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Race, Islamophobia and the politics of citizenship in post-unification Germany

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ABSTRACT   In the immediate aftermath of German reunification, as in the wake of the recent humanitarian crisis, Germany experienced notable 'peaks' of racist agitation and violence. In the 1990s, as today, the post-Communist eastern regions of Germany tend to be perceived as the hub of such racism. In this article, Lewicki revisits both 'peaks' via an examination of numerical evidence for verbal and physical racist violence in the former East and West of Germany. Rather than conceiving of racism as 'cyclical' or a specific legacy of the Communist dictatorship, her analysis suggests that political projects in Germany's past and present have retained distinct structural incarnations of race. Far-right activists could thus successfully channel animosities resulting from the terms of unification into nationalist and racist resentment: momentarily more so in the East, but increasingly also in the West. The politics of citizenship, Lewicki argues, has provided a key means of perpetuating, reaffirming and cementing racialized hierarchies in the two post-war German states, but also in reunified Germany.

Reflecting on the contours of race in Europe, David Theo Goldberg observed that the Muslim figured as 'death's delivery man'.[1] Viewed as inevitably hostile, aggressive and engaged in a jihad against Europe, the Muslim represents the threat of cultural demise and, as the bearer of violent destruction, the 'monster of our time'.[2] Goldberg's essay, published in 2006, concluded: 'How much longer is it to go from cultural animalization to the burning down of mosques than it was to go from the bestialization of Jews to Kristallnacht?'[3] By drawing analogies between contemporary Islamophobia and pre-Second World War antisemitism, Goldberg warned of the potential of anti-Muslim racism to escalate further in Europe's future.

1   David Theo Goldberg, 'Racial Europeanization', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2006, 331–64 (347).
2   Ibid., 346.
3   Ibid., 348.

In the period following reunification in Germany, the country experienced a notable 'peak' in expressions of racist views, and a series of assaults against asylum shelters; mosques were not yet a regular target of such attacks in the 1990s. Today, Goldberg's scenario seems worryingly prophetic: by 2016, about half of the German population supported anti-Muslim views, while an average of two attacks per week were directed at mosques, and assaults on refugee facilities rose to eighteen per week.[4] In the immediate post-unification period, as today, the post-Communist eastern regions of Germany tended to be perceived as the hub of such racism.

Research has highlighted the legacy of the socialist republic, which nurtured authoritarianism in its citizens,[5] and also pointed to the destabilizing effects of the transition from a Communist dictatorship to a democratic capitalist economy, which triggered status anxieties and a sense of relative collective deprivation.[6] Migration scholars have emphasized the impact of the politics of asylum since unification.[7] Historians have argued that the East German government's limited preparedness to engage critically with the population's involvement in Nazi crimes enabled the continuation of a 'racist mindset'.[8]

Although these analyses mention that racism also thrives in former West Germany, their main attention is directed at explaining right-wing extremist attitudes or practices in the former East. They often either implicitly or explicitly conceive of racism as 'cyclical', thus appearing and disappearing, or 'culturalize' racism by relating it to a 'backward' mindset rooted in East German

4   Government responses to parliamentary questions (*Antworten der Bundesregierung*), including 'Islamfeindlichkeit und antimuslimische Straftaten im ersten Quartal 2016', 29 April 2016, Document 18/8290; 'Islamfeindlichkeit und antimuslimische Straftaten im zweiten Quartal 2016', 1 August 2016, Document 18/9310; 'Islamfeindlichkeit und antimuslimische Straftaten im dritten Quartal 2016', 14 November 2016, Document 18/10322; 'Islamfeindlichkeit und antimuslimische Straftaten im vierten Quartal 2016', 10 February 2017, Document 18/11128; and 'Proteste gegen und Übergriffe auf Flüchtlingsunterkünfte im vierten Quartal 2016', 22 February 2017, Document 18/11298; all available on the *Deutscher Bundestag* website at http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btd/18/082/1808290.pdf, http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btd/18/093/1809310.pdf, http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btd/18/103/1810322.pdf, http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btd/18/111/1811128.pdf, and http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/112/1811298.pdf, respectively (viewed 21 September 2018).
5   For example, Oliver Decker and Elmar Brähler, 'Autoritäre Dynamiken: Ergebnisse der bisherigen "Mitte"-Studien und Fragestellung', in Oliver Decker, Johannes Kiess and Elmar Brähler (eds), *Die enthemmte Mitte: Autoritäre und rechtsextreme Einstellung in Deutschland. Die Leipziger 'Mitte'-Studie 2016* (Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag 2016), 11–21.
6   Anna Klein and Wilhelm Heitmeyer, 'Ost-westdeutsche Integrationsbilanz', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, no. 28, 2009, 16–21.
7   Patrick R. Ireland, 'Socialism, unification policy and the rise of racism in Eastern Germany', *International Migration Review*, vol. 31, no. 3, 1997, 541–68.
8   Jan C. Behrends and Patrice G. Poutrus, 'Xenophobia in the former GDR: explorations and explanations from a historical perspective', in Wojciech Burszt, Sebastian Wojciechowski and Tomasz Kamusella (eds), *Nationalisms across the Globe: An Overview of Nationalisms in State-endowed and Stateless Nations* (Poznań: Wyższa Szkoła Nauk Humanistycznych i Dziennikarstwa 2006), 155–70.

traditions of order and discipline.[9] Many of these studies have little to say about how and why racism persists in Germany's western regions. This is a serious lacuna as anti-Muslim racism has recently gained disproportionate virulence across the country.

Some of the scholarship on Islamophobia in Germany takes us beyond this reductive understanding of anti-Muslim racism as a cyclically flowing individual 'attitude' or relational 'prejudice'. Tracing the *longue durée* of Orientalism,[10] this literature links anti-Muslim racist discourses to Germany's Nazi legacy,[11] the late emergence of the German nation-state and Germany's colonial aspirations.[12] Relating race to wider political projects, such as nationalism, colonialism or the politics of memory, these perspectives also overcome a culturalist lens that roots racism in a broadly conceived 'mindset'. Analyses of recent shifts in regulatory attention directed at Muslims have implicitly or explicitly identified the politics of citizenship as a current political project that advances the racialization of Muslims.[13] However, what I think is missing from accounts that trace anti-Muslim racism in Germany's past and present is a more explicit consideration of the country's division during the twentieth century and the effects of German reunification.

In this article, I examine the dynamics of recent racist 'peaks' in post-unification Germany. I revisit previous research and numerical evidence of a spectrum of racist practices, including views expressed in surveys, electoral choices, participation in marches and physical violence. Rather than reflecting on the varied drivers of this diverse set of behaviours, I explore how these actions were directed at specific targets in the 1990s and today.

As immigration numbers were rising in the 1990s, racist discourses mainly focused on refugees and migrant workers whose markers of difference were

9   See Nitzan Shoshan, *The Management of Hate: Nation, Affect, and the Governance of Right-wing Extremism in Germany* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press 2016), 40.

10 Yasemin Shooman, *'… weil ihre Kultur so ist': Narrative des antimuslimischen Rassismus* (Bielefeld: transcript 2014).

11 Katherine Pratt Ewing, *Stolen Honor: Stigmatizing Muslim Men in Berlin* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2008); Gabriele Dietze, 'Okzidentalismuskritik: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer Forschungsperspektivierung', in Gabriele Dietze, Claudia Brunner and Edith Wenzel (eds), *Kritik des Okzidentalismus: Transdisziplinäre Beiträge zu (Neo)Orientalismus und Geschlecht* (Bielefeld: transcript 2009), 23–54.

12 Iman Attia, *Die 'Westliche Kultur' und ihr Anderes: Zur Dekonstruktion von Orientalismus und antimuslimischem Rassismus* (Bielefeld: transcript 2009); see also Dietze, 'Okzidentalismuskritik'.

13 Schirin Amir-Moazami, 'Zur Produktion loyaler Staatsbürger: Einbürgerungstests als Instrument der Regulierung von religiös-kultureller Pluralität in Deutschland', *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2016, 21–33 (special issue: *Bürgerschaft in Europa: Grenzziehungen und soziale Bewegungen in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft*, ed. Aleksandra Lewicki); Aleksandra Lewicki, 'The blind spots of liberal citizenship and integration policy', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 51, no. 5, 2017, 375–95; Luis Manuel Hernández Aguilar, *Governing Muslims and Islam in Contemporary Germany: Race, Time, and the German Islam Conference* (Leiden and Boston: Brill 2018).

mainly ethnocultural. Racist violence was more frequent in the East, while opinion polls reflected a more complex picture. In light of the recent increase in immigration from conflict-ridden areas such as Syria, Libya and Afghanistan, anti-Muslim racist practices have gained comparable virulence across Germany.

These developments, I suggest, show that the logics of race continue to structure social relations in Germany. In the post-war era, the politics of labour migration in East and West Germany racialized economic and political hierarchies, and conveyed a sense of superior entitlement to the population. The dynamics of reunification added another layer of stratification to German society. In times of rising immigration, right-wing extremist activists successfully appealed to post-unification animosities and mobilized narratives of a 'loss of control': momentarily more so in the East, but increasingly also in the West. However, rather than addressing the underlying social inequalities, or taking decisive measures against racist agitation and violence, the government directed regulative attention to the movement and conduct of the Other. In the 1990s, a notable sharpening of the boundaries of citizenship tamed the outburst of racism. The current government similarly attempts to contain the racist 'peak' by tightening immigration laws. The politics of citizenship, I thus argue, provides a key means of perpetuating, reaffirming and cementing racialized hierarchies. The rules of citizenship serve to stabilize a sense of supremacy in the long term, while their sharpening enables a reassertion of established privileges. Although I specifically focus on Germany, the observations I make about the politics of citizenship and the instrumentalization of social disparities can also help us to understand the logics of race and Islamophobia elsewhere in Europe.

Race and the politics of citizenship in East and West Germany

The history of racism shows that race is a shape shifter, and that racial subjects have been made through a prism of diverse categorizations. The racialization of bodies, as Salman Sayyid reminds us, was never exclusively focused on visual markers: biology was 'marked at the same time as religion, culture, history and territories were marked and used to group socially fabricated distinctions between Europeanness and non-Europeanness'.[14] Racism's varied conjunctures have been related to processes of political contention as well as to the dynamics of capitalism.[15] In Germany's past and present, race has materialized in various forms, including as the inferiorization of people of colour, which helped to legitimate German colonial

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14 Salman Sayyid, 'Out of the devils' dictionary', in Salman Sayyid and AbdoolKarim Vakil (eds), *Thinking through Islamophobia: Global Perspectives* (London: Hurst 2010), 1–18 (13).

15 Manuela Bojadžijev and Alex Demirović, 'Vorwort', in Alex Demirović and Manuela Bojadžijev (eds), *Konjunkturen des Rassismus* (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot 2002), 7–27.

expansion in, for example, Africa and China, as Orientalism, which assisted in justifying Germany's colonial aspirations in Turkey and the Middle East, or as antisemitism and antizyganism, which served as pillars in the building of the Third Reich.[16]

After the Second World War, the politics of immigration constituted one of the main arenas in which the East and West German governments paid regulative attention to race. Bridget Anderson argues that laws governing the movement of subjects play a role in creating, hardening and legitimating social hierarchies, and contribute to the manufacturing of racialized ethnic, national and religious categories.[17] The law and practice of citizenship, she goes on, do not just give immigration flows a particular character, but actively produce social relations. Citizenship, so Anderson argues, is not only about legal status but about status in the sense of worth and honour, and about membership in the 'community of value'. The politics of citizenship, Nandita Sharma adds, positively racializes the members of the nation, and negatively racializes Others.[18] Relevant policy areas are thus the conditions of entry, naturalization or integration, as well as the public contestation of racism. Although the two German states adopted diverging regulatory approaches to these matters, their politics of citizenship structurally sustained the logics of race.

The problematization of the Third Reich, specifically the systematic exclusion, prosecution and genocide of the Jewish population, has received considerable public attention in West Germany. The Allies worked with critical voices in the post-war Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) to confront society with its involvement in Nazi crimes, including through criminal prosecution, reparations, research, public commemoration and education. Significant parts of the population, however, also perceived these measures as impositions by the winners of the Second World War. One of the results of this process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (literally 'coping with the past') was the FRG's liberal post-war asylum regime. Despite their commitment to receiving politically persecuted refugees, post-war elites stressed that the FRG was 'not a country of immigration'. They were, nevertheless, keen to fill shortages in industrial production, and signed recruitment agreements with Greece, Italy, Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia in the 1960s. By employing so-called 'guest workers' in the lowest segment of the labour market, employers were able to maintain relatively high wages for the German population.[19] Labour migrants were to help boost the economy and then return to their home countries. They were barred from access to citizenship and voting

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16 Volker Langbehn and Mohammad Salama (eds), *German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust and Postwar Germany* (New York: Columbia University Press 2011).

17 Bridget Anderson, *Us & Them? The Dangerous Politics of Immigration Control* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013), 35.

18 Nandita Sharma, 'Racism', in Bridget Anderson and Vanessa Hughes (eds), *Citizenship and Its Others* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2015), 98–118 (99).

rights. Although Muslims soon formed the second-largest religious group in the FRG, they were not granted equivalent legal recognition as members of the Christian and Jewish denominations. Mosques were typically built in backyards of industrial sites and, if religious requirements were accommodated, this occurred with no material or symbolic support from the state. Although the 'guest workers' had a significant stake in West Germany's post-war economic prosperity, their contribution received little recognition. Thus, while the FRG rhetorically distanced itself from antisemitism and nationalism, ethnocentricity remained a prerogative of its politics of citizenship.

The German Democratic Republic (GDR), meanwhile, dissociated itself from the Nazi era by positioning itself as an anti-fascist state. Emphasizing the persecution of members of the Communist Party, the government refused to take responsibility for the atrocities of its predecessor regime.[20] Fascist continuities were, in line with the dynamics of the Cold War, 'outsourced' in that they were solely attributed to West Germany. While the latter strategy hardly challenged racist practices, it also entailed an element of distance in that fascism was projected on to the class enemy. In this vein, West Germany's immigration regime was condemned as Nazi-style slave labour. Yet, the 'worker's state' too was short of a supply of labour, and thus recruited, albeit in considerably lower numbers, so-called 'contract workers' from fellow socialist countries such as Vietnam, Mozambique, Cuba, Angola and Algeria in the 1970s. These initiatives were dressed up as skill-enhancement programmes for the benefit of the workers' home countries. As in the FRG, all foreigners were meant to return home and were not granted citizenship or voting rights. Relations between 'natives' and 'foreigners' were strictly regulated: social and especially intimate contacts were prohibited, and 'contract workers' were segregated from the local population in housing and the workplace. The overall travel ban reinforced the exoticization of foreigners as 'forbidden fruits' that arrived from an inaccessible outside world.[21] There was little accommodation for the workers' demands; Algerian workers, for instance, who requested the availability of pork-free meals in the canteen and time off for prayer, or questioned unacceptable housing arrangements, were labelled as 'ungrateful', 'belligerent' and 'lazy'.[22]

Thus, despite the divergent framing of 'labour migration', both German states' politics of citizenship ensured a hierarchical division of labour and

19 Serhat Karakayali and Vassilis Tsianos, 'Migrationsregimes in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Zum Verhältnis von Staatlichkeit und Rassismus', in Demirović and Bojadžijev (eds), *Konjunkturen des Rassismus*, 246–67.
20 Behrends and Poutrus, 'Xenophobia in the former GDR', 158.
21 Damani J. Partridge, *Hypersexuality and Headscarves: Race, Sex, and Citizenship in the New Germany* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 2012).
22 Almut Riedel, 'Wer guckt auf uns? Muslimische Migranten in der DDR', *Horch und Guck: Zeitschrift zur kritischen Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur*, vol. 40, no. 4, 2002, 42–5. Translations from the German, unless otherwise stated, are by the author.

systematic exclusion from political rights. Both societies treated immigration instrumentally: the foreigner was to come, do the dirty work, improve economic prosperity, not make any claims, not practise a foreign religion in public and then return home. The politics of citizenship signalled a sense of superior entitlement for the local population. It suggested that 'ethnic Germans' as sole legitimate occupants of their territory and privileged beneficiaries of the rights accorded to them. This political project added the figure of the migrant worker to the ranks of those who had been marked as Germany's internal and external Others during colonialism and the Third Reich. By performing an explicit break with and 'moving on from' the Nazi state legacy, both states positioned the Third Reich as the paradigmatic example of racist practice. They 'froze' racism in a specific period in history and limited public contestation to one of race's many incarnations.[23]

German unification

The discontinuation of the GDR, with its totalitarian features, such as its all-encompassing surveillance, violently enforced borders, travel bans and biased property rights, initiated a process of economic transformation and democratization in East Germany. The initial euphoria on both sides was tainted by the power dynamics of the unification process. The passing of a jointly negotiated constitution was barely seriously debated. The transition to a capitalist economy evolved on the terms of the FRG. The process disproportionately limited the economic and political agency of the population in the East over successive generations.

For instance, the Treuhandanstalt, the body in charge of privatizing the GDR's 8,500 state-owned companies, sold 85 per cent of the industry to buyers from the West and only 5 per cent to former GDR citizens.[24] Ownership regulations privileged western citizens who had lost their property in the postwar period over compensation claims from GDR citizens. The restructuring of the public and the private sector brought about high levels of unemployment, and comparably lower wage and pension rates than in the western regions. Twenty-five years on, employment rates and salaries continue to differ.[25] Public institutions were restructured, involving a transfer of leadership responsibility to West Germans. A recent study found that 23 per cent of leadership positions in the eastern regions, including in federal and regional

23 Alana Lentin, 'Racism in public or public racism: doing anti-racism in "post-racial" times', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2015, 33–48.

24 Franziska Augstein, 'Ausverkauf der Republik', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 17 May 2010, available online at www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/ddr-treuhand-anstalt-ausverkauf-der-republik-1.137266 (viewed 20 August 2018).

25 Statistisches Bundesamt, '25 Jahre Deutsche Einheit: Wirtschaft', available on the *Destatis* website at www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/_Querschnitt/DeutscheEinheit/25JahreDeutscheEinheit.html (viewed 20 August 2018).

government, media and educational institutions, are held by people from the East of Germany, even though they constitute 87 per cent of residents in the area.[26]

Thus, significant parts of the population, as Naika Foroutan noted, felt that their East German identity had been depreciated and their skills devalued.[27] Democracy had not lived up to their expectations, which fed into a sense of humiliation, estrangement and alienation from the new Germany. This was further reinforced through the acceleration of life and insecure working conditions in Germany's increasingly deregulated neoliberal economy. Significant numbers of young people left the East to take up employment in the West. By the late 1990s, two-thirds of East Germans thought that West Germany had 'conquered the East like a colonial power', and 80 per cent felt like 'second-class citizens'.[28]

The racist 'peak' in the 1990s

In the early 1990s, the number of asylum-seekers increased significantly as a result of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the dismembering of the Soviet empire.[29] The new arrivals received considerable media attention, and the government was often criticized for a 'lack of steering capacity'. German reunification marked the end of post-war occupation, and far-right groups instrumentalized narratives of a so-called 'finally united people' to revive German nationalism. They also effectively harnessed the animosities resulting from the terms of the unification process.

Right-wing extremist political parties such as the Deutsche Volksunion (DVU, German People's Union), Nationaldemokratische Partei (NPD, National Democratic Party) and Die Republikaner (Republicans) encouraged debates on 'bogus' and 'fraudulent' asylum applicants (*Asylbetrüger* and *Scheinasylanten*) whose main intention was to invade and exploit the

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26 Michael Bluhm and Olaf Jacobs, *Wer beherrscht den Osten? Ostdeutsche Eliten ein Vierteljahrhundert nach der Wiedervereinigung* (Leipzig: Universität Leipzig 2016).

27 Naika Foroutan, 'Nationale Bedürfnisse und soziale Ängste', in María do Mar Castro Varela and Paul Mecheril (eds), *Die Dämonisierung der Anderen: Rassimuskritik der Gegenwart* (Bielefeld: transcript 2016), 97–105 (101).

28 Birgit Rommelspacher, 'Rechtsextremismus in Ost- und Westdeutschland im Vergleich', paper presented at the conference 'Gegen Rechtsextremismus in Ost und West: Andere Ursachen –Andere Gegenstrategien', Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Berlin, 18 October 2006, available on the *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung* website at http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/do/04245.pdf (viewed 20 August 2018).

29 Germany received around 400,000 asylum-seekers and 400,000 emigrants from Central and Eastern Europe per year. Jochen Oltmer, 'Als das Grundgesetz geändert wurde', 16 May 2018, available on the *Mediendienst Integration* website at https://mediendienst-integration.de/artikel/asyl-asykompromiss-1993-asyldebatte-asylrecht-fluechtlingskrise-bundesrepublik-geschichte.html (viewed 20 August 2018).

German welfare state.[30] Their rhetoric resonated in as much as the DVU managed to win a small number of seats in two regional parliaments in the former East and two in the former West in this period. Die Republikaner gained parliamentary representation in Baden-Württemberg and Berlin in the 1990s.

Neo-Nazi agitation became particularly virulent in the early 1990s, culminating in a series of arson attacks on refugee shelters. Pogroms against asylum-seekers occurred in the eastern cities of Hoyerswerda and Rostock in 1991 and 1992, followed by arson attacks against Turkish families in the western cities of Mölln and Solingen in 1992 and 1993. Neo-Nazi groups had been part of West and East Germany for decades but they were kept out of the public limelight in the GDR.[31] It was only after 1989, Nitzan Shoshan notes, that neo-Nazi groups from the West added their financial resources, organizational skills and institutional networks to those of far-right groupings in the East and physical attacks became a publicly contested issue.[32] In the 1990s, the frequency of racist assaults rose across the country, with higher numbers of such incidents occurring in Germany's eastern regions.[33]

Surveys into mainstream attitudes complicate this picture. In 1991 and 1992, the population in the eastern regions could, more so than residents in the West, empathize with political refugees and expressed greater openness towards asylum-seekers.[34] The data indicate, however, that far-right tropes of 'bogus asylum-seekers' resonated significantly in both East *and* West: over 70 per cent of respondents across the country agreed that refugees 'took advantage of German asylum law', and a similar proportion supported changes to the constitutional provisions regulating asylum.[35] Respondents in the West, however, showed higher levels of approval of 'foreign workers', and were not prepared 'to send them back even if jobs were getting scarce'; in contrast, East Germans' disapproval and preparedness to 'send foreign workers back' rose continuously throughout the 1990s.[36] Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb suggested that, across East and West, racist attitudes were

30 Werner Schiffauer, *Fremde in der Stadt* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1997), 75.

31 Harry Waibel, 'Der gescheiterte Antifaschismus der SED—Antisemitismus, Rassismus und Neonazismus in der DDR', *JEX: Zeitschrift für Deradikalisierung und demokratische Kultur*, vol. 2, 2016, 40–67.

32 Shoshan, *The Management of Hate*, 32.

33 Ulrich Wagner, Wolf van Dick, Thomas Pettigrew and Oliver Christ, 'Ethnic prejudice in East and West Germany: the explanatory power of intergroup contact', *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2003, 22–36.

34 Erich Wiegand, 'Zunahme der Ausländerfeindlichkeit? Einstellungen zu Fremden in Deutschland und Europa', *ZUMA Nachrichten*, vol. 16, no. 31, 1992, 7–28 (22).

35 Ibid., 23.

36 Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, 'Fremdenfeindlichkeit und Antisemitismus in Deutschland: Ergebnisse der Einstellungsforschung Mitte der 90er Jahre', in Wolfgang Gessenharter and Helmut Fröchling (eds), *Rechtsextremismus und Neue Rechte in Deutschland: Neuvermessung eines politisch-ideologischen Raumes?* (Opladen: Leske und Budrich 1998), 211–24.

correlated with support for far-right parties such as Die Republikaner, as well as with the respondent's overall pessimistic assessment of the economic situation: the population in the East thereby perceived 'guest workers' as rivals in the labour market.[37] Sixty per cent of residents in East *and* West, however, agreed that 'foreigners should adjust their lifestyle more to the German way of life'.[38]

Several observations about the racist 'peak' in the 1990s are noteworthy: variations along the East–West axis, especially, were not as straightforward as suggested. While far-right narratives that frame non-Germans as invaders of the social security system resonated to a degree, the population in the East also expressed comparatively higher levels of solidarity with political refugees. At the time, violent attacks against refugee shelters were more frequent in the East. Across Germany, however, there was a broad consensus that the liberal asylum regime was in need of reform, and that immigrants should assimilate better. Neither public debates nor surveys were particularly concerned with refugees' or migrant workers' religion at the time; the most salient markers of difference were ethnicity and culture. That does not mean that anti-Muslim racism was not already part of the package. Iman Attia's qualitative research from the 1990s demonstrates that, if prompted, individual narratives of personal encounters and relationships could certainly resort to anti-Muslim racist tropes.[39] However, they did not yet play such a prominent role in mainstream political debates.

The politics of citizenship in post-unification Germany

In the years following unification, the politics of citizenship was significantly reconfigured. In an attempt to 're-establish social order' and 'preserve domestic peace',[40] various governments gave Germany's immigration and integration rules an overhaul. The so-called 'asylum compromise' balanced a liberalization of naturalization requirements for long-term residents with constitutional changes that tightened the conditions of entry for political refugees. Far-right narratives of 'self-segregated ghettos' and 'bogus asylum applicants', which, as noted before, resonated with mainstream audiences at the time, gained further legitimacy by becoming the focus of political reform. Novel eligibility requirements diluted the constitutionally protected right to asylum: applicants could file an asylum claim if they did not originate from or had not travelled through a third 'safe country'. Legal amendments adopted in 1990, 1993 and 1999 offered long-term residents a right to naturalization

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37 Ibid., 213.
38 Ibid.
39 Attia, *Die 'Westliche Kultur' und ihr Anderes*.
40 Eli Nathans, *The Politics of Citizenship in Germany: Ethnicity, Utility and Nationalism* (Oxford and New York: Berg 2004), 253–34.

and granted their children temporary dual citizenship. Evidence of cultural and constitutional allegiance replaced ethnicity as the entry ticket into the 'community of value',[41] in that naturalization was made conditional on a declaration of loyalty to the Federal Republic, and a demonstration of German-language proficiency.[42] The legal changes were designed to prevent the production of an outsider population that harboured foreign attachments, and to direct political refugees to countries other than Germany. Despite their liberal impetus, the citizenship reforms perpetuated the logics of race. The new laws sharpened the boundaries between those who held or could obtain a right to the territory, and those who were no longer considered worthy of humanitarian concern. They were indicative of what the government considered a pressing social problem and its adequate solution: the eruption of verbal and physical racist violence was addressed by directing regulatory attention to the movement and conduct of the Other. The reforms indeed turned out to fulfil the desired pacifying effect, as the numbers of new arrivals declined. Observers noted at the time:

> The wave of political violence could be contained once the political institutions had regained their capacity to regulate immigration, and the police and the criminal justice system were able to react more adequately to the violence … Once these decisions had been made, the topic lost significance again for a majority of the population.[43]

Thus, once the hierarchy between those positively racialized as Germans and those negatively racialized as refugees had been reaffirmed, the mainstream population's level of engagement with far-right activists' arguments and mobilization ceased, and racist violence declined.

It was a decade into the dissolution of the East–West binary that fundamentalist Islamism took centre stage. Once Germany had been identified as a harbour for the perpetrators of 9/11, the government's regulatory attention turned to Germany's migrant populations' religious profile. The politics of citizenship, yet again, was one of the key arenas of legislative activity, and it made religion more prominent, turning it into a salient marker of racialized alterity. The conditions of entry to the 'community of value' were specified further in the 2000s. Participation in integration courses was made a mandatory requirement for citizenship acquisition, and naturalization examinations were introduced. The national examination, supported by preparatory tools, such as textbooks and mock examinations, assessed, among other things, knowledge of constitutional norms that regulated sexuality and gender. This test, therefore, as Schirin Amir-Moazami notes, only aimed ultimately to disqualify 'disloyal' and 'illiberal' applicants but actually was designed to educate what were

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41 Anderson, *Us & Them?*, 4.
42 Ibid., 250.
43 Bergmann and Erb, 'Fremdenfeindlichkeit und Antisemitismus in Deutschland', 212.

framed as less-'civilized' populations.[44] By pitting deviant outsiders against an in-group who allegedly held up liberal sexual and gender norms by default, citizenship tests reflected and produced hierarchical binaries.[45] This and a much wider array of integration policy initiatives further sharpened the racialized boundaries of the nation and added a specific focus on Muslim religiosity to the regulatory framework.

The politics of citizenship also resonated with the views held by the wider public.[46] Wilhelm Heitmeyer, who traced the popularity of racist and right-wing extremist attitudes within the mainstream population in a large-scale longitudinal study, added anti-Muslim items to the questionnaire in 2002. The findings indicated that the salience of historic racist repertoires moved further to the fore when the Muslim presence in Germany became increasingly problematized. The East–West variation, the data suggest, was significant in that far-right activists successfully appealed to animosities resulting from the dynamics of unification. Between 2002 and 2008, anti-Muslim racist attitudes scored higher in the eastern regions: an average of 21 per cent of the population in the former West and 34 per cent in the East wanted 'to prohibit Muslim immigration to Germany'.[47] Sandra Hüpping and Jost Reinecke's analysis of these data found that approval of anti-Muslim items correlated with the perception of relative collective disadvantage in comparison to other regions.[48] Regardless of their actual social status, the more people felt *collectively* and *comparatively* marginalized, feared they could lose their job and sensed they had less political weight, the more likely they were to express racist views. A regional breakdown of the data supports my overall point about the structural features of race; it shows that, once the issue of 'self-ascribed deprivation in relation to others' was taken into account, the difference between East and West became insignificant: respondents from more-deprived West German regions approved of racist views on a similar scale to respondents from economically less well-off East German regions. Regardless of where they had been raised, those who felt comparably under-privileged displayed equal levels of resentment. Due to significantly higher levels of economic prosperity in the West, the number was significantly lower there.

44 Amir-Moazami, 'Zur Produktion loyaler Staatsbürger', 27–9.
45 Ibid.
46 See, for example, Alexander Yendell, 'Der Zusammenhang zwischen Regelungen der Staatsbürgerschaft, nationaler Identität und der Ablehnung von Muslimen', in Detlef Pollack, Olaf Müller, Gergely Rosta, Nils Friedrichs and Alexander Yendell (eds), *Grenzen der Toleranz: Wahrnehmung und Akzeptanz religiöser Vielfalt in Europa* (Wiesbaden: Springer 2017), 111–24.
47 Klein and Heitmeyer, 'Ost-westdeutsche Integrationsbilanz', 20.
48 Sandra Hüpping and Jost Reinecke, 'Abwärtsdriftende Regionen: Die Bedeutung sozioökonomischer Entwicklungen für Orientierungslosigkeit und Gruppenbezogene Menschenfeindlichkeit', in Wilhelm Heitmeyer (ed.), *Deutsche Zustände*, Vol. 5 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 2007), 77–101.

The current anti-Muslim racist 'peak'

Germany's response to the humanitarian crisis at the European border in 2015 further polarized this constellation. Chancellor Merkel's government temporarily suspended the Dublin regulations, and agreed to receive 800,000 refugees fleeing the Syrian war. This initiative constituted an ad hoc emergency response negotiated with the Hungarian and Austrian political leaderships. The following debate was highly contentious; while the new arrivals received unprecedented levels of hands-on assistance and support, they also faced rising levels of political protest. The atmosphere hardened after the events in Cologne on New Year's Eve 2015/2016 and Germany's first experiences with Islamist terrorism in 2016. Far-right activists and various centrist political representatives linked the events to a failure to manage immigration, and attributed a particular proclivity to violence to 'Islamic cultures'.[49] The 2016 '*Mitte*'-*Studie* recorded a modest increase in the overall set of right-wing extremist attitudes in that year, but observed a strengthening of focus on Muslims and asylum-seekers.[50] A ban on the immigration of Muslims, while still more popular in the East, found significantly higher approval rates across the whole of Germany. In 2016, 38.15 per cent of the people living in the former West and 53.82 per cent of the population in the former East would 'prohibit Muslim immigration to Germany', while 50.3 per cent in the East and 49.92 per cent in the West claimed to 'feel like a stranger in their own country due to the high Muslim presence'.[51] These trends point, yet again, to the structural anchoring of racism and its successful invocation during times of heightened immigration.

The right-wing populist party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD, Alternative for Germany) specifically began to mobilize around anti-Muslim racist concerns in late 2015. Alexander Gauland, its co-founder, demanded an immediate ban on Muslim immigration to Germany.[52] The AfD party manifesto advocated the permanent closure of the European Union's external borders, and called for a ban on 'symbols of Islamic domination in public', such as minarets, as well as on the hijab in the public services.[53] The AfD

49 Aleksandra Lewicki, 'Islamophobia in Germany: national report 2016', in Enes Bayraklı and Farid Hafez (eds), *European Islamophobia Report 2016* (Istanbul: SETA 2017), 214–36 (219).

50 Oliver Decker, Johannes Kiess, Eva Eggers and Elmar Brähler, 'Die "Mitte"-Studie 2016: Methode, Ergebnisse und Langzeitverlauf', in Decker, Kiess and Brähler (eds), *Die enthemmte Mitte*, 23–66 (45).

51 This is particularly astonishing as 98 per cent of Muslims live in the West of Germany. Unpublished data from Decker, Kiess and Brähler (eds), *Die enthemmte Mitte*, presented by Alexander Yendell in his talk 'Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment in East Germany', at the workshop 'Islamophobia in Germany: East and West', University of Toronto, 18–19 November 2017, 9.

52 Jörg Burger and Jana Simon, 'Neue deutsche Welle', *Zeit Magazin*, no. 52, 5 January 2017, 45.

53 AfD, *Programm für Deutschland: Das Grundsatzprogramm der Alternative für Deutschland*, Stuttgart, 30 April–1 May 2016, 27, 50, available on the *Alternative für Deutschland*

subsequently was seen as *the* anti-refugee party and parachuted into five regional parliaments with double-digit election results in 2016. In the 2017 general election, the party secured 12.7 per cent of the vote and became the third-largest grouping in the Bundestag. The results indicate a more emphatic reception of the AfD in the former East, where scores were around and above 20 per cent. Yet, with an average of at least 10 per cent, the AfD also gained a higher proportion of votes than any other far-right party ever achieved in post-war West Germany. If we take diverging population sizes into account, the absolute number of AfD voters is higher in the West. Thus, individuals who in the past expressed racist opinions but did not vote for far-right parties now felt that their views were inadequately represented by centrist parties and supported a platform that explicitly articulated such concerns.[54] The '*Mitte'-Studie* also confirmed that approval of anti-Muslim racist sentiments directly accounted for support of the AfD.[55]

Another beneficiary of the polarized debate was Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes (Pegida, Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West). Since 2014, the group has re-enacted the Monday protests that preceded the fall of the Berlin Wall in Dresden. Chanting 'We Are the People', the protesters racialize the line prominently used in the late GDR's social movement. Pegida initially gathered up to 17,000 supporters but had become almost insignificant before it re-emerged with new force in late 2015. The movement's main concerns are the failure of the government's politics of asylum, a critique of current elites, and anti-Muslim racist opposition to the public visibility of mosques and hijabs.[56] An important additional theme is 'West German arrogance' and the discrimination against East Germans. While Dresden has remained unique in assembling high numbers of participants, the movement has also inspired local offshoots across the country, including Magida in Magdeburg, Legida in Leipzig, Bärgida in Berlin, as well as Pegida Munich, Pegida NRW in Duisburg and Kögida in Cologne, to name just a few. In 2016, 200 such protests were registered by the authorities.[57] Of these Pegida-inspired gatherings, eighty took place in the western regions, sixty were organized in the East and sixty were held in Berlin. Together with the Pegida demonstrations in Dresden, this adds up to an average of five protests per week across Germany.

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website at www.alternativefuer.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2016/05/2016-06-27_afd-grundsatzprogramm_web-version.pdf (viewed 21 August 2018).

54 Oliver Decker and Elmar Bähler, 'Vorwort', in Decker, Kiess and Brähler (eds), *Die enthemmte Mitte*, 7–8 (8).

55 Elmar Brähler, Johannes Kiess and Oliver Decker, 'Politische Einstellungen und Parteipräferenz: Die Wähler/Innen, Unentschiedene und Nichtwähler 2016', in Decker, Kiess and Brähler (eds), *Die enthemmte Mitte*, 67–94 (82).

56 Piotr Kocyba, 'Wieso Pegida keine Bewegung harmloser, besorgter Bürger ist', in Karl Siegbert Rehberg, Franziska Kunz and Tino Schlinzig (eds), *Pegida. Rechtspopulismus zwischen Fremdenangst und "Wende" Enttäuschung* (Bielefeld: transcript 2015), 147–63.

57 Parliamentary Documents 18/8290, 18/9310, 18/10322 and 18/11128 (see note 4).

Notable with regard to Pegida is that its participants are largely men whose income and education is above the mean average, and who are disproportionately likely to support right-wing extremist and anti-Muslim racist views.[58] The '*Mitte'-Studie*, again, is helpful in disentangling the East–West comparison. The survey shows Pegida's agenda is supported by about a quarter of the population across the country.[59] The East–West variation is marginal: 25.4 per cent of those who live in the former East and 22 per cent in the former West support Pegida's political claims.[60] Thus, while Pegida operates particularly successfully in Dresden, the movement also meets with approbation across Germany.

As AfD's and Pegida's mobilizations have contributed to the legitimacy of racist agendas, and violent assaults have occurred with worrying frequency across the country. Racist violence quadrupled to alarming peaks in 2015 and 2016. Authorities registered 970 assaults targeting refugee facilities and 2,400 attacks aimed at individual refugees in 2016.[61] An additional ninety-one attacks directed at mosques were documented, although the number of unreported incidents is likely to be significantly higher. Of these officially recorded assaults on Islamic religious facilities, twenty-one occurred in the former East, two in Berlin and sixty-eight in the West of Germany.[62] Calculated against the size of the population, the frequency is relatively higher in the East. Thus, while Muslims are more likely to be subject to violence in Germany's East, racist and Islamophobic violence currently occurs systemically across the whole of Germany.

Several developments are noteworthy with regard to this recent racist 'peak'. Far-right agitators have successfully exploited the German government's response to the humanitarian crisis with a diverse spectrum of activist interventions, including electoral mobilizations, demonstrations and physical violence. Their rhetoric merges the post-war racialization of migrants with older historic spectres of racism, such as Orientalism. Political responses to physical and verbal racist violence have so far deviated little from this well-trodden path. While there is little commitment to safeguarding refugee shelters and mosques that are likely to be subjected to violence, recent German governments passed a series of measures that further tighten immigration rules. In 2015 and 2016, for instance, the asylum application process was

58 Alexander Yendell, Oliver Decker and Elmar Brähler, 'Wer unterstützt Pegida und was erklärt die Zustimmung zu den Zielen der Bewegung?', in Decker, Kiess and Brähler (eds), *Die enthemmte Mitte*, 137–52 (145).
59 Decker, Kiess, Eggers and Brähler, 'Die "Mitte"-Studie 2016', 64.
60 Ibid.
61 'Proteste gegen und Übergriffe auf Flüchtlingsunterkünfte im vierten Quartal 2016', 22 February 2017, Document 18/11298, available on the *Deutscher Bundestag* website at http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/112/1811298.pdf (viewed 21 September 2018).
62 Bundesministerium des Inneren, 'Schriftliche Fragen der Abgeordneten Monika Lazar', 26 January 2017, with covering letter to Monika Lazar, 2 February 2017, available on the *Monika Lazar* website at www.monika-lazar.de/fileadmin/user_upload/dokumente/schriftlichefragen/AW_SF_168_169.pdf (viewed 21 August 2018).

accelerated, deportations were made easier and integration courses were opened to refugees. In mid-2018, the government pushed for a further fortification of the European Union's external borders and prepared the passing of new and tighter immigration legislation. Anne Koch characterized such steps as 'well-rehearsed reflexes', in that they re-enact the rationalities of previous legal reforms.[63] These choices contribute to the success of racist populism in that they are suggestive of the government 'regaining of control' of Germany's borders, the loss of which had mostly been mourned by the far-right in the first place.

East and West Germany: united in Islamophobia

This paper revisited research-based evidence and brought together data sets that provide insight into the virulence of recent racist 'peaks' in Germany. German reunification distinctly stratified German society and reduced the East German population's sense of agency. In the 1990s, as today, far-right activists successfully channelled these animosities into nationalist and racist resentment. My systematic comparison of far-right activist repertoires, including electoral mobilization, protest marches and violent assaults, reveals that racism, while momentarily resonating more in the East, is not a distinctly 'eastern' phenomenon, but reverberates across the whole of Germany. The occurrence of racist 'peaks' in Germany's recent history, I suggest, do not indicate racism's cyclical appearance (and subsequent disappearance). They also do not imply that racist views constitute a 'mindset' that is passed on from generation to generation, across diverging institutional and political settings.

Rather, the regulative attention governments directed towards race in pursuit of political projects such as colonialism or the building of the Third Reich structurally and institutionally reproduced and, thus, sustained the logics of race. In post-war Europe, the political management of immigration played a significant role in reconfiguring racialized binaries in public life. Its politics of citizenship, I have argued, provided a key means of perpetuating, reaffirming and cementing racialized hierarchies in past and present Germany. My analysis shows that both German states claim to have overcome the legacy of racism, but project and normalize a myth of ethnic homogeneity, and nurture a sense of superior entitlement in their citizenry. In the Cold War through to the 1990s, the politics of citizenship operated with ethnocultural makers of alterity, after which, in the twenty-first century, religion became the focal point of regulatory attention. The regulatory efforts sketched in this article conveyed and normalized a sense of entitlement among the German population that could be successfully invoked during periods of increasing immigration: by far-right agitators but often enough also by the

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63 Anne Koch, 'Blaupausen staatlicher Kontrolle: Die Macht eingeübter Reflexe in der Asylpolitik', *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2016, 43–9 (special issue: *Bürgerschaft in Europa*, ed. Lewicki).

political mainstream. Violent eruptions of this sense of superiority have been contained by directing further regulatory attention to the movement and conduct of the Other. The tenor of political responses to both 'peaks' thus addressed racist arguments as if they articulated legitimate concerns.

As this article goes into print, statistics point to a continuation throughout 2017 and 2018 of the trends identified in 2016. While anti-Muslim racism most explicitly resonates at present with half of the mainstream population and is translated into multiple forms of action, other historically established incarnations of race, such as antisemitism, antizyganism and racism against people of colour, have clearly gained further traction. There is a worrying mismatch between evidence for the virulence of racism and the lack of recognition that it constitutes a major challenge to German democracy. Its reduction to a post-socialist problem of the eastern regions thereby plays a role in masking everyday racism across the country. The limited resources German governments have invested in prohibiting and persecuting physical, verbal and institutional racism, as well as the high levels of attention they have directed at tightening immigration rules, have also contributed to its legitimacy.

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