

German Pedophilia Discourse and its Authoritarian Populist Instrumentalizations

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Abstract: *Currently, trans- and queer-antagonistic mobilization often features associations with and accusations of pedophilia. While these instrumentalizations of pedophilia discourse are a transnational phenomenon and part of broader authoritarian populist strategies in many countries, they also feature some German specificities. I provide a short history of German pedophilia discourse, explain current authoritarian populist tendencies and its mobilization strategies, and analyze how aspects of pedophilia discourse are used to paint trans activism as dangerous, dehumanize trans and queer people, and to lastly enable violence.*

Keywords: *Pedophilia; Authoritarian Populism; Antigenderism; Transphobia*

1. Dangerous queers

A person with long red hair, heavy make-up, a beard and a malicious grin seems to sneak up on a pale, blonde child from behind. Their hand forms a claw and hints at an impending non-consensual grabbing of the poor child. The person is coded as queer and is most likely supposed to represent a drag queen – despite not wearing any drag. The headline below this depiction is »Hände weg von unseren Kindern! Genderpropaganda verbieten!« (Hands off our children! Ban gender propaganda!) (Schulze 2023). The poster for a July 2023 rally against a drag queen story hour at a Munich library uses old cisheterosexist tropes and portrays them in a way that combines antisemitic iconography with an anti-queer and anti-gender message. The poster is one of the culmination points of a campaign against the drag queen reading that was started by BILD-Zeitung

and local CSU politicians and even led to Munich's social democrat mayor, Dieter Reiter, harshly criticizing the event.

Two years before, in summer 2021, a large group of neo-Nazis, members of the identitarian and ›Reichsbürger‹ movements, evangelicals, fundamentalist Christians, former left-wing esotericists, and Covid-19 deniers stormed the stairs of the Berlin Reichstag after a demonstration. Despite the heterogeneity of the group, one motif dominated the altercation: The letter »Q« adorned the demonstrators T-shirts and was printed on flags, banners, and posters. It stands for QAnon, a conspiracy narrative that has its roots in the 2015/16 US presidential election campaign. In the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, it spread to German-speaking countries. Central to the narrative is the idea that a global network of pedophile elites is kidnapping children, holding them captive, torturing them in order to harvest their blood and to produce the substance adrenochrome from it – an echo to antisemitic ritual murder narratives (Kössler). In Germany, QAnon gained popularity especially in the ›Reichsbürger_innen‹ and Corona denier milieus.

In German-language Christian fundamentalist contexts, too, conspiracy narratives have spread in the last decades. Here, the idea of pedophile elites endangering children is a dominant motif. These narratives are used in struggles against education plans, for home-schooling, and against sex education (Kämpf 2022). In recent years, transnational anti-gender mobilizations have often operated with instrumentalizations of pedophilia discourse (e.g., Brock 2022; Graff/Korolczuk 2022; Leschzyk 2022; Ramme 2020), and the association of trans activism, gender studies and queer theory with pedophilia has become a staple of trans exclusionary feminists and trans- and queerantagonistic pun-dits.

As Meike Baader has pointed out, pedophilia discourse has »an especially German history« (Baader 2015: 315). What makes it so special, according to Baader, are the »politization of child sexuality« and antiauthoritarian perspectives on child rearing during the sexual revolution, which stimulated debates since approximately 2010, in which pedophilia was discussed as a predominantly left-wing phenomenon and often, pro-pedophilic positions and actual cases of sexualized violence against children were treated as if they were morally equivalent (Baader 2015).

In addition to Baader's points, there are more specifically German aspects of pedophilia discourse that need to be taken into account in order to understand current instrumentalizations:

German pedophilia discourse has its roots in legal codification efforts of sexual assault cases of the late 18th and early 19th century and is, thus, closely linked to nation-building and biopolitics (Kämpf 2016: 25–46). During National Socialism, antisemitic and anti-homosexual campaigns coded pedophilia as specifically Jewish and/or gay. This coding, again, influenced later activist and scientific debates surrounding child sexuality and pedophilia (Kämpf 2016: 197–200).

Today, I will argue, authoritarian populist mobilizations use pedophilia discourse to demonize sexual liberalization, to cement cisheteronormative family ideals, and to foster discursive moves towards authoritarianism. I will provide a short overview of the dominant motives of German pedophilia discourse and its instrumentalizations and connect it to current authoritarian populism and its ways of governing.

1.1 A very short history of German pedophilia discourse¹

Today, the term pedophilia is often used as a synonym for child sexual abuse. The ICD and the DSM define it as either, a sexual preference for prepubescent children (ICD 10 F65.4) or as – depending on whether an individual has acted upon pedophilic urges or is markedly distressed by the condition – as sexual orientation or disorder (APA 302.2). It was first described as a sexological concept by the Austrian psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing in 1896. He defined pedophilia as a ›pathological predisposition‹ and ›psychosexual perversion‹, characterized by an inclination towards children that was not motivated by ›low‹ morals or impotence (Krafft-Ebing 1896: 269, transl. kmk).

As Michel Foucault elucidated, this period was marked by a proliferation of sexuality discourses: New sexual ›species‹ were scientifically ›discovered‹ and sexuality became a powerful and dangerous force, foundational for nation states and their biopolitical governing. One of the focal points of this regime of sexuality was the bourgeois family, consisting of father, mother and child(ren), as central unit of the reproductive order and the nation state (Foucault 1983). Children were seen as capital and the future of society and the nation (Hommen 55–56). Under the influence of evolutionary and degeneration theory, childhood was conceptualized as a formation of high plasticity and, thus, very susceptible to moral and other disturbances (Castañeda 2002; Gill-Peterson

1 This passage in parts follows my observations in Kämpf *Pädophilie*.

2018), and the bourgeois family was seen as the only place of child rearing and control (Foucault 1983: 109–110).

This context made the idea of a pathological sexual species with an attraction to children acceptable. Krafft-Ebing's pedophilia is gendered and rooted in bourgeois ideas of masculinity. His bourgeois pedophile only acts upon his urges outside of the family and in times of distress or under exceptional circumstances. His motifs are neither moral corruption nor criminal intent, but psycho-sexual perversion. The concept made it possible to imagine sexualized violence as almost exclusively coming from outside of the family unit and to project it onto maids, domestic servants or dangerous strangers (Chenier 2008; 2012). By leaving sexualized violence within the family invisible, the figure of the 19th century pedophile stabilized the cisheteronormative bourgeois family (Chenier 2012; Kämpf 2015; 2016). The reduction of the family to the nuclear unit of father, mother, child(ren) was also a question of child protection, of keeping external and potentially corrupting influences away from the fragile and plastic formation of the child.

During National Socialism, pedophilia discourse was re-shaped by the national socialist »Kampf gegen das Verbrechen« (»fight against crime«) and homosexuality, and by antisemitism (Kämpf 2022: 104–174). By then, pedophilia was usually discussed as »Kinderschändung« (child defilement). Crime in general, and especially »Sittlichkeitsverbrechen« (sex crimes), were not so much seen as an attack on or risk for individual children or the bourgeois family under the Nazi regime, but as acts of aggression against the »Volksgemeinschaft«, the völkish community, itself. The concept of »Volksgemeinschaft« offered narratives of (self-)empowerment that enabled and demanded genocidal violence for those subjectivated as its members (Wildt 2007; 2019: 40–41). It was at the same time imagined as powerful and fragile and demanded constant protection from its members. By painting »Kinderschändung« as one of the big dangers to the »Volksgemeinschaft« and naming the supposedly most likely perpetrators, jews and gay men, the discourse could be used to dehumanize and mobilize towards violence. The most explicit of these campaigns against Jewish men were conducted by the propaganda magazine *Der Stürmer* and combined antisemitic accusations of sexualized violence against children with conspiracy narratives and sometimes implicit, but often explicit, demands to commit violent acts against those that were dehumanized in the texts.

The conflation of »Kinderschänder« and »Volksgemeinschaft« discourse contributed to creating the conditions of acceptability for an increasingly genocidal practice. Narratives of child protection were instrumentalized

against jews, queers, people with disabilities, and those categorized as ›antisocial‹. Child protection – if at all – implied white, ›arian‹, non-disabled etc. children as future parts and practitioners of the völkish community. It was not the individual child, but the ›Volksgemeinschaft‹ that was supposed to be protected.

As historian Dagmar Herzog has detailed, during and after the so-called sexual revolution sexuality became an important frame and interpretation matrix for understanding National Socialism (Herzog 2005: 192–194): Sexual repression and repressive education were seen as roots of fascism, and ›freeing‹ sexuality – explicitly including child sexuality – from repressive forces was seen as an antifascist practice. This often predominantly meant greater openness towards nudity, masturbation or youth sexuality, but also included discussions about the complete abolition of age of consent laws (Herzog 2005: 196; Eitler 2007: 241).

This openness and the anti-repressive attitudes allowed for a pedophilia discourse, in which pedophile activists could paint themselves as a sexual avantgarde, and especially within the fields of sexology and pedagogy, pro-pedophile or pedophilia-enabling research was published. During the 1970/80s pedophile activists formed alliances with gay activists and were active members of the Green Party (Bosold 2023: 481; Beljan 2014: 86–122; Walter/Klecha 2015). Jan-Henrik Friedrichs has analyzed that these alliances were not solely based on shared experiences of repression or the different age of consent for gay male sex, but also on racist and neocolonial power relations and the idea that solidarity with sexual minorities was seen as important against the background of prior NS-persecution (Friedrichs 2021: 79–80). Furthermore, and looking at the activist's social positionalities, though, he suggests to also consider masculinity or more precisely male privilege as one of the connecting moments between gay and pedophile activists (Friedrichs 2021: 83) – a perspective that also fosters more scrutiny of the sexualization of children within the heteronormative mainstream.

German sexology itself moved away from normative postulations, which used to describe specific sexualities as always deviant and pathological. Instead, 1960/70s research insisted that sexological categorizations needed an empirical basis (Eitler 2007: 242; Kämpf *Pädophilie* 228–246). Within the logic of this »empirical turn« of sexology (Dannecker), empirical research was not only an option, but an imperative and some sexologists were convinced that the harm done by pedosexual acts had to be empirically proven before being stated, and in some cases researchers considered adult-child sexual relations as harm-

less as long as they were committed ›non-violently‹ (Kämpf 2022: 282–258). Post-NS sexological pedophilia no longer described bourgeois white men, failing at controlling their desires or perverted – often antisemitically coded – ›Kinderschänder‹, but a sexual orientation characterized by tragic and risk. A turn that also found its way into the DSM in the early nineties. Today, sexological pedophilia research is embedded in risk discourses as pedophilia counts as one of the main recidivism risk factors in forensic psychiatry.

Among the German specificities in pedophilia discourse are its biopolitical connections to the nation state and the family, its association with gay and left-wing liberalization discourses and the Green party, and their respective discussions about age of consent laws and collaborations with pedophile activists; a sexology that in some cases sided with pedophiles and collaborated with activist-scholars; and a past instrumentalization against jews and gay men that helped to enable genocidal violence. One last specialty of German pedophilia discourse, not mentioned in the introduction, might be the wave of studies trying to analyze the aforementioned past entanglements with pedophile activists and past ›problematic‹ positions about child sexuality in the contexts of institutions. During the last decade, numerous studies have been and are still conducted – especially in left-wing, pedagogical and child protection contexts (e.g. Apin et al. 2011; Baader/Oppermann et al. 2020; Hax/Reiß 2021; Institut für Demokratieforschung 2015; 2016; Karliczek et al. 2016; Nentwig et al. 2019).

1.2 Authoritarians and assemblages

Isabell Lorey and Alex Demirović have recently suggested to apply Stuart Hall's concept of authoritarian populism to the current political situation. Hall developed the theory in order to explain the paradoxical political situation of Thatcherism that entailed »a movement towards a dominative and ›authoritarian‹ form of democratic class politics—paradoxically, apparently rooted in the ›transformism‹ (Gramsci's term) of populist discontents« (Hall 1985: 118). Thatcherism managed to combine contradictory themes, such as traditional conservative topics like »nation, family, duty, authority, standards, patriarchy« with aggressive neoliberal ones, such as »self-interest, competitive individualism, anti-statism« (Hall 1985: 122). For Hall, authoritarian populism mobilized around »moral panics« in order to manufacture populist consensus (Hall 1985: 116).

Alex Demirović, sociologist and critical theorist, has analyzed current authoritarian populism as a third phase of neoliberalism and a bourgeois governing technology (Demirović 2018: 30). Structured by the existence of multiple crises (climate, migration, war, finance...), this third phase has been marked by a drastic political move towards the right, more authoritarian forms of governing, has empowered »racist and fascist publics« and mobilized »civil society fascist violence« (Demirović 2018: 31–32, transl. kmk). Authoritarian populism isn't explicitly anti-democratic, on the contrary, it appropriates democracy for its own means (Demirović 2018: 38–39). Or as Lorey puts it, it builds »on the constitutive inequalities and domination patterns of modern liberal democracy. One of the key aporias of liberal democracy is that democratization processes are able to occur without changing this form of democracy in its basic masculinist, bourgeois and exclusive form« (Lorey 2023).

For Demirović, moral panics work as a form of governing through emotions and resentment, which are interpreted as the »worries of the people«, which have to be taken seriously (Demirović 1985: 32). These »panics« as mobilization tools focus on »issues like security, migration and sexual liberalization. Authoritarian populism directly targets freer forms of gender and sexuality regimes« (Lorey 2023). Authoritarians also portray themselves as in constant struggle against powerful authorities themselves, and paint a picture of left-wing hegemony and dominance, making a refusal of authoritarianism more difficult (Demirović 1985: 37–38).

What Demirović and Lorey, following Hall, call »moral panic«, is a concept that has been criticized for quite some time, as neither »moral« nor »panic« seem to be a completely apt description of the phenomena they are supposed to capture (e.g. McRobbie/Thornton 1995; Hunt 2013). Furthermore, Hall's 1970s/80s use of the term dates back to a time long before social media, auto-scrolling timelines, bot armies, shitstorms, algorithmically curated feeds, and semi-automated trolling. So, following Alan Hunt's suggestion to think with the term »assemblage« instead of panic (Hunt 2013: 64), to describe current affectively and emotionally charged mobilizations focusing on topics like migration, race, (trans)gender, queerness, sexuality, crime etc., I will use the term statistical_affective assemblages.

Simon Strick has emphasized that affect theory is an important tool for the analysis of social media dynamics, and offers ways to understand that »political emotions« and positions often have a basis in affective processes (Strick 66). For him, affects are the basis, the alternative right works with in digital realms, and correspond with social media platform's inner workings (Strick 2021: 71).

With the addition of ›statistical‹ to ›affective‹, I am trying to capture the social media dynamics that are largely based on statistical operations, which influence who gets to see what, when, and how often, and what topics are algorithmically ›pushed‹.

Statistical_affective assemblages often work as right-wing event-production strategies that Strick has described in *Rechte Gefühle*: The alternative Right constitutes an »affective community« and does not ›react‹ to but produces the events it interacts with (Strick 2021: 168) as part of their »metapolitics«, their political strategy of »cultural intervention« (Strick 2021: 37). Their aim is a right-wing »discursive ›climate change‹« (Strick 2021: 164). My suggestion is, that these tactics are not restricted to the fascist Right but have become part of authoritarian-populist governing in general and have – in the shape of statistical_affective assemblages – replaced what Hall has described as moral panics.

These assemblages are highly dynamic and comprised of social media postings, traditional press articles, (mis)quoted snippets of interviews, AI-generated photos, memes, trolling, bots, auto-scrolling news aggregators, videos etc. and process as well as amplify affects. Thus, affects and resentments already existing in the bourgeois mainstream (Lorey 2023) are processed into political emotions and used to push further towards authoritarianism. Within these assemblages governed by statistical logics, attempts at democratic dialogue, exchange of opinions or even well-meaning counter-speech and fact-checks are not only largely futile, but counterproductive as they feed the hate machine and keep social media storms going – because current social media timelines are not curated according to content, do not differentiate between hate speech and counter speech, but are algorithmically driven by statistics, where any interaction creates new impressions and clicks that are counted and influence post rankings and hashtag trends. – An effect that mirrors authoritarian populism's immunization strategies and fosters them.

1.3 Pedophilia discourse and authoritarian mobilization

Current authoritarian populist instrumentalizations of child protection make use of some of the specificities of German pedophilia discourse. One field, where this is especially dominant at the moment are queer and trans activism as well as trans youth health care measures. They are painted as threats to children and youth and described with vocabulary associated with pedophilia such as »grooming« or »early sexualization« and are intended to conjure up

a threat to children posed by trans women, drag queens, and queers (Ayyadi 2023²).

In the debates surrounding the drag queen story hour mentioned in the beginning, CSU secretary general and member of the Bavarian parliament, Martin Huber, tweeted that children »should not be indoctrinated by woke early sexualization« (Huber 2023, transl. kmk). Bavarian deputy prime minister and minister of economics, Hubert Aiwanger, framed the event as child endangerment and a case for a youth welfare office intervention and was quoted in BILD as having stated, »The Greens probably want to tie back to their pedophile roots here.« (Queer.de 10.08.2023, transl. kmk) – a clear recurse to one of the specificities of the German pedophilia discourse. Munich's SPD mayor Dieter Reiter also criticized the reading, but lastly refused to ban it (Queer.de 10.08.2023, transl. kmk). The ensuing social media shitstorm lasted from early May until mid-June, cumulating in an attempted, but failed, attack of the reading by neo-Nazis from the identitarian movement (Queer.de 15.08.2023). In August, Bavarian AfD politician Peter Junker, aspiring for a place on the party's list for the European elections, held a speech referring to the reading hour, in which he insisted on a strict gender binary (»man and woman«) and appealed to his audience to »protect« children from »state-tolerated child fuckers« (Queer.de 09.08.2023).

Similar recurses to older left-wing or Green party age of consent debates or involvement with pedophile activists also featured in right-wing and evangelical struggles against sex education in schools. Here, authoritarians claimed that sex education outside of the (cisheteronormative) bourgeois family was intended to normalize pedophilia and gain access to children and was planned and conducted by pedophile networks (Kämpf 2015). Here, as in 19th and early 20th century pedophilia discourse, the danger for children is imagined as coming from outside of the cisheteronormative family. In transantagonistic discourse, children and the family are again painted as threatened by a dangerous external influence: An allegedly internationally operating, powerful trans and/or queer »lobby« with connections to the pharma industry is supposed to be endangering children and their bodily well-being. The idea that the family has wide-ranging parental rights over the body of its children – no matter what medical doctors or psychologists recommend – is merged with authoritarian

2 This text contains examples for the pedophilia/grooming associations with trans topics. I do disagree with its argument that transantagonistic mobilizations have replaced racist mobilizations against refugees, though.

skepticism towards sexology, trans health care, gender and queer studies (e.g. NIUS 2023). Here, authoritarian populists devalue traditional forms of knowledge production and operate in the mode of »post-truth politics« and disinformation, as Demirović describes it (Demirović 2018: 33–34). Contemporary transantagonists sometimes even spread rumors – often in the form of »just asking questions« – that the administration of puberty blockers to trans teens might be intended to satisfy the pedophilic desire to keep children childlike-looking for longer (e.g. Kelle 2023). The possibility of gender self-identification and bodily autonomy within the framework of trans health care measures is reinterpreted as a pedophilic conspiracy against children.

Noticeable in transantagonistic discourse is the postulation of a powerful opponent, and a trans or queer hegemony threatening the freedom of speech of anti-trans activists (e.g. Paul 2023; NIUS 2023) and concealing the true dangers of trans activism and medicine, which are allegedly ignored by the media, politicians and other feminist or left-wing activists. Following Demirović, this strategy allows authoritarians to position themselves as the truly oppressed, and at the same time implies a powerful queer conspiracy, which makes it almost impossible to successfully criticize or argue with authoritarians (Demirović 2018: 37–38). In this way, through transantagonistic discourse, authoritarians can stage themselves as endangered potential victims, taboo breakers and the only true defenders of cis women and children at the same time, frame every criticism or counter-speech as an attack, and thus immunize themselves against criticism.

Some of these instrumentalizations of child protection and pedophilia discourse with their claims of a powerful opponents use past left-wing, Green party or gay activist's positions regarding age of consent laws, misguided sexual positions regarding pedophilia, and past cooperations with pedophile activists to make their accusations more plausible and to bolster the claims of long-standing secret elite pedophile networks. They treat these past entanglements as present phenomena and completely ignore the – by now – numerous studies trying to come to terms with the past, and thus, again, at least implicitly make (current) mainstream cisheterosexual sexualized violence happening outside of left-wing and queer contexts invisible.

Associations with pedophilia are used to paint sex education, trans activism, SelfID laws, trans women, drag queens, queers and trans people etc. as threats, as dangers for children and the cisheteronormative family and the sex_gender order. With the conspiracy narrative of a queer/left-wing hegemony and powerful networks as mighty opponents, authoritarians not

only immunize themselves against critique, they're also creating a form of (self) empowerment towards violence, in which an amorphous ›we‹ has to ›fight back‹ against oppression to ›protect the children‹. Affect is turned into resentment and used for a discursive shift towards authoritarianism and violence.

Right wing conspiracy narratives, such as QAnon mentioned in the beginning, are quite obviously echoes of antisemitic ritual murder, but there are also more clearly intentional actualizations of NS mobilizations, as the German far-right has been using the NS »Kinderschänder« campaigns as a blueprint for quite some time (Kämpf 2015). The potential of the recent statistical_affective mobilization around trans topics has also been recognized in Schnellroda, headquarter of the new right think tank Institut für Staatspolitik. A recent public event there shows that they are actively using child protection rhetoric as a mobilization and empowerment tool. At their summer party in July 2023 a panel discussion moderated by Ellen Kositzka about the topic »Transgender«, featured Martin Lichtmesz/Semlitsch, an activist connected to the identitarian movement, Bettina Gruber, literary scholar and anti-feminist publicist, and Marc Jongen, AfD, member of Bundestag (IfS 2023). Their talk quickly moved from trans children and the alleged ›social contagion‹ of transitioning towards outright conspiracy narratives. Lichtmesz/Semlitsch proposed that transgender was an »elite thing«, supposedly propagated from »the very top«, and claimed that the rainbow flag was the new national emblem of the »globalist empire« – clearly an antisemitic trope (IfS 2023: 20:40). Marc Jongen confabulated about ›powerful opponents‹ fostering transhumanism and biotech via trans health care measures, which he claimed were a crime and mistreatment of children and youth (32:00). Interestingly, he explicitly declared the topic as a »good anchor point« for starting a new mass mobilization (34:20). When Kositzka asked Lichtmesz/Semlitsch if he had some »stricter« ideas to »end this« to offer than just appellation and education, he replied jokingly by asking her if she now worked for a state security agency (35:00) and after insisting that he'd rather not talk about his »fantasies«, warned that now that the topic had moved towards children, »people are slowly getting nervous...« (36:20).

While no explicit calls for violence were made, the conversation still makes it obvious, that the fascist right not only understands authoritarian populist strategizing, but also uses it itself as a tool of mass mobilization and (potential) incitement to violence – interpreted as self-defense against a powerful enemy.

2. Résumé

In current authoritarian populist dynamics, the discourses of child protection and pedophilia are used to create affinities with bourgeois fears and resentments, foster a discursive climate change (Strick 2021), push for more and more authoritarian measures, and lastly, make violence imaginable and thinkable, enable violent subjectivations and to incite violent practices.

What is supposed to be protected here are the cisheteronormative family with its patriarchal parental rights over children's bodies and the binary sex_gender order for which the figure of the malleable, groomable, impressionable and fragile child is used as a stand-in. This way, sex education, drag queens reading to children, trans activism and trans health care, Self-ID laws etc. can be interpreted as dangerous. Paired with the conspiracy narrative of queer, pedophile or trans networks and lobbies that reach far into the government or with the antisemitic tropes of ›globalist‹ or ›transhumanist elites‹ out to destroy the supposedly natural order, these motives paint a picture of a powerful threat that ›the people‹ need to defend themselves against at all costs.

While anti-gender/-trans/-queer campaigns instrumentalizing child-protection or pedophilia discourse are a transnational phenomenon, some specificities of German pedophilia discourse, such as older entanglements with pedophile activists or past debates about the abolition of age of consent laws in the Green Party, are used to lend credibility to the narrative of a powerful enemy with connections reaching far into the government. Within fascist and new right contexts, the NS ›Kinderschänder‹ campaign seems to be used as a blueprint for current mobilizations.

As Alex Demirović elucidates, authoritarian populism uses its mobilizations to shift official state politics towards authoritarianism and merges nationalist conservative with fascist actions (Demirović 2018: 40–41). The statistical_affective assemblage mobilizing around the new German SelfID law that was supposed to finally replace the old so-called ›Transsexuellengesetz‹, has already led to somewhat of a discursive climate change and has found its way into state legislation processes. In May, federal Family Minister Lisa Paus (Green Party) and Minister of Justice Marco Buschmann (FDP) presented a draft for the new law that featured concessions towards transantagonistic talking points, such as the right of business owners to discriminate against trans people (Queer.de 11.08.2023; Bouvar 2023). On the other hand, the mobilization against the drag queen story hour in Munich was not exclusively a success for authoritarians. While the social media shitstorm lasted for months

and featured – before for a long time almost unspeakable – accusations against queers, the mobilization to the rally itself was less successful and the right-wing rally was drastically outnumbered by a queer counter-protest.

Yet another statistical affective assemblage that mobilized around migration and crime should serve as a warning and a call to action, though. In recent years, racist mobilizations have indeed found their way into official state politics: Current migration and asylum politics and legislation go hand in hand with a racialization of criminality and are conducted by a social democrat ministry of the interior that initiates increasingly authoritarian measures – to way too little protest.

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