General Secretary of the CDU Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, for advertising the event given the group’s appearance. The event ended entirely peacefully. For more information on the debate see: Ansgar Graw and Hannah Lühmann, “Werbung für Linksextreme? Kritik an Steinmeier wegen Konzert-Tipp”, Welt, 3 September 2018, www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article181390978/Feine-Sahne-Fischfilet-in-Chemnitz-Steinmeier-wegen-Konzert-Tipp-in-der-Kritik.html, (Access date: 5 September 2019).
Again after Chemnitz, on 13 October, the biggest anti-racist demonstration in decades took place in Berlin and was called “Indivisible” (Unteilbar), with the slogan “United against Racism.” Ostensibly there were around 240,000 demonstrators, although the organizers apparently only expected around 40,000 to show up. At the end of the day, a concert took place where the famous German musician Herbert Grönemeyer sang in Turkish.118

After the AfD tried to push through with their idea of supporting children to spy on their teachers, teachers in Berlin have countered by “reporting themselves” en masse to the AfD asking them to put their names on the list. A public debate erupted where comparisons were drawn to Nazi persecution policies.119 The move by the schools and teachers was made public through the GEW, the German union for teachers and university staff. The first school that came forward was the Lina Morgenstern School in Kreuzberg (Berlin), where “teachers wrote a joint letter to the AfD asking for all their names to be voluntarily added onto the ‘denunciation list’ it is compiling.”120

A less funny situation happened near Cologne at the beginning of 2019: an independent cinema in Hachenburg (Westerwald) advertised “free entry for AfD members” to the movie Schindler’s List. The commercial cinema aimed to show the movie on 27 January, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by the Red Army and the German commemoration day for the victims of Nazi persecution. Right afterward, an online video appeared that threatened a bomb explosion at the movie theater as well as several hate (and support) mails. A public debate ensued, whether the cinema owner Karin Leicher might have provoked in the “wrong way,” thus drawing the aggressive and international reactions for a good reason. Critique came from the CDU for drawing unnecessary attention to the AfD with the “provocation,” but Hendrik Hering (SPD), president of the federal parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia, stood up for Leicher and applauded her “creative” social protest.121 Eventually, Leicher decided to offer the event free of charge with a subsequent discussion for everyone interested. She explained both of her decisions with the fact that there is a vivid AfD scene in the vicinity.122

The union of German historians also felt compelled to publish a concerned and independent political statement – in English and German – that was drafted on their yearly convention in September. The historians agreed collectively that they see recent political developments in Germany as a “danger to democracy.”

The most politically ironic intervention in 2018, however, came from the infamous Coke Brothers venture. A business known for its human rights and worker’s rights violations, its outright support of conservative politics in the USA, and its disastrous approach to nature, positioned itself this year as a liberal voice against the AfD. A fake Coca Cola billboard was put up by activists shortly before Christmas in front of the AfD headquarters in Berlin stating “Merry Holidays – Say no to the AfD.” Patrick Kammerer, director of public affairs & communications of Coca Cola Germany, commented on Twitter poignantly, “Not every fake has to be wrong.” Subsequently, AfD members were filmed emptying bottles of Coca Cola in the gutter as a sign of protest. Another AfD move used a counter-billboard showing the AfD embracing the Coca Cola rival Pepsi as their favorite drink, whereupon Pepsi declared its intention to keep all legal options open for suing the AfD. Eventually, the AfD started using local German Cola products such as Vita Cola (the former GDR copy of Coca Cola). Vita Cola didn’t threaten a lawsuit, but made it clear in public that their brand stands for “tolerance and cosmopolitanism” and opposes the appropriation by the AfD.

In line with the big-business politics was the decision of high-profile German businesses (amongst them some DAX companies) to take a political stance. After the events in Chemnitz, some felt compelled not to continue treating society as separate from economy. Fears primarily revolved around the international reputation of German business, Germany as a site for international business as well as for the many international employees. Companies also feared that business and invest-

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ment would spiral down given the negative reporting and the legitimate fears (of foreigners) that now concern (apparently solely) the “East of Germany.” Reinhard von Eben-Worlée, president of the association Family Businesses cautioned, “Not only Saxony, Germany as a whole, is facing the problem of a shortage of skilled workers [Fachkräftemangel] and has to be able to compete with other countries for foreign workers. Professionals only come if a climate of cosmopolitanism prevails. The same applies to companies.”

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The wages of being white German post-unification never materialized into actual economic and social status gains for a large section of former East Germans. Waves of unemployment after unification (up into several generations until today) became a reality that was epitomized in the well-known slogan that the “East was sold out.” In a response to a taz interview with Tobias Burdukat, a social worker in the former East of Germany, the interviewee makes clear that the unseen and well-organized neo-Nazi structures are all over Germany. The question whether the “We are more!” hashtag campaign was speaking to a certain truth was met with suspicion. Instead, Burdukat believes that its mantra is simply not a true assessment of reality and believes another hashtag such as #whatifnotnow would have been better. In order to change anything, Tobias Burdukat infers that people need to become active in a long-term fashion, move from the cities to the villages and/or support local organizations and political structures that attempt to work against it. Hence, the following recommendations are put forth:

- Critical Whiteness workshops and training for police and administrative staff, evaluated by an independent committee or institution that is not from the police.
- Incidents of racist attacks should include the surroundings of mosques.
- Incidents of racist attacks should include any religious prayer space and/or rooms.
- More public and institutional debate on how Jews and Muslims are pitted against each other within an Islamophobic German public discourse.
- Rural areas (in the East and West) should have more political and institutional coverage, representation, with a focus on anti-racist trainings, diversity, and gender issues.


• A critical and thorough understanding of right-wing extremist networks that extend into the parliament (AfD politicians) and within the state apparatus (military, intelligence services, police forces) should take place by legal and media investigations.

• A critical understanding of how classism, class and racism interact – especially with regards to the former East of Germany – is of utmost necessity to deconstruct the myth that racism only exist in the East of Germany and, by extension, Europe.

The issue of Islamophobia and racism writ-large, along with the sociopolitical fragmentations of today’s society have become propelling forces in Germany.

Chronology

• **17.01.2018:** Sections of the parliament release a resolution calling for the criminalization and expelling of anti-Semitic foreigners from Arab and North African breeding grounds.

• **January 2018:** Report is published showing Germans greatly overestimate the number of Muslims living in Germany.

• **April 2018:** Rap artists Farid Bang and Kollegah are accused of anti-Semitism and the entire music award Echo, after 26 years, is cancelled in its wake.

• **May 2018:** “Kippa Flashmobs” of Germans posing as Jews demonstrate against anti-Semitism in the migrant quarter of Neukoelln in Berlin.

• **02.06.2018:** Infamous speech of Gauland (AfD) stating that the “Nazis were just a speck of bird poop in more than 1,000 years of successful German history.”

• **June 2018:** Pegida Demonstration in Dresden takes place where “Drown! Drown! Drown!” is chanted interpolating the so-called refugee crisis in the Mediterranean.

• **22.07.2018:** Mesut Özil announces on Twitter that he will leave the German national football team for good due to racism.

• **24.07.2018:** Ali Can coins the Twitter hashtag #MeToo, giving expression to people who experience racism.

• **July 2018:** NSU trial comes to an end and the families of the victims vow to take the case to the European Court of Justice.

• **25.08.2018:** Daniel H. is killed in Chemnitz.

• **26.08.2018:** First racist and anti-refugee/immigrant demonstration in Chemnitz (Saxony) takes place and will be followed by more in the days and weeks to come.

• **03.09.2018:** “We Are More” anti-racist music demonstration takes place in Chemnitz with around 50,000 participants.
• **05.09.2018**: Saxony’s Head of Government Michael Kretschmer (CDU) declares “There was no mob, there was no manhunt, there was no pogrom” in Chemnitz.

• **05.09.2018**: German Minister of the Interior Horst Seehofer (CSU) declares “Migration is the mother of all problems.”

• **21.09.2019**: Björn Höcke (AfD) declares his party wants to “intellectually refine the ‘brute’ ways of civil protest.”

• **22.09.2018**: Amed Ahmad dies of his wounds after being severely burnt in his cell.

• **27.09.2018**: The Union of Historians announces in a public statement that recent political developments in Germany are a “danger to democracy.”

• **13.10.2018**: “Indivisible” anti-racist demonstration takes place in Berlin with around 240,000 people participating.

• **16.11.2018**: The newspaper *taz – die Tageszeitung* publishes an investigative report on neo-Nazi networks in the military, police, and intelligence services that operate in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria.

• **November 2018**: Berlin teachers report themselves to the AfD after the latter called on students to denounce left-leaning teachers.

• **December 2018**: Several right-wing extremist police networks are uncovered in Hesse (West Germany).