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Social normalisation of right-wing extremist Islamophobic positions

The increasing popularity of the right-wing populist and far-right AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) in Germany is now widely known. However, a trend is emerging that may further disseminate the AfD's ideology into the mainstream of society and enhance its political influence: the normalisation of far-right ideas and terminology, which shifts the "boundaries of what can be said." For example, through an extensive social media campaign, the concept of "remigration" is being presented as a legitimate political idea.

The AfD's approach of blending constitutionally compliant demands, such as the deportation of criminal asylum seekers, with unconstitutional ideas is evident in a ten-point resolution adopted by the Bavarian AfD in November. According to this resolution, the goal of the state is a large-scale remigration involving millions, primarily through mandatory return programs targeting "groups with weak integration capabilities and willingness" to their countries of origin as well as the withdrawal of citizenship for people defined as such. Given that the AfD prominently stated during the 2017 federal election campaign that "Islam does not belong to Germany" and "wearing the headscarf is an obstacle to integration," it is generally understood that Muslims are the primary focus of the remigration concept, which appears to be gaining broader acceptance.

Witch hunt for alleged Islamists

The extent to which Germany has normalised certain former right-wing positions and is fixated on Islamist-motivated attacks is illustrated by a recent case in Bavaria where the unsubstantiated claim of one individual was sufficient for months of imprisonment: After spending over two months in detention for allegedly planning a machete attack on Bundeswehr soldiers, the case against a suspected Islamist was dismissed in Munich in November. It took these two months for the investigations to verify that there are no evidence of a planned attack or radical Islamist ideology on the part of the accused. Instead, it is now believed that the testimony of an acquaintance was deliberately false, motivated by revenge following disputes over a drug transaction.

Islamophobic propaganda after Islamophobic perpetrator killed 5 in Magdeburg In mid-December, a vehicular attack perpetrated by a Saudi Arabian citizen who had been living in Germany for 16 years and working as a psychiatrist claimed the lives of five people and injured nearly 300 others in Magdeburg. Despite the perpetrator's public identification as an ex-Muslim, his years-long engagement with Islamophobic and far-right propaganda, and his expressed sympathies for Israel and the AfD (Alternative für Deutschland), the incident

sparked widespread speculation on social and traditional media. Discussions emerged questioning whether the attacker had merely pretended to renounce Islam to carry out an Islamist-inspired attack as a so-called "lone wolf." The narrative posited that vehicular attacks are a hallmark of so-called "Islamist" perpetrators.

However, this widely disseminated claim contradicts the facts: of the eight comparable incidents since 2016 in Germany, only two - including the Magdeburg attack - were demonstrably motivated by Islamist ideology. In all other cases, the perpetrators were non-Muslims, some of whom specifically targeted migrants. Nevertheless, the underlying motivations were consistently linked to paranoid schizophrenia. In the days following the attack, numerous demonstrations took place in Magdeburg, including those organized by far-right groups and the right-wing extremist AfD. These groups sought to downplay any ideological connections to the perpetrator and publicly distanced themselves from him. In light of numerous attacks and threats, migrants and Muslims were advised to exercise caution and, particularly in Magdeburg and its surroundings, to avoid being in public spaces whenever possible.

Germany resumes arms exports to Israel - Gaza population without interests worthy of protection

In December, the Administrative Court in Frankfurt dismissed an urgent application by a man from Gaza seeking to prohibit Germany from exporting arms to Israel. The court justified its decision by stating that German foreign trade law does not provide protection for foreign nationals abroad. Moreover, there was no indication that Germany had granted arms export licenses recklessly or arbitrarily. Meanwhile, following a temporary halt, Germany's federal government approved arms exports to Israel worth €30 million in early December. Germany is Israel's second-largest arms supplier after the United States.