

When neo-Nazis march and anti-fascists demonstrate

Protean counterpublics in the digital age

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Abstract

Demonstrations organised by neo-Nazis and the New Right, accompanied by large counter protests by anti-fascist groups, civil society networks, and citizens, have become important political events in Germany. Digital media technologies play an increasingly important role in the confrontation between the two ends of the political spectrum framed by historically rooted ideology. This study explores how different media technologies are appropriated by activists, who consider themselves marginalised and oppositional to the mainstream, on both sides of the conflict. The study aims to examine how digital media permeate counterpublics' (Negt and Kluge 1972; Fraser 1992; Brouwer 2006; Warner 2002) strategies, tactics, and media practices in their struggles for visibility in these protest events.

The counterpublics on both ends of the political spectrum take place and are analysed across three dimensions: [1] technical affordances and media environments; [2] strategies, tactics, and media practices; and [3] political positions and ideologies. The results are based on a data set of online communication, representation, and media coverage on different online media platforms related to marches planned by nationalist groups in the former East Germany, which were accompanied by counter protests by anti-fascist groups, NGOs, and civil society. The data is analysed across these dimensions by using the methodological frameworks of discourse theory (Carpentier 2007; Dahlberg and Phelan 2011; Laclau and Mouffe 1985) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 2010; van Dijk 2001; van Dijk 1998a).

Due to the historical significance of the events and taking into account the continuity of the role of media technologies in articulating counter publicity, the case is contextualised through a discussion of the radical right and radical left in present-day Germany as well as an analysis of archived publications from the anti-fascist counter movements to the National Socialist regime in World War II Germany. An empirical and theoretical exploration contributes to the discussion of counterpublics framed by conflictual ideologies in the digital age and to the ongoing discussion concerning the role of digital media technologies in political protest. The author concludes by suggesting a protean and relational perspective on counterpublics in the digital age and the role of radical politics in the mediated environments of contemporary democracy.

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Introduction

When I first arrived in Dresden in February 2010, I was unaware of the events taking place there. The city was awash with posters and stickers concerning actions to stop the biggest neo-Nazi march in history. Policemen were spread out across the city to ensure that the confrontation between the neo-Nazis and the counter protests did not escalate. Stickers for the National Democratic Party of Germany (*Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*) were covered by those of the activists belonging to the counter protests, and *vice versa*. The topic featured prominently on the front pages of the local newspapers. One could find civil society and politicians calling for memorial actions, counter protests, and anti-fascist protests, as the National Democratic Party and neo-Nazi groups such as the National Autonomists called, for their part, on people to take part in the march. I sat down in a café with free wireless access and followed the Twitter stream that accompanied the actions. Later, I joined the counter protest in the streets. When I got home, I read in the news how the neo-Nazi march had been stopped by the massive mobilisation of counter protests, I joined the related Facebook group, and I followed the post-event discussion online.

In February 2011, I returned to Dresden, this time with the aim of studying the neo-Nazi march as an example of how groups with two different radical political orientations are in conflict, both of them challenging the mainstream and both of them extensively using digital media to mobilise, coordinate, and discussing the events in which they take part. The anti-fascist protests are an example of the strategic use of digital media in situations of contestation and conflict. Before and after the events, several participants from both sides noted the importance of Twitter and other online platforms. ‘I have never been a friend of Twitter, but today it was very useful’, tweeted one of the participants in the counter protests that had accompanied a neo-Nazi march in Leipzig. Associations were made with other events in which social media had played an important role, such as the protests in Egypt. The events are based on historically grounded political ideology that is reproduced and renegotiated in digitally mediated discourse and street action. Protest in the streets is used by both sides to gain attention and to produce visibility. These relationships resulted in an interesting interplay between the street actions and the digitally mediated realities that were constructed around the events. The events in Dresden were the first encounter of crucial importance for this research project.

The second was a visit to Stanford University and the Hoover Archives, containing documents and media outlets from World War II, including both Nazi-propaganda and the radical media of counter movements. I was interested in the interrelatedness of political ideology and digital media technologies, yet these documents revealed that many of the strategies attributed to digital media are not particularly new. This provided a new perspective on the data I collected and analysed within the framework of counterpublics, contestation, conflict, and digital media in anti-fascist protests. Within this dual framework, this project attempts to contribute to the discussion of the relationship between media technologies and radical politics from a methodological, theoretical, and empirical perspective. The project is broadly concerned with two interesting relationships that emerged from the Dresden case study. The first is the relationship between the different political ideologies and their use of digital media. The second relationship is the relationship between counterpublics and digital media technologies.

The idea for this project was developed at a time when role of the social web as a

facilitator and emancipator in movements and protest, especially against oppressive governments, was being praised across the globe. The newspaper widely proclaimed 'Egypt's Facebook Revolution' (Smith 2011), 'Iran's Twitter revolution' (The Washington Times 2009), 'Facebook and Twitter key to Arab Spring uprisings' (Huang 2011), 'Student Protests 2.0' (APA/nachrichten.at 2009), and more recently 'Russia: The Revolution Will Be Tweeted and Facebooked and YouTubed' (Shuster 2012). These headlines were usually followed by more realistic assessments of the role of the social web such as 'The truth about Twitter, Facebook and the uprisings in the Arab world' (Beaumont 2011) and 'Facebook and Twitter are just places revolutionaries go' (Morozov 2011b) or of the negative consequences of using technologies in protest such as 'Iran's Web Spying Aided by Western Technology' (Rhoads and Chao 2009).

Being surrounded by the hype about digital media fuelling protest as well as being aware of negative consequences such as control, surveillance, and censorship, it seemed an important contribution to this contemporary discussion if I were to study the relationship between technology and radical politics. The case of the anti-fascist protests is an interesting example of a historically conditioned conflict involving radical political beliefs that can be traced back in history but that nevertheless uses contemporary forms of expression. Digital media were used extensively not only in coordinating the protest as well as in mobilising, representing, and constructing a collective identity, in forming unity across political divides, and in carrying out the conflict around the events in online discussions. Tracing the relationship between media technologies and counter publicity back to the pre-digital age contributes to our understanding of the role of digital media in the protest events in this case.

Aim

This project aims to contribute to a better understanding of digital media in contestation and conflict. It especially concerns questions of mediated struggle against domination in contemporary politics as a relationship between political ideology, counterpublics, and media technologies. The project focuses on the concept of counterpublics and digital media, not only progressive counterpublics as well as anti-fascist and undemocratic ones in a situation of conflict. The societal impact of the technology as an evolutionary process is embedded in media history as well as in a larger societal and political context. The contribution thus works on different levels:

[1] From a *theoretical* perspective, this project contributes to a rethinking of the concept of the counterpublic in the digital age. The strategies of activists to produce counter publicity are part of a struggle against domination framed by different political ideologies and expressed in different online media platforms. Through a theoretical and empirical exploration, the project contributes to the ongoing discussion concerning the societal impact of technology on political protest and to the conceptualisation of counterpublics within this framework.

[2] From an *empirical* perspective, the project attempts to map the different political positions articulated online in nationalist demonstrations and anti-fascist protests as well as the tactics and media practices of activists aimed at producing visibility and articulating their perspective on the events relative to their political position. On the basis of these strategies, practices, and different political positions as well as their representation on different online media platforms, we discuss the relationship between the different online media and their roles in producing visibility and counter

publicity in protest. This relationship is studied in its continuity, i.e. in the digital and pre-digital age.

[3] From a *methodological* perspective, the project attempts to combine a set of methods based in discourse theory and critical discourse analysis (see Chapters 2.3.3 and 3) to study the societal impact of digital media in the production of counter publicity. This methodological framework is developed to study the events in their socio-cultural and historical contexts. In terms of methodology, we develop the argument that contemporary phenomena in digital media can be studied by tracing their origins back to a pre-digital period, thereby producing a more realistic assessment of the role of technological innovation in political unrest.

The project's theoretical perspective is outlined in the first part of this thesis through a literature review, and analysis is guided by a discussion of theoretical concepts. The analysis is carried out within a framework based on the interrelationship between technical affordances; tactics, media practices, and strategies of producing visibility; political positions and ideology; and political and historical context. By conceptualising the empirical findings relative to the theoretical discussion, the study attempts to clarify this framework.

Research questions

Three theoretical dimensions frame this project's analysis and are derived from the operationalisation of the research question: [1] The first dimension is 'technical affordances', which, from a sociology of technology perspective, describes a way of thinking about technical artefacts in terms of their limitations and potentials (Hutchby 2001) in political action. This way of thinking about technology and society will be discussed in the first part of the theoretical discussion and literature review, which comprise the analytical framework for this project. [2] The second dimension is 'counterpublics' (Warner 2002; Negt and Kluge 1972; Brouwer 2006; Fraser 1992) and their struggle for visibility. This dimension concerns what activists do with media technologies; how they appropriate them in protest; and what media practices, strategies, and tactics they use to produce visibility. [3] The third dimension concerns different political positions and ideologies (van Dijk 1998b), their relationships with one another in digital media representations and self-representations, and how these different positions and their relationships comprise 'the political' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Mouffe 2005). In the theoretical discussion and the literature review (Chapter 2), we will explain in more detail these three dimensions, their origins, and how they frame the analysis.

These three dimensions belong to the central research question. By answering this question, the present study contributes to the discussion of the concept of counterpublics in anti-fascist protest in the digital age. The question thus concerns the technical affordances of digital media, the tactics and media practices used by anti-fascists and their opponents in their struggle for visibility, and the different political positions and ideologies of the groups involved in the protest events. In other words:

How do the different groups involved in nationalist demonstrations and anti-fascist protest articulate their political positions and identities in digital media as part of their media practices and tactics in their struggle for visibility?

This question is broad and requires more specification to address the three-dimensional focus suggested for this study. Along the three dimensions, the question can be unpacked into the following three sub-questions:

[1] What are the potentials and constraints of the different online media platforms used in the nationalist demonstrations and anti-fascist protests in terms of the struggle for visibility of the different groups?

[2] How are the different online media platforms appropriated in nationalist demonstrations and anti-fascist protests? What are the media practices and tactics of the different groups?

[3] How do the different groups involved in the protest events present their political identities in digital media, and what relationships can be identified between the different groups?

To address these questions, this study uses a set of qualitative methods. The empirical results that address the questions from different perspectives lead to a higher level of abstraction, conceptualisation, and theoretisation. The development of the analytical framework and the presentation of the empirical results are structured along the three dimensions that the sub-questions address.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of five chapters, which are the building blocks for the findings presented in Chapter 5.4, 5.5 and Chapter 6. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 addresses the analytical framework developed in this study through a literature review and theoretical discussion. The three dimensions of the research question comprise the theoretical framework. The first dimension addresses the perspective on the relationship between society and technology. It concerns the role of media technologies in grassroots action and counter political discourse. It concludes with the understanding of technical affordances within this perspective. The second dimension addresses the concept of counterpublics and digital media. It discusses the different concepts of counterpublics, their relevance to this case, and their relationship to related concepts such as alternative media and the role of media in social movement studies. The chapter concludes with the media practices and tactics that are addressed in these concepts in order to articulate oppositionality in the struggle for visibility. The third dimension addresses political position and ideology. It concerns the articulation of political positions in digital media and related concepts such as ideology and propaganda. This section also addresses the question of forming unity in diversity and the different relationships between groups with different political positions in mass mobilisation. Chapter 2 concludes with a summary of the analytical framework that guides this study.

Chapter 3 addresses the research design and the methods used in this study. It is composed of an argument for qualitatively addressing the questions asked in this study as well as a description of the research design's methods. It also includes a brief description of the three interrelated protest events on which this study's empirical analysis is based. This chapter introduces the data collection methods, sampling strategies, methods for analysis, ethical considerations regarding the study, and a description of the data set on which the analysis is based. It concludes with an outline of how the different methods included into this study contribute to addressing the research question.

Chapter 4 contextualises the case. This chapter is divided into two sections: A contextualisation of the political context of the study and a historical contextualisation of counterpublics and media technologies. The first section is composed of a literature review. It addresses the radical right and radical left scene in Germany and the

different groups involved. This includes their media use, the relationship between the two radical ends of the political spectrum, and the role of events such as nationalist demonstrations and counter protests in contemporary Germany. The second section presents the results of a document analysis of print media published in World War II Germany by counterpublics such as refugee groups, underground movements, and political groups that resisted the regime. The results are presented through the analytical lens of this study, contributing to addressing the relationship between media technologies and counterpublics.

Chapter 5 addresses the empirical results of the study based on the three dimensions of the analytical framework. In these dimensions, the results are structured along the different online media platforms included in this study. Although the different platforms are interlinked and used simultaneously in the protest events, they are presented separately for analytical purposes. The results show how the different political and media environments foster the formation of diverse political groups, relationships between them, and forms of self-representation and communication in a digitally mediated environment and how this challenges concepts of counterpublics. The description of these components in the events forms the basis for the concluding chapter.

Chapter 5.4 and Chapter 5.5 move the rather descriptive presentation of empirical results to an analytical level. They address the changes in media environments and suggest a way of thinking about the technical affordances of digital media. Based on the discussion of these changes, they address the media strategies, tactics, and practices of counterpublics prior to and during the digital age in order to understand the relationship between media technologies and the articulation of oppositionality. Chapter 5 concludes by suggesting *protean counterpublics* to address oppositionality in digital media from a relational and situational perspective, taking into account the digital media environment's technical affordances. Chapter 6 reflects on the results and limitations of this study and suggests directions for future research. Chapter 7 briefly concludes this thesis.

Media technologies, counterpublics, and radical politics

This study's theoretical framework is based on three components. The first deals with the relationship between technology and society and concludes with the perspective on this relationship in this study. The second addresses the concept of counterpublics and related concepts within this perspective. The third addresses different political positions and ideologies. Framed by discourse analysis and discourse theory, it suggests a way of thinking about political ideology and political positions in protest. The concepts are incorporated into a theoretical framework for analysis at the end of this chapter.

I will start this chapter by introducing some of the early – and rather deterministic – ideas concerning the effect of internet technologies on society in general and on political engagement and grassroots action in particular. These ideas (Brecht 1967; Barlow 1996; Barbrook and Cameron 1995; Haraway 1991) are relevant for understanding the potentials and limitations of technology in grassroots action. This discussion is taken to a more abstract level by locating the concept of technical affordances (Hutchby 2001) within the perspective of the relationship between society and technology (Williams 1974; Turner 2006; Bakardjieva 2005; Feenberg 2002;

Feenberg 2010) that frames this study. Framed by this perspective, the next section deals with the role media technologies play for counterpublics (Fraser 1992; Negt and Kluge 1972; Warner 2002; Brouwer 2006) in their struggle for visibility. The chapter also addresses the related concepts of alternative media (Atton 2004; Downing et al. 2001; Fuchs 2010a; Lievrouw 2011), the public sphere (Habermas 1962), and media's role in social movements (McAdam and Snow 1997; van de Donk et al. 2004; Goodwin and Jasper 2003; Cammaerts 2012; Uldam 2010; Carroll and Hackett 2006; Della Porta and Tarrow 2005). This section concludes with possibilities and limitations for the concept of counterpublics in terms of addressing media practices and tactics by different groups in anti-fascist protests aimed at articulating oppositionality in the struggle for visibility. The third section locates the study in discourse theory and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 2003; Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Mouffe 2005; Dahlberg 2005; van Dijk 1998b). This includes concepts such as agonism, hegemony, and radical democracy as frameworks for a democratic space in which different political positions can be articulated, contested, rejected, discussed, accepted, and re-negotiated. This section addresses propaganda, ideology, and political positions. We conclude by sketching out a conceptual space in which the different political positions are articulated and in which relationships between the groups become apparent in their representation, self-representation, and interaction in digital media.

The literature review and theoretical discussion conclude with the study's theoretical framework for analysis. The framework is composed of the three strands of discussion, which form the structure of this thesis. The theoretical discussion is based on this case and is thus limited. Reviewing all of the concepts in detail is beyond the scope of this theoretical discussion and literature review. The concepts are therefore addressed relative to the case of the anti-fascist protests and are reviewed to provide an analytical framework for this specific case.

Affordances, technologies, and politics

The media maintain its anticipation of a revolution sparked by the emergence of new media technologies. The 'Twitter revolution' followed the 'Facebook revolution', the 'revolution 2.0' followed the 'Internet revolution'. These effect-based claims that technology determines social change were, from this limited perspective, not seriously conceptualised by internet research. They did, however, influence how we think about technology in society and about grassroots action in particular. An understanding of the early discourses and ideas about internet technologies as representative of the environments in which they were developed contributes to an understanding of the potentials and limitations inherent in the technologies. We start by addressing some of these ideas, taking into account their importance with regards to understanding the meaning of technology in political activism. To introduce the perspective on the relationship between society and technology, these ideas are discussed on a more abstract level, finally leading to the location of the concept of technical affordances from a critical perspective on society and technology.

Chasing ideas about technology

Visions concerning the impact that a new media technology would have on society were usually based on its functionalities relative to older technologies, representing the normative framework in which a technology was developed. These visions are especially powerful prior to the institutionalisation of a media technology, when the

technology is used only by a limited group of people, usually educated professionals. The early days of the internet were accompanied by visions of its potential for democracy and empowerment. These visions had two sources: One was the libertarian environment in which it was developed, including its early users in Silicon Valley, composed of geeks, researchers, and the hippie culture of the surrounding area as well as businessmen (Turner 2005). The other source lay in the technology's functionalities, the more interactive possibilities for communication, the combination of different forms of communication in one platform, the network character, and the possibilities for collaborative content production. These functionalities were embedded in the libertarian idea that anyone could achieve financial prosperity as a result of deregulation and privatisation, i.e. through the absence of government forces. These ideas of participation and independence from state institutions are similar to radical leftist politics. Both participation and the invention of radical and egalitarian politics independent of the state are radical leftist ideas (Newman 2007). Interactive forms of communication as functions of web technologies were considered as to be sources for participation compared with traditional mass media technologies. The second criteria compared with mass media technologies was the lack of institutionalisation of web technologies. The internet appeared to be the free and open saviour that would provide space in which counterpublics could emerge, in which marginalised groups could have their say, in which everyone could publish, and in which markets could operate free from government intervention. These comparisons with older media technologies and the visions for their positive potential for empowerment and engagement can be traced back to earlier technological inventions that are today considered as 'old' mass media. In 1932, Brecht anticipated the following scenario in his radio theory:

The broadcasting system would be the most wonderful communication apparatus ... imaginable in public life, a fantastic channel system, that is, if it understood not only to transmit but also to receive, in other words, to make the listener not only hear but also speak, and not to isolate him [sic], but to involve him in a relationship. ([German original Brecht 1967]; Brecht in S. Coleman 2007, 263)

The interactive character of the broadcasting system, the possibilities it offers for engaging in a 'relationship', for 'involving', and for 'speaking' suggest an interactive component of the technology. The channel system seemed as revolutionary as does the networked character of web technologies today. The same functionalities of the technology that are now regarded as centralised and institutionalised mass communication, involving listeners and viewers as passive recipients, were once associated with the potential for participation and engagement. Brecht's idea about broadcasting suggests the technology's relational character, its ability to counter isolation and to connect individuals.

The Brecht's rhetoric is similar to visions of the technology's potential for transforming society in the early days of the internet. Wellman describes this period of internet research as one emphasising the transformative quality of the internet, based on the argument that technology would determine social change: 'The internet was seen as a bright light, shining above everyday concerns. It was a technological marvel, thought to be bringing a new Enlightenment to transform the world' (Wellman 2004, 124). The idea that technologies had a transformative potential was thus not new but, in fact, also accompanied earlier technical developments. The ideas that web technologies were transforming society and that individuals were hugely

disadvantaged due to lack of access were reflected in policy papers across the Western world, fostering further internet penetration (European Union 2005; NII 1993; WSIS 2003). The visions of the web also represented the fear of economic, social, political, and cultural isolation that would result from being left out of these developments, a vision summarised as the ‘digital divide’ (Norris 2001), which was important in encouraging infrastructural development. Connectedness and individuals’ access to different kinds of information and knowledge were vital components of this discourse. Connecting individuals within the networked structure and free access to information are again ideas linked to radical leftist politics.

The idea of open and free access to information is especially obvious in Vannevar Bush’s vision of the ‘memex’, which influenced the development of internet technology:

Consider a future device for individual use, which is a sort of mechanized private file and library. [...] A memex is a device in which an individual stores all his books, records, and communications, and which is mechanized so that it may be consulted with exceeding speed and flexibility. (Bush 1945)

The vision of no longer requiring a physical object for storing information was related to the idea that any form of information that was stored in books or records would be freely available. Since a physical carrier for the information was no longer necessary, it would be free of charge and accessible to anyone. This vision, considering the normative framework of libertarian democracy, was rooted in ideas of equality, egalitarianism, and indeed anarchism relative to the accessibility of information. Again, the idea of storing information and making it accessible to anyone at any given point in time is not new. Discourses of free information in these visions, as a study by Zimmer (2009) shows, can be traced back to the invention of encyclopaedias in the 18th century.

These discourses were based on ideas of a free and open society, emancipated from control of knowledge by authorities. The lack of government and state interference becomes especially obvious in the writings of the *Electronic Frontier Foundation*, such as in ‘A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace’:

Governments of the Industrial World, you weary giants of flesh and steel, I come from Cyberspace, the new home of Mind. [...] I declare the global social space we are building to be naturally independent of the tyrannies you seek to impose on us. [...] You have not engaged in our great and gathering conversation, nor did you create the wealth of our marketplaces. (Barlow 1996)

State influence and government interference were described using discourses of totalitarianism, from which cyberspace was free. This freedom was clearly associated with the freedom of the market and cyberspace as a space where economic prosperity should not be limited by government interference, a claim that was part of the popular neoliberal discourse at that time. In a historical analysis of the WELL¹, Turner (2005) argues that the rhetoric of counter cultures that lingered in the discourse of the internet and, later, the social web in the 21st century was always intertwined with the economic network and was thus a rhetoric of capitalism. ‘Cyberspace’ represented the values of the people inhabiting at the time, such as geeks, hackers, successful start-ups, researchers, and adherents of hippie culture. The values with which these groups

¹ The Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link, short The WELL, was started by Steward Brand and Larry Brilliant in 1985 and is one of the oldest virtual communities.

identified became part of the discourse of the technology, which was one of counter culture. In other words, these spaces were environments that would foster ‘peer-to-peer ad-hocracy, a levelled marketplace, and a more authentic self’ represented by computers (Turner 2006, 3). These values, it was hoped, would change society for the better when the technology became part of everyday life. The values of the groups that designed, developed, and marketed the technologies would also become part of the society. This anticipation was part of the so-called *Californian Ideology*:

Once again, capitalism’s relentless drive to diversify and intensify the creative powers of human labour is on the verge of qualitatively transforming the way in which we work, play and live together. [...] a loose alliance of writers, hackers, capitalists and artists from the West Coast of the USA have succeeded in defining a heterogeneous orthodoxy for the coming information age [...]. (Barbrook and Cameron 1995)

Capitalism is presented as the driving force for technological development and is associated with egalitarian values and counter culture, using discourses of diversity, creativity, and openness. The ‘alliance’ represented by a group of ‘writers, hackers, capitalists and artists’ was one that would define the new information age. Technology is presented as the driver for transformation throughout different spheres in society. That the incorporation of these technologies into everyday life would also mean that people with different sets of values would appropriate the technology was not part of the discussion at the time.

The anticipated decentralisation from web technologies was rooted in their networked structure, which could connect loose alliances, allowing for collaboration among different individuals. The ideal form of collaborative production enabled by the networked structure is available today in the form of Wikipedia, a collaboratively produced, non-commercial online encyclopaedia. ‘Commons-based peer production’ as a mode of production ‘relies on decentralized information gathering and exchange to reduce uncertainty of participants’ (Benkler 2002, 375) with the aim of fostering human creativity. This idea of collaboration within a decentralised structure – the collaborative production of knowledge – is considered radical leftist discourse. It is, however, rooted in economic ideas offered by the web structure. The same ideas are discussed today with buzzwords developed in a business context such as O’Reilly’s ‘web 2.0’ (2006). The discourses of ‘brave new worlds’ (Hardey 2007) provided by internet technologies in general and the ‘social web’ and ‘web 2.0’ in particular are developed by ‘business gurus or cultural experts’ (Van Dijck and Nieborg 2009, 871). However, claims made concerning the technologies’ participative potential are based on arguments of political engagement and participation, including the idea of individuals subverting the power of traditional media rather than gaining scope for new business models using digital media technologies. The business ideas are still present in the terminology developed around digital media technology and especially *web 2.0* or the social web, which borrows expressions from economics. The ‘prosumer’ (Toffler 1989) describes the blurred boundaries between producer and consumer. The ‘produser’ (Bruns 2007) describes the changing value chain between producer and user, which is no longer linear now that these roles have become interchangeable in online media.

Nevertheless, the functionalities of the technology were appropriated in different ways in order to challenge, contest, and engage in politics. Engagement and grassroots action using internet technologies take different forms. Jenkins (2009) investigates the emancipatory potential of the internet as participatory culture, a form

of civic engagement. ‘Citizen journalism’ (Gillmor 2006) describes the participatory potential of the user engaging in the production of news and content. ‘SmartMobs’ (Rheingold 2002) take advantage of the space and time for *ad hoc* coordination in protest. From a business-oriented perspective, internet technologies provide the potential for forming collaborative organisational structures in companies (Shirky 2008). A more technology-based form of contestation, which is an important part of the discussion concerning counter culture and technology today, is hacktivism (G. Coleman 2011; Nissenbaum 2004).

One of the criteria responsible for the argument that the technologies possessed emancipator potential was the possibility of anonymity in cyberspace. Overcoming socially constructed biases and bias due to physical appearance was seen as the potential to express one’s true self. The *cyborg manifesto* (Haraway 1991) uses the image of the ‘cyborg’ as a genderless persona in a feminist critique. Expanding on the metaphor of the extension of the human through technology, it describes a scenario in which gender has been overcome by technology. This represents another component of the discourses of technological development and its societal impact on grassroots politics. The cyborg as a genderless persona could overcome inequalities due to gender in contemporary society. It thus expresses the critique articulated by feminist movements, which are often used as examples of new social movements. Technology within this context has a liberating function through its potential for overcoming social bias.

The examples given here are framed by the early discourses of the internet’s potential for political engagement in the environment in which these discourses were developed. Several authors have traced back their origins to come to a conclusion as to why the potential of internet technology and the so-called web 2.0 for grassroots action, political engagement, and participation was so positively evaluated overall. One argument is that these statements were insufficiently rooted in media history (Allen 2012; Carey 2005), and another involves the lack of social, cultural, and political context (Carey 2005) in the discussion as well as a failure to understand the rationality built into the hardware and software of the technology (S. Coleman 2007, 365). These are some of the reasons why it was possible to regard the internet as a borderless space that would enable civic engagement and democracy.

The idea of the internet as a space for left-wing movements, which is deeply rooted in these early discourses of the technologies, led for a long time to a denial that the same technologies were being used by anti-democratic groups (I will return to this discussion when addressing the struggle for visibility in Chapter 2). Today, online spaces – to maintain for a moment the spatial metaphor – are inhabited not only by geeks, successful start ups, hackers, researchers, and adherents to hippie culture as well as by powerful media institutions, corporations, governments, and groups from across the political spectrum. In other words, the functionalities of web technologies – decentralised communication structures, immediacy, apparent publicity, overcoming limitations of space, possibilities for user-generated content, potential for connecting with individuals, etc. – are appropriated in different contexts such as protest, civic engagement, and grassroots action as well as for purposes of control by anti-democratic groups, authorities, and governments. The early discourses of the web and the environment in which the technologies were developed have, however, shaped these functionalities, or as Winner (1986) would argue, technologies are not neutral as artefacts but are inherently political to some extent. Given the importance of the user and the idea of the user’s empowerment through internet technology though, there is

the implication that the users can appropriate the technology for their purposes. In other words, the media practices and tactics in protest change with the different functionalities of digital media technologies. Those functionalities used to express counter publicity are, however, also used by groups that do not foster peace, equality, and welfare, or – in this study – anti-fascism as well as by those that foster totalitarian and anti-democratic ideas. Although the technology can be appropriated for different purposes, this does not mean that changes within the digitally mediated environment have no influence on contentious political and counter publicity. These changes can, however, be adopted by different political groups, and the changes in the outcome of radical politics occasioned by digital media are more nuanced than is often realised and can only be understood relative to their socio-political, cultural, and historical contexts. This combined functional and interpretive perspective on technology will be addressed on a more abstract level in the following subsections.

Technical affordances and *critical constructivism*

The three primary elements composing the conception of digital media technology in society are Andrew Feenberg's (2002; 2010) critical theory of technology, its adaption and application by Maria Bakardjieva (2005), and the concept of technical affordances (Hutchby 2001). In this subsection, we address the perspective on the relationship between media technologies and society that guides this study, based on a discussion of concepts touching on this relationship.

Two central ideas concerning the role of media technologies in society and the internet in particular were the 'information society' (Webster 2004) and the 'network society' (Castells 2000). These two concepts describe two of the main changes anticipated in society with technological innovation of the 20th century. The first is an abundance of information being available to everyone, in contrast to a scarcity of information, much of it restricted and accessible only to a select group of people. The availability of this nearly unlimited amount of information at any given time, however, also leads to the possibility of selecting a particular source of information over another. This results in a struggle for attention, which is important for radical political groups and counterpublics to make their marginalised voices heard. The free accessibility of information is, as discussed earlier, also related to an egalitarian society and is thus a radical leftist claim. The 'network society' addresses the change from a centralised structure to a network structure. This change results in new forms of distribution of information, communication, organisation, coordination, and managing relationships. This fosters heterarchical structures instead of hierarchies and also encourages the traceability of interaction and different forms of communication. Another aspect is traceability and publicity since different forms of online communication make interactions between two or more participants visible and thus part of the public discourse. These two ideas concerning the role of media technologies in society show that studying a technology alone is insufficient for understanding such changes. It is important to understand the functionalities of a new technology and to point out its uniqueness in order to understand its potential. However, as Meyrowitz (1994, 73) argues, it is only by studying a technology's relationship with economics, politics, power, and ideology that we can the mediated world in which we live.

To understand the environment in which and the purpose for which a technology was developed is part of this contextual knowledge concerning technology. Beniger (1986) argues that the emergence of the information society is not a result of a

particular event such as World War II but is a series of events that resulted in the necessity of controlling information. The changes in technology and the economics of collecting, storing, processing, and communicating information and programmed decisions can thus 'affect societal control' (Beniger 1986, 226f). This integrates the question of control, which was also the underlying principle of the ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network), developed by the US Defense Department and representing the first version of what we now know as the internet. This question of control is still important when considering radical politics and groups that engage in civil disobedience, particularly in their relationship to the authorities they attempt to challenge.

Beniger's stance goes beyond the claim that technological development changes society as such, arguing that technologies are developed due to a certain need in society and are thus socially shaped. This idea was taken further in the concept of the 'social shaping of technology' (Lievrouw and Livingstone 2006; MacKenzie and Wajcman 2003), which argues that technology is socially shaped rather than that technology shapes society in a certain way. That the relationship between technology and society is not a linear cause-and-effect relationship in both directions – neither from a techno-determinist nor from a social constructivist perspective – becomes apparent in the work of Raymond Williams (1974) on television. Williams argues that television was developed from a current order and with a particular purpose. He thus takes into account that technologies are shaped by the environments in which they were developed and the purposes for which they were developed. Williams regards television as 'a complicated interaction between the technology [...] and received forms of other kinds of cultural and social activity' (Williams 1974, 39). To understand this interaction, he suggests a triad of technology, institutions, and cultural form. Institutionalisation describes what a technology does in society. The cultural form describes how technology reproduces the existing cultural form; only after the technology has been integrated into culture can it develop its own form. Alternative uses of the technology can lead to the creation of new forms. In this framework, activists can appropriate technology to produce counter publicity, i.e. to develop their own cultural forms, which differ from the social function for which the technology was developed, the idea of the institution in which they are embedded, or the form the technology takes in society.

The institutionalisation of technology, especially the influence of corporations on technology, is an important element in the critique of internet technology and so-called web 2.0 in particular by political economy and critical theory. One reason for this critique is that web 2.0 was inspired by corporate ideas and thus represents capitalist interests (see Fuchs 2010b; Sandoval and Fuchs 2010; Scholz 2008; McChesney in Stein and Schejter 2009) that hinder the struggle from below. Using the concept of sharing in web 2.0 discourse for economic purposes (John 2012) is combined with the argument that web 2.0 is totalitarian instead of social because the company creates archives that 'remain closed to the very users that have built them' (Gehl 2011, 1242). Exploitation of labour, alienation, the pursuit of profit, and the fostering of capitalist domination are among the arguments within this perspective. The negative consequences of the technology are also addressed as control, surveillance, and loss of privacy (Albrechtslund 2008; Fuchs 2011; Krueger 2005). These perspectives are important in critically evaluating the utopian ideas on how technologies will affect the democratisation of society. However, this does not necessarily mean that technologies lack emancipatory potential. Cammaerts (2008) concludes this debate by arguing that, despite the great expectations that always greet

new media technologies, they are not only an infrastructure for the capitalist system but also a means of making resistance possible.

In a more abstract understanding of technology in society, Feenberg (2002; 2010) argues in his critical theory of technology for a focus on human agency that is situated between structure and constructivism. From this perspective, technology reinforces hierarchies and power relations that are part of the prevailing political system. As a result, technological innovation supports those in power and the power of the system in which they were developed. However, Feenberg argues, technological invention also provides new possibilities for subversive actors who can use the technological potentialities to challenge the system by appropriating new media technology for their causes. Bakardjieva (2005) labels his philosophy of technology a 'critical constructivist model'. Feenberg explains the social implications of technology through the 'principle of the conversation of hierarchy' and the 'principle of democratic rationalization' (Feenberg 2002, 92). The first of these describes the social hierarchy that is reproduced when new media technologies are introduced. Surveillance and control sustain the societal structure. The second describes how technology is used to undermine existing hierarchies and control. This potential of technologies is not always realised and is partially dependent on the space in which the dominated are free to act. As a result, technology is neither neutral nor deterministic (Feenberg 2002; Feenberg 2010; Winner 1986).

In the political realm, Bakardjieva (2009) suggests the concept of 'subactivism' as an expression of 'democratic rationalization'. 'Subactivism' describes a new form of agency within online communities, the online everyday life interactions of which can occasion political change on a small scale. On the basis of Feenberg's critical theory of technology, Bakardjieva (2005) develops a conception of technology to examine the phenomenon of 'technology-in-use-in-social-situations' based on three levels of investigation. On the first level, she explores the different use of genres regarding a specific technology. On the second level, she examines the institution, the underlying structure, the normalisation of these genres of use, and the everyday situations that to some extent determine the use of technology. On the third level, she considers how these technologies are appropriated and thus how the spectrum of genres of use is broadened for technological democratisation. This conceptual analytical framework focuses on the user of a technology at the same time as it takes into account technical affordances and their institutions. It is centred on human agency and the emancipatory potential of the internet. This perspective thus includes structure and human agency, which are not mutually exclusive but are, in fact, both necessary components in the relationship between technology and society.

From this perspective on the relationship between society and technology as one between human agency and structure, we locate Hutchby's (2001) concept of technical affordances. The concept is based on Gibson's work on affordances in psychology of perception. It describes what a human or animal can do with an object: A rock, for example, is both a shelter from the sun for a reptile and place of concealment for a human hunter. These affordances in Gibson's approach do not change with the interpretation of the observer and can be directly perceived so that, for instance, a mouse can be directly identified as 'food' for a cat in any situation. Gibson's affordances are strictly concerned with natural objects. Hutchby discusses different types of affordances such as the 'affordances of artefacts' (Hutchby 2001, 448). His concept of affordances is divided into affordances that are 'functional' and those that are 'relational'. Functional affordances can be enabling or constraining

factors of an artefact for a particular activity, such as walking or taking photographs. The relational aspect can differ from one species to another or from one group of people to another. Affordances, according to Hutchby, are entwined with a set of rules governing their use. These rules can be social or technical and can – or rather, must – be learned. A clock, for example, has technical rules, such as the necessity of changing a battery when it stops. To understand the affordances of a clock, however, one must also understand the concept of time and understand the reading of time in accordance to certain rules. These features are not only derived from an artefact's materiality but are also designed into the artefact for a practical purpose. The affordances of technical artefacts thus do not 'impose themselves upon humans' actions' but, rather, set 'limits on what is possible' in terms of their use. At the same time, there are a variety of possible responses to the 'affordances for action and interaction that a technology presents' (Hutchby 2001, 453).

From this perspective, affordances are neither ignored nor determined only by a technology's functionalities. Reading the concept of technical affordances from a media technologies perspective, one can also argue that the affordances of media technologies are composed of their functionality and certain media practices. These practices may, however, vary depending on the group or individual using the technology. In other words, different groups can appropriate media technologies in different ways. This does not exclude the idea that the technology, characterised by certain potentials and limitations, can influence the outcome of media practices and thus the outcome on an action related to such practices. In Feenberg's words, technology can maintain power relations and hierarchies while at the same time possessing an emancipatory potential for fostering human agency. Certain practices are, as Bakardjieva argues, framed by the institutionalisation of media technologies, yet the same practices can also be used as a challenge by counterpublics in their struggle for visibility. The media practices are thus to some extent determined by the functionalities and the institutionalisation of a media technology: In a different context and with a different group or actors, the technology could have different outcomes. Appropriation of technology within this perspective does not necessarily result in a change in media practices entirely in accordance with this purpose. The same media practices can have different outcomes if they are used by different groups for different purposes and with different sets of values. They can also, however, change depending on the interplay of their forms of use and institutionalisation as well as their relational and functional aspects, i.e. their potentials and limitations, which Hutchby describes using the concept of affordances. This thesis regards the relationship between media technologies and society as an interplay between these components.

Counterpublics and their struggle for visibility

The first part of the literature review and theoretical discussion concerned the conceptualisation of technology and society in this thesis. This second part addresses the role of media technologies in producing counter publicity in a democratic environment. The idea of 'publics' in Habermas' framework of the 'public sphere' (1962) is used as a point of departure for discussing both its relevance to and limitations for addressing oppositionality in contemporary political and media environments. The use of media to create alternatives to the mainstream is addressed in alternative media such as the 'alternative internet' (Atton 2004) or 'radical media' (Downing et al. 2001) that take into account radical left and right alternatives.

Concepts that embrace both sides are relevant for this study since the case includes radical political groups from both ends of the political spectrum, all of which express their political opinion in alternative media. In social movement studies, the role of the media is mostly discussed within concepts of ‘framing’ or ‘opportunity structures’ (Della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Garrett 2006; Gitlin 1980; McAdam and Snow 1997; Rucht 2004; Tilly 2004; Benford and Snow 2000). This approach to the role of media in contentious politics is useful for understanding activists’ media practices and tactics. Cammaerts’ (2012) concept of ‘mediation opportunity structure’ is introduced to understand how media technologies constrain and enable activists’ media practices and tactics from a social movements perspective. On the basis of these concepts, ‘counterpublics’ (Negt and Kluge 1972; Fraser 1992; Brouwer 2006; Warner 2002) are addressed as alternatives in which oppositionality represents an important characteristic. As explained in the following sections, the notion of counterpublics used in this thesis goes beyond rational critical debate and is framed by the activists’ media practices and tactics in a digital media environment.

Publics and the *public sphere*

The ‘public sphere’ (Habermas 1962) is based on deliberation and consensus and is among the most frequently used concepts in contemporary research on use of the internet for civic engagement and political participation (see Downey and Fenton 2003; Gerhards and Schafer 2010; Goldberg 2010; Papacharissi 2002; Valtysson 2012). One criteria that made the concept of the public sphere so appealing to internet researchers is the special dimension given by the English translation to ‘sphere’. This indicates a relationship to early interpretations of a distinct space as ‘the virtual’ or ‘cyberspace’ in which the ideal public sphere that Habermas describes could be made actual. The second criteria is the potential for the user to engage with and actively produce content and thus to engage in discussion, deliberation, and decision-making. Digital media technologies would provide the infrastructure for the ideal public sphere based on consensus by participation and deliberation of citizens with decision-makers. The reasons this ideal did not materialise are discussed elsewhere (Dahlgren 2005; Papacharissi 2002; Valtysson 2012) and will not be explained in detail here. Instead, the shortcomings of the concept for describing counterpublics in contemporary politics and attempts to extend the concept of the public sphere are presented.

‘Publics’ are an important component of Habermas’ public sphere as well as concepts based on public sphere theory. The public sphere is composed of different publics and their relationships with one another (Habermas 1962). A public is a social category based on belonging and identification. In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas (1962) criticises the commercial influence on media institutions that prevents the public sphere from its ideal realisation. One of the most important components of the ideal public sphere is that of consensus based on rational critical debate. Political action or the state and power can be influenced by rational critical discourse in society. One threat resulting from commercialisation is that the media, which should inform citizens so that they can engage in informed discussion, started focusing more on advertising and consumer values than on political information. The focus of citizens’ interest thus shifted from political action to consumption. Habermas’ concept of the public sphere is, however, restricted to the bourgeois society, and rational critical debate was structured by the belief system, values, and ideals of the bourgeoisie. Agency in the public sphere is based solely on rational

critical discourse that can contradict these values and forms of political action from within bourgeois society.

Only later in his work did Habermas accept the existence and potential of counterpublics outside of the bourgeois to challenge domination (Downey and Fenton 2003). In Habermas' public sphere, the emancipatory potential was not radicalised but was abandoned because of two changing conditions: [1] 'The asymmetrical nature of mass culture' that makes it difficult for marginal and critical voices to be heard but that supports the interests of those in power and those with capital, and [2] The increasing interrelationship between civil society and state power, i.e. private and public (Warner 2002, 47ff). The concept of 'counterpublics' is based on the assumption that there are unbalanced power relations in mass culture. Counterpublics try to challenge these power relations to make marginalised and critical voices heard. In its early days, the internet was considered a space in which these oppositional voices could express their opinions and eventually challenge the mainstream.

Warner (2002, 67–124, quotations italic in original) sets out several criteria for understanding the constitution of a 'public'. Publics are '*self-organized*', i.e. organised by discourse based on text distributed by media technologies that can constrain or enhance through their forms of production, distribution, access, and technological features as well as through their textual forms of expression. They are '*a relation among strangers*' and can only exist through 'constant imagining'. Public speech is addressed as '*both personal and impersonal*', i.e. directed personally at us as well as addressed to strangers. Publics are '*constituted through mere attention*' and are '*the social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse*', i.e. there is a relationship between texts and discourse over time. '*Publics act historically to the temporality of their circulation*'. This is where Warner also sees a change for publics occasioned by digital media. Due to the constant access to content, circulation becomes more continuous, and the content can potentially become representations. A '*public is a poetic world making*', which describes the public by the way it speaks and the way it understands the world, including the different political positions on which a public can be based. In this framework, publics can be studied as mediated discourse and as relationships between publics, yet the framework also takes different political positions into account.

Publics are thus not single entities but are interrelated. The constant renegotiation of publics alters not only these relationships as well as the discourses of which the publics consist. The publics in question are constrained or empowered by the structures in which they are embedded as well as change in interaction and through representation. Within public sphere research, Dahlgren identifies three analytical dimensions that help clarify publics in their media environment: 'the structural, the representational, and the interactional' (Dahlgren 2005). This includes constraints from and emancipatory potential of formal institutions and their economy, power, control, laws, and regulations as well as the affordances of technologies as structures. The 'representational' perspective is the output of media, including criteria such as agenda setting, ideological tendencies, and pluralism of views. The 'interaction' dimension includes both interactions between media and citizens and between citizens themselves. As a result, Dahlgren argues, the boundaries between representation and interaction become blurred on the internet, and there are new forms of communication on new technical platforms.

Homogeneity is not a necessary criteria for citizens in a democracy. In their plurality of political positions and forms of political expressions, they should, however, share

the idea of enhancing democracy and democratic possibilities. In Dahlgren's words, 'The political and politics are not simply given, but are constructed via word and deed' (Dahlgren 2005, 158). Practices and routines, practices and competencies, loyalty to democratic values as well as to personal identities as citizens are dimensions of a 'civic culture' (Dahlgren 2000). Dahlgren extends the concept of the public sphere by moving beyond rational critical debate and including questions of identity and the plurality of political positions. Dahlgren's conceptualisation of 'publics' thus goes beyond the representational role of the media and includes interaction. Since interactions are mediated in digital media environments, they become traceable and obvious dimensions of the public.

Civic engagement can thus be explored as 'civic agency' and 'civic competence' (Dahlgren 2006). Human agency within this concept can derive from the interplay between private and public. Identities of citizens are related to other identities and other contexts, and there are no clear boundaries between them. Dahlgren questions the concept of deliberative democracy and consensus based on talk along three themes: the different versions of talk that can be considered deliberation, the ideal of 'excessive rationality', and discursive power. Civic agency, he argues, also emerges outside the narrow vision of the public sphere as deliberative democracy. He thus does not deny the value of the public sphere model as deliberation but claims that it could be enriched through interplay with other perspectives, particularly cultural studies and radical democracy. Although these perspectives are not strictly 'critical' from a Frankfurt school perspective, Dahlgren (2004a) argues that the critical should not be reduced to a particular neo-Marxist '-ism' but it must be conceptualised from a broader perspective.

To conceptualise publics within this broader perspective suggested by Dahlgren, it is crucial to understand the publics on which this thesis focuses. The concept of the public sphere thus has limitations due to its focus on the bourgeois public and the focus on rational critical debate with the aim of democratic consensus as an ideal form. In contemporary media environments, the expression of oppositionality takes different forms, including emotions, performance, and questions of identity.

Alternative media in the mediapolis

Alternative media are one form by which counterpublics express their political positions, spread their messages, develop their identities, and gain visibility by constructing alternatives to the mainstream. Alternative media have been defined with the following working definition as:

any media that are produced by noncommercial sources and that attempt to transform existing social roles and practices by critiquing and challenging power structures (Atkinson and Dougherty 2006, 65).

This definition includes criteria that are also applied to counterpublics, such as oppositionality and the challenging of power structures, i.e. modes of production, participation, and user-generated content represent important aspects. Alternative media can thus be developed by counterpublics to support these processes.

These alternatives used to be strictly separated from the mainstream media through their physical carrier. Alternative serial publications or periodicals were printed and disseminated independently from mainstream media. These boundaries are still there when we consider alternative online media platforms such as IndyMedia, which exist separately from institutionalised online media and have different audiences. On social

web platforms, however, the different forms converge. The non-commerciality, for example, which is an important criteria that identifies alternative media does not apply to most of the contemporary social web platforms. The distinction between hegemonic and 'potentially counter-hegemonic' (Cammaerts and Carpentier 2009) positions on the social web can thus not be clearly drawn. The earliest example of social movements organising by using the internet is the Zapatistas (Garrio and Halavais 2003; Russell 2005). Later examples that were critically assessed are the anti-FARC rallies in Colombia (Neumayer and Raffl 2008) and the so-called Twitter revolution in Iran (Morozov 2009). Although these events involved the use of different online platforms for a single issue, they do not represent non-commercial, alternative media platforms such as IndyMedia but were appropriated for specific protest events. Although alternative media always needed to be studied in relation to mainstream media, the boundaries between mass media coverage, radical media, and representation on websites and in social media becomes more blurry online. As a result, a dualistic perspective is inadequate for understanding the relationship between digital and mass media in protest, and the relationship between different media formats becomes a relevant criteria for radical political communication.

In her article on mediated solidarity, Fenton argues that online political mobilisation basically 'refers to the internet as a space for the expression of views excluded from the mainstream media' (Fenton 2008a, 38). Acceptance of fragmentation in online and offline society must be accompanied by solidarity in order to mobilise for political action and create substantial political communities. The notion of collective identity is closely related to solidarity. The challenge is to mobilise across differences and particularities as well as to produce solidarity through universality. Internet technologies facilitate fast mobilisation over distances and ad hoc action, but the question is, as Fenton concludes, whether these ad hoc actions can result in a coherent oppositional ideology that influences policy change. The hope for a better world that underlies these ideologies in resistance must be able overcome fragmentation in order to turn acts of resistance into a sustainable political program (Fenton 2008b). Alternative media do play an important role in the mobilisation and production of solidarity but are particularly important for creating sustainable communities that share a particular political position, support an alternative political project that goes beyond a single-issue campaign, and create solidarity in these groups.

Concepts such as the 'alternative internet' (Atton 2004), 'alternative media' (Atkinson and Dougherty 2006; Lievrouw 2011), 'radical media' (Downing et al. 2001), and 'critical media' (Fuchs 2010a) deal with media that articulate perspectives that are marginalised in mass mediated discourse. These alternative media only exist in relation to the dominant discourse in mass media, to which they represent an alternative. In regarding alternative media as part of a larger conceptual framework of media, the 'mediapolis' (Silverstone 2007) is a useful concept describing the order in which they are embedded. Silverstone describes these orders as follows:

Since these media representations, in their consistency and in their power, tend to delegitimize and marginalize other kinds of framings; and since, in so doing, they define the asymmetries, hierarchies, presences and absences of public space, then the contrapuntal relationships of self and other, of minority and majority, of minority and mainstream, and of the distant and the close at hand, become increasingly material as the foundation for contemporary public life. (Silverstone 2007, 101f)

Minorities caused by asymmetries in representation are the result of institutional arrangements and politics that surround these media. From a normative perspective, this raises the question of how these minorities appear and vanish in our media. In the 'mediapolis', people who want to make a difference struggle for appearance since the mediapolis is the space in which our social and political world is constituted and perceived. Alternative media can be a space in which minorities and marginalised voices can articulate their political positions. Their main purpose is to develop alternatives to the mainstream. They are thus also relevant for radical political groups to present and express their alternatives to like-minded groups before trying to gain visibility for the cause in the mainstream. One of the successful and sustainable examples of how the web is deployed by oppositional movements to develop a radical political alternative to corporate capitalism is IndyMedia (e.g. Dahlgren 2004b; Della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Rucht 2004; Garcelon 2006; Pickard 2006). IndyMedia is a classic form of alternative media, one through which progressive groups can support their causes through non-institutionalised and non-commercialised collaborative production.

The relationship between mainstream and alternative media is important to consider when studying the representation of protest events online. Several studies show how closely the practices of alternative media are related to mass media: Platon and Deuze (2003) argue that, despite being a more radical form of journalism, alternative media such as IndyMedia share problems and issues with journalism in general. A study on NGOs and their relationship to the media concludes that conforming to the normative values of the mainstream media is crucial for NGOs in gaining coverage that leads to a de-radicalisation of political positions (Fenton 2010). In the 2010 Toronto G20 protests, the alternatives and collaboratively produced stream on Twitter worked similarly to the mainstream media in terms of moving away from the actual cause of the protest and instead focusing on violence (Poell and Borra 2011). Compared with the mass media, alternative and activist media refer only to police violence rather than the violence by activists that the mainstream media considers newsworthy (Edgerly, Toft, and Veden 2011). Italian activists use web platforms mostly in a one-directional manner and not in the social, interactive way we usually associate with the social web (Barassi and Trere 2012). In all of these examples, the relationship between mass media and alternative media is the main point of interest. This is especially clear in two strategies adopted by activists in alternative media: adjusting to the mainstream media and reconstructing the frames in mainstream media to develop alternative perspectives. Adjusting to mainstream media thus takes two forms: A technical form, comprising a change in appearance in accordance with reading habits and journalist practices, and a political form, comprising a de-radicalisation of political positions to gain support from a wider portion of the political spectrum. These strategies are especially relevant during mobilisation of support for a cause or mobilisation of participants in mass action.

As the case studied in this thesis shows, the alternative media developed online are not necessarily progressive media. In other words, 'There is no guarantee that networked information technology will lead to the improvements in innovation, freedom, and justice' (Benkler 2006, 18). Atton's results show that it would be a mistake to dismiss the media of the radical right as alternative media because they now clearly use the discourses that they once opposed to propagate hate, exclusion, and separatism. By using discourses of marginalisation, they reconstruct their identities as ordinary people – unthreatening and victimised – despite their authoritarian and exclusive values (Atton 2004, 88f). He identifies the alternative

media of right-wing groups online as a sub-form of alternative media with a specific value systems and structure. Downing's (2001) concept of 'radical media' identifies the alternatives of the right-wing as radical but repressive, without the desire for self-governance of the media, compared with left-wing media, which seeks to foster democratic culture. The alternatives that are developed by counterpublics in this study include both the alternative online media of the radical right and that of the radical leftist such as Altermedia and IndyMedia. Both of these claim to be critical alternatives to the mainstream.

Building a bridge to Social Movement Studies

Public actions, such as the protest events in this case, have always been important for social movements and counterpublics. One aim of these actions is to produce visibility. Although media play an important role in this process, 'relatively little attention has been paid to content, means and channels of communication of the groups involved' (van de Donk et al. 2004, 10) in movement studies. To understand how social movements articulate their causes, it is useful to have a conceptualisation between structure and constructivism. According to Melucci (1989), the question of why social movements form can be answered from a structural perspective, but *how* they are formed must be answered from a constructivist perspective. This is especially relevant for contemporary movements:

Contemporary social movements, more than others in the past, have shifted towards a non-political terrain: the need for self-realization in everyday life. In this respect social movements have a conflictual and antagonistic, but not a political orientation, because they challenge the logic of complex systems on cultural grounds. (Melucci 1989, 23)

The construction of a 'we' by individuals is essential for collective action and has three orientations. The goals of collective actors are no longer stable and aimed at a new social order but can be replaceable, negotiable, and temporary. Collective action, Melucci argues, is a process that describes how activists' communication, negotiation, and production of meaning are framed by a certain environment. The symbols, messages, and political causes carried by new technologies thus depend on changing technologies and the organisations in which they are embedded.

From a media studies perspectives, activists use media in general and online media in particular to express their political cause, communicate alternative perspectives, organise, challenge dominant discourse, and coordinate protest (Uldam 2010; McCurdy 2009; Lester and Hutchins 2009; Rucht 2004; Postmes and Brunsting 2002; Dunbar-Hester 2009; Mercea 2011; Askanius and Gustafsson 2010). A study of protests by at-risk workers in Italy concludes by identifying three media practices in protest: media knowledge practices, relational media practices, and media representations (Mattoni 2012). Media representations and self-representations are particularly relevant in this thesis because they are used to produce counter publicity.

The struggle for visibility includes the issue of how activists are presented in the media. In other words, of 'how protest and demonstrations are variously selected, sourced, narrativized, visualized, discussed, contested and elaborated in the news media remains worth struggling for' (Cottle 2008, 867). The so-called web 2.0 has not fundamentally changed the practices of grassroots action, yet there are now more potential media practices and a broader communication repertoire for activists

available. Digital media add new forms of expression, interaction, and coordination to the repertoire that activists have at hand in their struggle for visibility.

In new social movement studies, the process of mobilisation by representation and self-representation in the media is taken into account through frames that ‘may take the form of appealing stories, powerful clusters of symbols, slogans and catch words, or attributions of blame for social problems’ (Goodwin and Jasper 2003, 52). These forms are aimed at mass mobilisation. For mass demonstrations, the ‘logic of numbers’ (Della Porta and Diani 1999) is important for getting attention. The role of media in this process is mainly to support the struggle for visibility that social movements need to mobilise and disseminate their perspectives throughout society. Media presence has an effect on ‘virtually every aspect of a challenger’s experience – recruitment efforts, organization, strategy, and tactics’ (Gamson 1992, 147). Framing is the signifying work in which actors engage in the production and maintenance of meaning, and they help to simplify and condense the world in a meaningful way (Benford and Snow 2000, 613). Collective action is developed by negotiating shared meanings and can be defined as action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate activities and campaigns (Benford and Snow 2000, p. 614). They thus link individual identities to collective identity. Hence, the media are understood as vehicles for collective action frames, supporting the visibility that activists need to mobilise, construct and diffuse their demands. Media presence affects recruitment efforts, organisation, strategy and tactics and activists depend on mediation.

Through the media movements fight a battle over meaning, a symbolic protest, in which catchphrases and images determine the challengers’ success. The strategies and tactics that activists use to gain visibility are related to the expectations of mass media. Challengers who use non-violent action, for example, get less attention from the media due to their expectations of violence, photos of burning barricades, and activists attacking police with bricks. Media often focus on violence and ‘dramatise’ it to increase newsworthiness (Gusfield 1994, 71; Juris 2005). Violent action can thus be considered an ‘extreme speech act – a crying out for visibility’ (Cammaerts 2012, 112). To use violence in protest is a reaction to the decreasing newsworthiness of regular protest if it does not include an extremely high number of participants. At the same time, such protests are less likely to get audience support for their causes since they are represented as violent (Gamson 1992, 167). Violent action is another form, alongside mass demonstrations, that creates visibility in the media and can be considered a radical appropriation of the politics of attention in mass media by activists in their struggle for visibility.

Making their claims and actions visible is ‘an explicit strategy of individuals who know very well that mediated visibility can be a weapon in the struggles’ (Thompson 2005, 31). The production of counter publicity is one of the main criteria for a movement’s sustainability and for its ability to engage a large number of participants in collective action. Media are key for movements’ abilities to present their points of view and make their causes understood by the public. To do that, the focus of media reporting on violence or charismatic leaders must shift to the actual cause intended to influence policy change (McAdam and Snow 1997). The strategic use of media to influence social change is thus not a phenomenon of digital media. Oppositional movements have used media technologies to create counter publicity and counterculture in opposition to corporate media throughout history.

One of the differences in web communication compared with mass media is personalisation and focus on identity (Harrison and Barthel 2009, 174). Turkle (1995) argued that computers in general and the internet in particular redefine human identity since people are able to explore their identity, develop multiple selves, and form new relationships online. By redefining the self, the web can redefine the way people present themselves in groups, networks, or communities. Young people can identify the potentials to and limits of different media for specific purposes from a practical as well as from a social perspective (Stald 2008, 154). Identity and the construction of 'us' versus 'them' is central to organising a collective, especially among fragmented individuals with different political perspectives (Mylonas 2012).

The focus on personal identity in relative to the collective is characteristic of contemporary politics, which not only become 'an instrumental activity for achieving concrete goals, but even at times an expressive and performative activity, entwined in the development of the self' (Dahlgren 2004b, xii). This expressive and performative activity described by Dahlgren is a third form of expression of political opinion, which can result in media presence of activists outside of the contexts of mass demonstrations and violent action.

The development in social movement studies over the years is a change from considering protesters as rational, straightforward, and instrumental individuals to people with grievances who establish a feeling of solidarity among activists (Goodwin and Jasper 2003, 6). Collective and personal identity and their relationship with one another are thus aspects of movements (Gamson 1992, 173). Within a media environment, there is a third dimension to identity apart from the individual and the collective: This is 'public identity' (Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield 1994). Individual identity is shaped in interaction within collectivity. At the same time, the normative rules, frames of interpretation, and sets of beliefs influence individual actors. Collective identity is shaped by public images and solidarity with the cause by the public. This change from rational critical struggles to ones of emotion, symbols, grievances, performance, and identity is embedded in a change in the mediated environment of contemporary politics.

The concept of 'mediation opportunity structure' (Cammaerts 2012) explains this struggle for media attention and can thus be used to bridge the gap between social movement studies and media studies. It includes 'networked media' and 'discursive opportunity structure', which is embedded in the broader concept of 'political and economic opportunity structures'. Koopmans and Olzak (2004) argue that mediated discourse is important to understanding collective action and can bridge the gap between opportunity structures and framing perspectives in social movement research (Koopmans and Olzak 2004). Cammaerts' concept addresses media not only 'the symbolic and discursive realms' of social movements as well as those that are 'instrumental and material to realising their immediate goals' (Cammaerts 2012, 118). Processes of adapting to and appropriating the logics of mass media are tactics of activists in this concept. Such tactics are not only symbolic as well as have an instrumental purpose. This can be realised through physical action, using media for mobilisation, as well as through using tactics strategically to gain visibility and attention from the media. The concept thus includes a functional dimension as well as a discursive and symbolic dimension for understanding protest in contemporary media environments.

The logics that Cammaerts describes in his concept as well as the development of an identity as a counterpublic also apply, however, to groups that are anti-democratic.

The identity construction of neo-fascist movements, skinheads, and other antidemocratic groups as marginalised and negatively presented takes place in a similar manner (Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994, 185) as for anti-fascist and anarchist movements. As this thesis will show, due to their oppositional positions relative to democracy and, thus, the prevailing system, neo-Nazis and the so-called New Right use many of the same media strategies, practices, and tactics that are identified for protest movements located on the radical left of the political spectrum. Although these groups are considered in concepts of alternative media, as discussed earlier, and counterpublics, as addressed below, they are mostly ignored in social movement studies. The identification of similarities in their media practices and tactics due to their self-definition as counterpublics despite their different value systems is important in understanding their role in contemporary political and media environments.

Counterpublics beyond rational-critical debate

The radical groups on both ends of the political spectrum studied in this thesis consider themselves to be counterpublics and opposed to the mainstream. What makes a public a 'counterpublic' from a conceptual perspective (Brouwer 2006; Fraser 1992; Negt and Kluge 1972; Warner 2002) is its resistance to domination. The conceptualisation of counterpublics goes back to Negt and Kluge (1972), who speak of the proletarian public compared with Habermas' public sphere, which is based only on bourgeois society and does not grant the working class any emancipatory potential. From Negt and Kluge's perspective, proletarian publics are organisations that are independent from and critical of capitalist ideology. One of their main arguments is that the public sphere is not only left to the bourgeois society as well as that there are different competing public spheres. They argue that the proletarian public sphere and the bourgeois public sphere cannot co-exist in interrelationship since both aim to destroy the other. The level of production, they argue, is excluded from the concept of the public sphere, which makes it an ideal construct. To truly bring about change and struggle against the ruling class means to change the mode of production rather than simply the mode of political control. The public sphere does not exist as such but only through its articulation in processes of a certain practice.

Negt and Kluge's concept of the 'proletarian public' is based on the Marxist conceptualisation of class and the production process as the defining criteria of the proletariat. The proletarian public, Negt argues in an interview, 'does not only stand for the working class but for oppressed relationships, for things and interests, which are not expressed' (Krause 2006). It is one form of a counterpublic, understood as a process rather than a status. Negt and Kluge's work is more concerned with acting as a point of departure for future research and does not emphasise discussion of a successful counterpublic. The counterpublics are, however, inspired by a critique of capitalism and oppression by modes of production. This is one of the major differences to more recent conceptualisations of counterpublics, which include any articulations that are marginalised in the mainstream discourse.

The counterpublics in question in this study are more in line with contemporary perspectives such as 'subaltern publics' (Fraser 1992) or counterpublics (Warner 2002; Brouwer 2006) that emphasise oppositional interpretations of identities, interests, and needs amongst members of subordinated groups. These groups are subordinated relative to dominant publics and, according to Fraser (1992), do not get their voices heard due to their class, ethnicity, or gender. 'Subaltern publics' are based

on Habermas' concept of rational-critical debate, but with the addition that the publics in question are oppressed. The relationship between the bourgeois public and other publics is a 'conflictual' one. Inequalities must be taken into account to foster discursive interaction between the various subaltern and bourgeois publics. These multiple subaltern counterpublics 'are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs' (Fraser 1992, 123). These counterpublics include 'subaltern publics' that represent the interests of the political left as well as those that are antidemocratic, anti-egalitarian and exclusive but help 'expand the discursive space' (Fraser 1992, 124) and articulate counterdiscourses based on their oppositional identities and interests. By including these different perspectives, she suggests a society that is not constituted by one comprehensive public sphere but one that permits differences and antagonisms.

Oppositionality in a counterpublic is 'a position of rejection, resistance, or dissent. It emerges when 'social actors perceive themselves to be excluded from or marginalized within mainstream or dominant publics and communicate about that marginality or exclusion' (Brouwer 2006, 197). Counterpublics must thus be seen in relation to the dominant publics from which they are excluded. Counter publicity also includes the spaces in which counterpublics communicate, retreat, and reflect to prepare for interaction with other publics. However, groups that remain within these separate spaces cannot be considered to be counterpublics since it is the relationship with dominant publics that constitutes their counter publicity (Brouwer 2006).

Counterpublics move beyond rational critical norms of Habermas' concept of public deliberation and recognise that individuals participate in multiple publics. Such a conceptualisation aims to create a dialectical understanding of the relationship between the dominant and the subordinate (Brouwer 2006). This understanding of counterpublics includes subordination and embeddedness in a larger public. Counterpublics are formed through conflict with the norms of their cultural environment, which are framed by a dominant public. The concept of counterpublics defines the relationship with other publics as one of opposition and subordination. These oppositional publics, which are articulated in discourse, are no longer necessarily based on class struggle and possess diverse political perspectives, including undemocratic ones. The articulations, Warner (2002) suggests, transcend rational critical debate and include identity, performance, or emotion. Their relationship to the mainstream is a subordinate one, but it is nevertheless dialectical.

The counterpublics studied in this thesis are not only subordinate but are also in a conflictual relationship with one another. Including the neo-Nazis and the New Right as counterpublics allows for the addressing of their conflictual relationship with anti-fascist and anarchist groups. The struggle for visibility on both ends of the political spectrum is not one for visibility alone as well as for solidarity, identity, support, and positive alignment with a cause. To understand the media practices and tactics of the different groups, with their different sets of values, that are involved in the events studied in this thesis, the concept of counterpublics must be reconsidered. One aspect consists of the different values that the groups represent and hence the political ideology that they articulate in the protest events.

Ideology and political positions in digital media

Despite similar media practices and tactics due to their self-definition as counterpublics, the value systems of the groups involved in the events are completely different. Anti-fascists, anarchists, and more broadly citizens who wish to protect their city from neo-Nazis are opposed to the New Right, neo-Nazis, and members of the National Democratic Party of Germany. As argued in the discussion concerning counterpublics, both sides use similar media practices, tactics, and strategies due to their self-definition as counterpublics. However, when discussing social movements and counterpublics, radical right-wing groups are generally ignored and are instead addressed in the frameworks of ideology and propaganda. Although classic propaganda in particular is useful for understanding the conflict studied in this thesis, ideology and political positions require a broader and more flexible conceptualisation. The counterpublics in this study are neither homogenous nor based on one clear political ideology or position and thus a clearly defined profile but are, rather, characterised by a heterogeneity of political positions. Their political positions are renegotiated in contestation and conflict with the events studied here.

This chapter thus starts by addressing propaganda (Bernays 1928; Chomsky 2002; Daniels 2009; Herman 2000; Jowett and O'Donnell 2012; Lasswell 1927) in order to understand the confrontational character of the counterpublics in the events in question. Ideology and the reproduction of ideology as well as its renegotiation in conflict represent important elements in these conflicts. The notion of 'ideology' is addressed as the interplay between historically grounded belief systems renegotiated in mediated discourse (Freedman 2003; Atton 2004; van Dijk 2000; van Dijk 1998b; Thompson 1990). The composition of friend-enemy constellations and the construction of the Other by creating frontiers are important to discussion, contestation, and conflict. These friend-enemy constellations, the different political positions and ideology in discourse, are examined through the ontological framework of critical discourse analysis (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999; Fairclough 2010; Fairclough 1995; van Dijk 2001; Wodak 2001) and discourse theory (Carpentier 2007; Dahlberg and Phelan 2011; Wetherell, Taylor, and Yates 2001; Laclau and Mouffe 1985). This subsection concludes by considering how different political positions and ideologies can be studied in a digital media environment.

Conflict and propaganda

In this study, the concept of propaganda in its classic form is relevant for understanding how opinions are formed in war as well as in conflict in general. Studies of propaganda usually refer to situations in which the media are completely controlled by a government, military, or other propaganda elites, including the strategic use of media to produce, reproduce, or maintain a certain belief system or image, often by manipulating citizens. Classic propaganda studies are based on war and conflict and how the military and governments justify their own actions and present the enemy as evil. For this purpose, control over media content and the use of media technologies to disseminate information are essential. However, control over media and news agencies is never totally fulfilled, and there is always space in which counter publicity can emerge and in which underground movements can appropriate the same media technologies as are used by the propagandists. Although this study concerns subordinate counterpublics and the conflict between them rather than those in power, propaganda studies are helpful for understanding the media practices used in this conflict. The concept of propaganda within this framework is useful in two

ways: [1] for understanding the conflicting situation between two groups, i.e. the ways the two conflicting parties construct their enemy, involving the use of rhetoric, symbols, and strategies as well as how different realities are constructed around a single event by constructing friend-enemy relations; and [2] for understanding how media technologies maintain existing structures of power and control as well as how they are used to challenge these structures.

Propaganda, according to classic theories, involves working with popular opinion, using it to promote the interests of the government rather than forcing an opinion on people. One of the aims of propaganda, according to early studies, was to create unity and support for a war cause and military action, especially in the home country. Laswell identifies the following strategies for creating unity by using language in propaganda during World War II: appealing to a common history and using historical imagery to produce nationalism, religious justification and using religious vocabulary, presenting the enemy as a threat to peace and security, creating collective egotism, basing the description of the war upon beliefs, emphasising financial profit, and appealing to interest groups (Laswell in Curnalia 2005, 243). To justify military intervention, one of the objectives of propaganda is to create an enemy and describe it as 'evil' and undertaking unethical actions, in contrast the actions of one's own country, which are 'good' (Lasswell 1927, 630). Emotional language, shocking images, and language of affection are used to support these strategies. Due to the nationalist character of radical right-wing groups in Germany, the language used for framing their own identity is very similar to what Laswell observes in World War II. The language and symbols used by the New Right and neo-Nazis are still strongly influenced by Nazi rhetoric. The construction of the 'evil' enemy is, however, a strategy used by both sides in the conflict.

Propaganda is also a means of explaining communication of implicit political positions for the influencing of public opinion, i.e. manipulation of the masses by the elite as the ruling power in democracies (Bernays 1928). In this framework, propaganda is a way of organising democratic societies by suggested ideas that do not necessarily reflect the truth. Technical means such as the printing press, radio, and telegraph were used to spread these ideas or images over distances. Although this concept is based on the idea of mass communication and the central distribution of information, it also includes more implicit strategies, such as a certain political agenda in education, religion, or other manifestations reflected in everyday interactions. In a more general sense, propaganda can be defined as:

the use of words, symbols, ideas, events, and personalities with the intention of forwarding or attacking an interest, cause, project, institution, or person to the eyes and minds of a public (McClung Lee 1945, 127).

This is not necessarily limited to war situations. Propaganda can also be considered a sub-form of persuasion and a form of communication aimed at influencing certain behaviour, which is also the case with 'counter propaganda' (Jowett and O'Donnell 2012, 7). This concept is particularly useful in this study since it focuses on a case that deals with two conflicting groups, both of which would consider themselves in opposition to the mainstream. Attacking a cause, project, or institution by using events and symbolic action is a strategy practiced by activists in order to take their cause before to the public.

From a critical theory and political economy perspective, however, an analysis of propaganda begins from the powerful that dominate the information flow and does

not provide space in which contesting parties – and hence for counterpublics – to emerge (Herman 2000, 108). The interesting aspect of Chomsky and Herman's (2002) propaganda model for this study is the production of fear as an additional filter in the news media's propaganda model, distinct from market mechanisms such as advertising, ownership, and funding. Anti-ideologies use fear to produce hate against certain groups. These ideologies undermine critical perspectives, and it is claimed that fear of loss of stability is a frequent argument used in conservative and right wing politics. Fear is used strategically by nationalist groups to produce hate against foreigners as well as by authorities to undermine the ideas of counterpublics. Presenting activists and their radical forms of expression such as violence in a de-contextualised manner, without addressing their political causes, produces fear and can limit support for a cause.

Although the different propaganda models rely heavily on structure and the reproduction and maintenance of power, they also include a constructivist perspective since they claim that different realities of a certain conflict exist side by side. Chomsky (2002) argues through this perspective that propaganda is not necessarily a construct of lies by elites that covers the truth but rather of different realities that exist parallel to one another, depending on the different actors who are involved in the events and their perspectives. This also involves there always being 'dissent despite all the efforts of manufacturing consent, i.e. civil society's ability to think and resist' (Chomsky 2002, 38f). Dissent includes the development of a different perspective on and a different representation of events by the actors involved. The relationship between groups in conflict, or between counterpublics and publics, is also a relationship between different perspectives on certain events. The different realities that are, for example, constructed as friend-enemy relations in conflict can subvert as well as maintain power. Media technologies did and do play an important role in this process.

Manipulation has a social dimension as a form of power abuse, a cognitive dimension in the form of 'mind control', and a discursive dimension as the analysis of 'the usual polarized structures of positive self-presentation and negative other presentation expressing ideological conflict' (van Dijk 2006, 380). Manipulation in conflict creates moral superiority and enhances power and credibility by discrediting dissidents and demonising the Other as the enemy. Use of emotional language, using apparently unquestionable proofs of beliefs and reasons for fighting the enemy, supports these discursive acts in conflict. Van Dijk (2006) does not explicitly refer to propaganda with his concept of manipulation, yet the strategies that he describes in the use of language in conflict are very similar.

Propaganda as a concept in internet studies covers a wide range of topics, such as propaganda by the Bush administration in the Iraq war (Christensen 2008; Kellner 2004; Paolucci 2009; Patrick and Thrall 2007; Snow and Taylor 2006), the influence of government on public opinion in war news (Patrick and Thrall 2007), propaganda and communicative action in the Global Jihadist Movement (Torres, Jordán, and Horsburgh 2006), the role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the democratisation of countries with a Moslem majority (Howard 2010), the use of the internet by terrorists (Weimann 2006), the behaviour of right wing groups and cloaked websites (Daniels 2009), and the issue of polarisation and false consensus in ideologically homogenous neo-Nazi groups (Wojcieszak 2008). In these examples, the manipulative nature of propaganda is prominent. Bratic (2008) applies a rather neutral perspective on propaganda in an analysis of peace-oriented media in conflict.

From this perspective, propaganda is not only used by the ‘evil’ part of the conflict; both sides use certain similar strategies. What becomes obvious in these ideas about propaganda is that a difference needs to be made between practices and values when analysing situations of conflict and contestation that include different political ideologies.

In contemporary democracies, as the case studied here shows, not all of the perspectives that confront the mainstream can be considered critical, progressive, and challenging domination. The social web supports not only progressive movements that foster peace and welfare or criticise capitalism but also propaganda and right-wing discourse. A study on propaganda and cyber racism on cloaked websites shows evidence that propaganda, advertising, politics, and cyber racism to converge, which makes it harder to differentiate between civil rights websites and racists sites (Daniels 2009). These websites are particularly effective because they are hard to distinguish from other sources and because they use legitimate sources to support their own perspectives. In racism as a socially constructed entity, the Other is depicted by making the self or in-group positive or by focusing on the unique self by presenting the Other as negative. Online racial discourse of skinhead groups, for example, is subtler and inexplicit but is nevertheless powerful in constructing permanent boundaries between the Self and the Other (Campbell 2006). The hegemony of ideas that describes the underlying ideology of the far right is reflected in their websites. Discourse of alternative progressive movements is used to maintain an oppressive ideological space for these groups (Atton 2006).

Practices of self-representation, representation, interaction, organisation, coordination, mobilisation, and discussion in digital media are thus practices that are used by groups with different sets of values across the political spectrum. Morozov (2011a) claims that decentralisation even makes it easier to include the desired ideas into national conversation due to the same advantages that can foster ad hoc organisation of progressive movements, i.e. advantages in coping with costs related to space and time. A study on public outrage and new media in Russia shows that technology is a tool that can lead to both democratisation and support for authoritarian regimes (Toepfl 2011). Similarly, Christensen (2008) shows with his analysis of YouTube videos in the Iraq war how the platform was used to spread both information favoured by the military as propaganda and dissenting material by US soldiers in Iraq. He identifies the potential audience that the soldiers can reach via YouTube as one of the most important criteria for how dissent is communicated on the internet compared with earlier media. These videos do not have a direct impact on the conflict itself but do influence on the ‘war over public opinion’, in which these videos began ‘to restructure the balance of story-telling power’ (Christensen 2008, 173). As the studies of Christensen, Atton, and Morozov show, despite the different values systems and causes behind these political groups, they share tactics and media practices in using digital media to influence public opinion. In situations of conflict, these similarities become even more apparent due to the shared aim of constructing friend-enemy constellations that produce solidarity with a cause as well as support active resistance against the enemy.

Ideology, friends and enemies in discourse

These value systems that clearly differentiate groups from one another can be understood through the notion of ‘ideology’. This study does not aim to discuss the notion of ideology in detail as this has been done elsewhere (see van Dijk 1998b; van

Dijk 2000). The concept is, however, addressed briefly in the context of this study, i.e. as ideology in discourse. Ideology in this framework is a combination of historically grounded beliefs that are renegotiated and reconstructed in discourse. In digital media, ideology is thus reproduced, challenged, and renegotiated by mass communication as well as in interaction, discussion, and confrontation.

Mass communication plays a pivotal role in Thompson's (1990) theory as he sees it as central to the production and diffusion of ideology. Ideology as 'meaning in the service of power' (Thompson 1990, 7) stresses the construction and conveyance of ideology by symbolic forms, such as text, images, and utterances. These symbolic forms create and sustain relationships of domination, which are justified within a particular ideological framework and imposed on those in less powerful positions. To study ideology in modern culture, Thompson argues, is to interpret 'the connection between the meaning mobilized by symbolic forms and the relations of domination which that meaning serves to establish and sustain' (Thompson 1990, 293). Thompson's concept of ideology is structural, based on the way meaning serves to sustain relationships of domination and subordination. Gramsci, however, warned that ideology is not solely used by the state to oppress but is also produced and operated in civil society (Freeden 2003, 20f).

Ideology and power are not entirely stable; they are constructed and reconstructed in discourse. In other words, power is a creative, playful, and productive generator that influences how ideologies are represented as a means of constructing social realities based on group identity and ideology that try to challenge existing power structures. In Foucault's (2002) terms, there must be a productive resistance for power relations to emerge. Power is always a set of actions upon other actions and is reconstructed and challenged in discourse. Fairclough's (1995, 26f) concept of ideology is closely related to the Gramscian idea, which is based on hegemony and domination but not necessarily in class structure. According to Fairclough, ideologies are important in establishing, maintaining, enacting, and transforming power and are controlled by an elite and rooted primarily in that which is unsaid. According to van Dijk (1998b, 30), theoretically interesting questions include not only ideologies to sustain and legitimate domination as well as counter ideologies and resistance, such as fascism with anti-fascism.

On the basis of this notion, van Dijk defines ideologies as 'shared social representations that have specific social functions for groups' (van Dijk 1998b, 191), combining social, cognitive, and discursive elements. Since ideologies share social representations that have meanings and thus social functions in groups, it is important to know how such ideologies are acquired, constructed, and changed by the members of these groups (van Dijk 2000). From a contemporary perspective, Freeden argues that 'ideologies have been fragmenting into more diverse, unstructured, and temporary combinations that offer partial political solutions while undergoing continuous modification' (Freedden 2003, 94). The temporality of ideologies in late modern society is based on a particular set of beliefs that is historically grounded yet renegotiated by situations of conflict, alliance, and contestation. In confrontation, however, ideologies become more explicit than they are in everyday interaction (van Dijk 1998b, 98). What Atton (2004), in reference to Back, calls 'liquid ideologies' are the recreation of historically rooted ideological claims in discourse. This can be observed in discussions, dialogue, and confrontation between groups.

One element of analysing the structure of ideology in discourse is the polarisation between oppositional groups, i.e. in-groups and out-groups. Studying the

representation of ideologies in discourse means analysing ‘mediated action within a specific space and time that separates ‘us’ from ‘them’” (Chouliaraki 2008, 26). Ideological constellations – like ‘us’ and ‘them’, fascist and anti-fascist groups – can never develop into homogenous systems but are reproduced and reconstructed in discourse. The development of frontiers between notions of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ is an essential element in this process. A ‘discourse’ is thus not a distinct entity but ‘an element of social life which is closely interconnected with other elements’ (Fairclough 2003, 3). As a result, discourse is a way of representing certain aspects of the world in texts, including visual images and sound. In the anti-fascist protests, these representations are driven by publics composed of anti-fascist-groups and fascist-groups, which creates an apparently straightforward polarisation of two political positions.

Studying ideology as a particular belief system of groups that are counterpublics is studying a world that ought to be rather than studying the world that these groups attempt to challenge. Discourse in contentious politics is, according to Foucault (2003; 1978), related to the struggle over truth. As a result, counter discourses challenge the legitimacy of the truth of an original discourse. The construction of these different perspectives on truth is based on the political belief systems of groups that act in civil disobedience to challenge power and domination. Discourses can thus be studied in their continuity as well as involve renegotiation since they are by necessity ‘*(re)read, (re)written, (re)built, (re)produced, (re)searched, (re)articulated, or (re)jected as text*’ (Krippendorf 2009, 223, italic in original).

The framework of radical democracy situates different political positions in the social and discursive field of ‘the political’, where hegemonic power struggles take place. These power struggles are interrelated with social practices of identification. Citizens’ identification with a political community is an important component of citizenship and participation but is also part of radical politics (Dahlgren 2009). Processes of identification aim at finding and exploring common causes that are vital for community building as well as for challenging power elites, societal norms, and values (Bennett and Amoshaun 2009). In this way, the individual level of identification with political opinions and communities is interlinked with the socio-cultural level of mass mobilisation and collective action. Bakardjieva (2012) speaks of ‘mundane citizenship’ in this context as firmly rooted in individual experiences but nevertheless transcending these through collective identification. Power in political communities is at play in different ways: through hegemonic power struggles between communities claiming supremacy (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) and within communities through socialisation, shared norms and values, and the contestation of these norms and values (Carpentier 2011). Establishing a notion of ‘Us’ implies a distinction in relation to a ‘Them’. Hegemonic power struggles are centred on such processes of identification (Mouffe 2005).

Conflict and hegemonic power struggles between different groups and communities are essential to the notion of ‘the political’. Through the construction of ‘frontiers which separate’ (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 136), different communities in political struggle are based on identification with a particular political community, which entails the identification of the ‘Other’. The identification of a ‘common enemy’ (Mouffe in Carpentier and Cammaerts 2006) unites different political positions in democratic pluralism in contestation. The democratic revolution that Laclau and Mouffe anticipate is one of radical pluralism that overcomes relations of oppression:

Our task is to identify the conditions in which a relation of subordination becomes a relation of oppression, and thereby constitutes itself into the site of an antagonism. (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 153)

Oppression within this framework exists in discourse and in relation to an ‘exterior’ that is constructed in discourse. The ‘discourse of subordination’ can be interrupted by this discursive exterior. An antagonism can, for example, arise due to the denial of certain rights to females, which resulted in feminism. This creates new social movements, which are based on resistance against new forms of domination different from those that are based on class struggle (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 159). The ‘project for a radical and plural democracy’ that Laclau and Mouffe describe is based on a struggle for the autonomy of different spheres and subject positions (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 167). Democratic pluralism includes, however, not only progressive and left-wing perspectives as well as perspectives outside of the socialist program of radical democracy:

The discursive compass of the democratic revolution opens the way for political logics as diverse as right-wing populism and totalitarianism on the one hand, and a radical democracy on the other. Therefore [...] we must understand in all their radical heterogeneity the range of possibilities which are opened in terrain of democracy itself. (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 168f)

As an example, they refer to the New Right, which uses neo-liberal discourses to transform social relations. The hegemonic struggles are not therefore necessarily of a progressive character but can be articulated in different discourses, including anti-democratic ones (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 174f). The occurrence of right-wing and racist discourse challenges the limits of freedom of speech and radical pluralism (Cammaerts 2009). The paradox regarding freedom of speech on the internet is that, as a relatively unregulated and uncensored means of communicating, digital media are used by groups that share values against freedom of speech and expression (Weimann 2006, 7). This becomes apparent in the case studied in this thesis, in which groups operating under undemocratic rules and practicing exclusion use the right for freedom of expression to justify their actions.

In this framework, the aforementioned relationship between individual and collective identity in movement mobilisation must be able to accept ‘multiple identities’ of participants and activists (Downey and Fenton 2003, 194) with diverse subject positions. Not all of the antagonisms that are represented can, however, result in agonism as described by Laclau and Mouffe (1985), i.e. in ‘conflictual contestation’ that can be constructive if groups show respect for one another in discussions within friend-enemy constellations. Following Mouffe (2005), political participation consists of conflict and hegemonic power struggles between different groups and communities. In radical democracy theory (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Mouffe 2005), counter discourses must be studied as both counterpublic and discursive contestation, i.e. as including inter-discursive and intra-discursive contestation, which are both part of ‘the political’. Collective identities and the creation of ‘us’ and ‘them’ are necessary antagonisms in a democracy, and the identification of individuals with a collective as a friend or enemy is a political outcome of an individual action. Collective identification with democratic objectives, passion, and pluralism are important components of ‘the political’, in which these struggles of resistance take place.

Discourse theory and critical discourse analysis

The conceptual framework of Discourse Theory (Carpentier 2007; Dahlberg and Phelan 2011; Laclau and Mouffe 1985) comprises the idea of different political positions that form ‘the political’, and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999; Fairclough 2003; Fairclough 2010; van Dijk 1998b; van Dijk 1998a; van Dijk 2001) addresses the power relations reproduced in discourse. Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory allows for the examination of political identities as unities formed by heterogeneous groups and their counter discourses. The formation of frontiers against a common enemy are analysed in terms of form and content as they clarify the components of radical publics. Studying how these counter hegemonic unities are formed within democratic pluralism requires an emphasis on passion and the development of collective identity through articulation.

One of the interesting aspects of social movement studies concerns the discourses of political groups or movements, how they present themselves, and how they are presented and framed by others (Johnston 2002, 68). CDA should contribute to protest studies by documenting resistance of the less powerful and their strategies against the powerful as well as, on account of its claim as a critical analysis, documenting how these strategies can be emancipatory, challenging domination, inequality, and discrimination (Flowerdew 2008). Due to the critical – and thus political – component of CDA, this emancipatory moment is usually associated with the political left, which should be empowered in its struggle against domination. Radical right-wing groups also play an important role and develop counter publicity in this study. The question is how to address groups as counterpublics in resistance to the mainstream if they do not share a political program that can be accepted in a democracy.

The counterpublics that are developed as unities against a common enemy across heterogeneous political positions are maintained and constructed as alternatives to the mainstream by articulation through different media. Antagonism and exclusion constitute these vibrant counterpublics. Media technology ‘encourages and enables particular uses and outcomes enabling users to perform certain activities’ (Dahlberg and Phelan 2011, 52), which describes how they are positioned between materiality and socially constructed meanings concerning them in digitally mediated dissent. Digitally mediated discourse can be studied as both mediation and as the construction of a political agenda as well as in terms of mediated discussions and utterances that are framed by the political beliefs of a group and thus reproduce political ideology. The interdependency of these individual encounters and mass mediated political agendas for maintaining the hegemony of one discourse over another also describes the relationship between social structure and the individual level, i.e. political subjects and, thus, agency. The active reproduction, construction, and reconstruction of ideologies – their gradual change and reconstitution – in social practices bridges the gap between the macro-level and the micro-level (van Dijk 1998b, 228ff). Fairclough refers to this relationship in the interdependency and simultaneous appearance of action, representation, and identification, with identification being located more in interpersonal communication (Fairclough 2003, 27). The different forms of communication converge in digital media. However, the technical affordances of the different media platforms foster some forms of communication more than others, which is reflected in and influences the way activists produce counter publicity from within their political perspectives.

Hegemony and domination are not stable, persistent, and universal structures; they change in accordance with a specific political goal or with the social reality constructed on the basis of a group's political beliefs, i.e. its ideologies. The relationship between groups and members of groups changes on the basis of the political goal. Groups that unite in democratic pluralism (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Mouffe 2005) for a common cause can disperse again after they have achieved their political goal. As a result, socially shared beliefs and practices of groups and group relations are situationally determined. Resistance and struggle require a socio-cognitive basis – i.e. shared values, principles, and ideologies – to overcome domination (van Dijk 1998b, 168).

Access to public discourse is crucial if movements and contentious discourses are to be heard (van Dijk 1998b, 174). Language is an essential element of social life yet is at the same time interconnected with other elements (Fairclough 2003). As a result, discourse analysis is but one part of the strategic analysis of the relationship between ideology, media practices, and technical affordances. Critical discourse analysis takes into account the order of discourse, power, and the social structuring of language, focusing on the relationship between language and other elements of social life. Fairclough stresses the development of transdisciplinary dialogue in approaches to text analysis 'in order to develop our capacity to analyse texts as elements in social processes' (Fairclough 2003, 6). This relationship is characterised by social structures, social practices, and social events. Representation within this framework is discursive, and different discourses can represent the same event from different positions or within different social realities based on a political ideology. This perspective suggests a framework that includes structural and interpretive analysis.

According to Fairclough (2003, 28), the method of text analysis involves identifying the meaning in specific texts as action, representation, and identification as well as the articulation of genres, discourses, and styles in text in order to understand the relationship between concrete social events and social practices on a more abstract level. The connection between the individual and social level is constituted by the notion that although discourse influences people, it is also the base that people make discourse, thereby designating the relationship between social constructivism and realism in discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995, 40). The construction of counter publicity concerns struggle against domination, confrontation and conflict, and the formation of unity in democratic pluralism. This includes both the structure by which a hegemonic discourse dominates marginalised discourses and the agency that enables the marginalised discourses by using different digital media platforms to strategically challenge domination.

Political ideology grounded online

The internet itself can be considered 'a site of data about society and culture', meaning that claims about radical political ideologies can be grounded online (Rogers 2009). Digital media are the object of study, taking the form of media technology in the digital age. At the same time, activists use digital media to express their identity – i.e. political positions – and thus to construct and reproduce ideology by using the technical affordances of different online media platforms. With reference to Giddens' double-hermeneutic, Jensen argues that we interpret the interpretations of others in order to study 'how and why they communicate' (Jensen 2011, 30). This does not only apply to the fact that the results of research influence the way people construct the world around them. The textual representations of different political groups are

interpretations of these groups that are produced in a specific context yet are nevertheless used to construct political identity and to reproduce and renegotiate political ideology.

Power relations of social practices are both reflected and reproduced in media discourses, thereby explaining ‘why certain intertextualities but not others are possible in a particular discursive practice’ (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, 119). These intertextualities are one aspect of how counterpublics position and articulate themselves in discourse. The modalities are reflected in language and symbols of political communication through the media and can thus be studied as digitally mediated discourse. As Fairclough (1995) suggests, ‘social structures’ are reproduced not only in the form of language and text as well as as ‘social practices’ and ‘social events’ related to one another by intertextuality. Within this framework, text is constitutive of ‘(1) social identities, (2) social relations and (3) systems of knowledge and belief’ (Fairclough 1995). In other words, the different political positions of the groups in the events studied here can be studied with reference to their identity, their relationships with one another and with authorities, and their belief systems, i.e. ideologies. In mediated political communication, political ideology plays an essential role in creating social identities and beliefs, especially in forming collective and personal identity. This is related to van Dijk’s (1998a) identification of discourse structures, context, reproduction, persuasion, and justification as dimensions of the relationship between ideology and discourse. These dimensions can also be considered tactics that certain political groups strategically use to articulate their political positions in digital media.

This is especially relevant when discussing the relationship between the different digital media formats and the hegemony and power structures between and within the various discourses, which emerge around these events in accordance with the different political ideologies. The traceability of online representations and communications is used to study the groups involved in the events and these groups’ discourses. At the same time, traceability is used strategically by activists and those in power, i.e. used as a strategic means of appropriating the technology. As a result, there is a dialectical relationship between the appropriation of technology by different political groups and the ways in which they are studied. To understand how these different political positions interrelate with the appropriation of technology in the events, we must take into account the relationship between the technological affordances of the different platforms, the struggle for visibility, and the various political groups involved in the events.

Towards an analytical framework

The three parts of the theoretical discussion form the framework that guides the analyses in this thesis. The analysis is structured along three dimensions: technical affordances, media practices and tactics of counterpublics, and the groups’ various political positions and ideologies. We distinguish between these for analytical purposes, but they are interrelated and reflect one another. In brief, these three parts consist of:

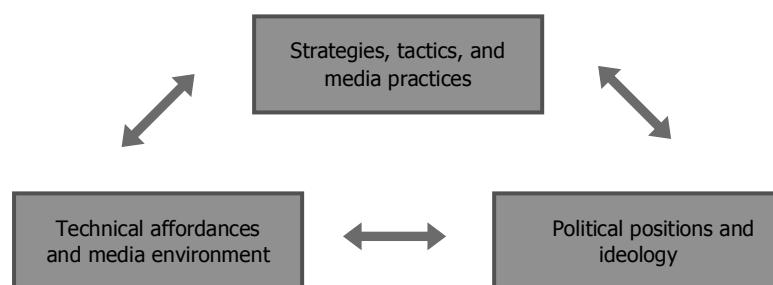


Figure 1: Analytical framework

Technical affordances and media environment: The relationship between society and technology (as addressed in 2.1) was explained as ‘critical constructivism’ (Feenberg 2010; Feenberg 2002; Bakardjieva 2005). This theoretical framework explains technology as developed within a certain environment with the aim of sustaining power and hierarchies in a society. At the same time, however, technology can be appropriated to challenge power and exercise its emancipatory potential. In this framework, technical affordances (Hutchby 2001) are what we can do with technology, including a functional component that enables or constrains possibilities for political action. The affordances of media technologies consist of their functionality and the particular media practices they foster or constrain. They differ in accordance with the different digital media platforms and the different media technologies, including past technologies. These affordances are part of the media environment that permeates activists’ struggles for visibility.

Practices, tactics, and strategies of counterpublics: The counterpublics (as discussed in 2.2) in this thesis consist of neo-Nazis and the New Right as counterpublics alongside anti-fascists, civil society groups, and anarchists. In this constellation, the groups are in a relationship that is both oppositional and conflictual. The counterpublics on both ends of the political spectrum use strategies, tactics, and media practices in their struggle, which is not a struggle for visibility alone but also for solidarity, identity, support, and positive alignment for their cause. Understanding the media practices and tactics of the different groups also means understanding their similarities despite their different political positions and ideologies. The second part thus concerns what the groups involved in the protest do with media technology as counterpublics, i.e. their tactics, strategies, and media practices due to their oppositional nature. The focus is on the appropriation of media technology by these groups in opposition, resistance, and conflict. Continuity is an important aspect in this constellation. Tracing the media practices, tactics, and strategies back to counterpublics in Hitler Germany in World War II helps us understand similarities despite different political and media environments.

Political positions and ideology: The third part (addressed in 2.3) concerns the values and political positions of the groups involved in the protest events. Differences, alliances, confrontation, and oppositionality are formed on the basis of claims, slogans, ideology, and political positions. Despite their similar practices, tactics, and strategies as counterpublics, the groups involved in the protest events could not differ more in terms of their political positions and the ideologies on which their values and beliefs are based. The values, belief systems, and heterogeneity of political positions involved in the protest events form the third part of the analytical framework. Ideologies and political positions are reproduced as well as renegotiated through

different forms of expression on the various digital media platforms. The ontological framework composed of critical discourse analysis and discourse theory is employed to understand expressions of power, hegemony, and oppositionality as well as interaction, alliances, discussion, and confrontation between the different groups in digital media.

Research design and methods

This project's research design follows no single approach with a strict set of methods. It is experimental in the sense that it combines different methods to study phenomena of democracy in the digital age outside parliamentary politics. The methods used here are guided by the research question that is asked (Della Porta and Keating 2008) rather than by following a monolithic approach. Jensen (2012a) would classify this thesis as using a 'complementary' approach from an interdisciplinary perspective. The different methods address certain aspects of the research question, but the sets of findings are combined in a theoretical framework. Jensen argues that although this approach is especially relevant in the interdisciplinary field of media and communication research, it is difficult to apply due to the necessity of staying within one discipline and a particular set of methods. The relationship between digital media, political media, and ideology is located between historically grown political beliefs, ideas, and media practices of counterpublics as well as new phenomena, forms of expression, and political context.

The individual methods used here are not particularly novel, but they are combined so as to answer the question asked in the introduction. This requires a perspective that takes into account both the structure that radical politics attempts to alter and agency in the actors' relationships with one another (Giddens 1994). The results across the three layers of technical affordances of different media technologies (practices, tactics, and strategies of counterpublics) as well as their values, ideologies, and political positions contribute to a rethinking of counterpublics in the digital age. In the following, we explain how the methods used in this project contribute to answering the research question; how the different methods were implemented; how the case and data set were selected; and how the different methods in strategies, sampling, analysis, and interpretation are integrated into the research design (Creswell 2009). This chapter is thus concerned with what was being done and how the different elements and methods contribute to answering the question that was asked.

Why qualitative?

This study is primarily concerned with meaning in text and with different forms of expression in digital media. The forms that radical political groups develop in their position as counterpublics by appropriating media technologies with regard to their various political positions and ideologies requires examination and interpretation of the relationship between the different actors, their political positions, their identification as counterpublics, and the technical platforms they use. The strategies and tactics, the production and reproduction of meaning and ideology, along with the potential and constraints of the different platforms with their technical affordances, must be identified in terms of their interdependencies with one another. The thesis thus tries to show the limits of existing concepts of counterpublics in contemporary forms of political resistance and their expression in digital media. It tries not to discover structures of media practices but rather to identify how counterpublics with

different sets of political positions and ideologies express their causes in moments of contestation. By identifying this process in the protest events studied here, this thesis seeks to fill theoretical and analytical gaps concerning the concept of counterpublics. This includes the questions of how counterpublics have changed over time, which media environments they are embedded in, and which ideologies they are based on. To examine these relationships, we require an interpretation of the different components' relationships with one another. The aim is to move these interpretations onto a more abstract level, conceptualising them and thus contributing to contemporary understandings of radical politics as counterpublics in digital media. As a result, this thesis offers a new perspective by means of the idea of protean counterpublics in the digital age.

Ethical Considerations

The data on which this study is based is sensitive in two ways: First, it is a topic that is important in the media discourse in general and touches upon a historically stigmatised topic, especially in the German-speaking context. This study only includes public communication and discussion of the events. One reason for this is that the topic discusses counterpublics and thus publicly available information and communication. However, the authors of comments on YouTube, tweets, comments in Facebook groups, or on IndyMedia operate in semi-public spaces. Ethics of internet research in general discuss the blurring of boundaries between private and public spaces online within different disciplines (Bakardjieva and Feenberg 2000; Bassett and O'Riordan 2002; Berry 2004; Eysenbach and Till 2001; Pittenger 2003). The main problem when researching online communities or in qualitative internet research online, they say, is the question of whether these spaces are considered private or public, not only by the researcher as well as by the community or subjects being studied.

Feenberg and Bakardjieva (2000) argue that alienation should be avoided, i.e. the subjects engaged in an online community do not intend to be observed or be part of a study when they interact online. This is certainly true for groups that discuss topics such as health issues and that consider their online community as a private space in which they may discuss these issues with like-minded people who share their problem. In this study, however, the political groups in question communicate and present themselves online in order to produce counter publicity, challenge the mainstream discourse, and thus, act publicly. Bassett and O'Riordan (2002) argue that studying these attempts at producing counter publicity as private would be counterproductive to the aims of these groups. To consider their representations and conversations as private but institutionalised media reports as public would be to diminish their cultural capital and marginalise subcultures or subgroups. As a result, the internet user should have the right of representation and publication and be integrated into academic discussion as a means of accepting the diversity of cultures online. Returning to Bakardjieva and Feenberg's argument, alienation in these cases would indeed consist of not considering these voices as public and as representations of political counterpublics. Thus, when quoting from online data, comments in tweets and on different online media platforms that can be considered semi-public by the authors are anonymised, and quotes from websites, blogs, and online news media coverage include the names of the groups or media institutions.

The topic is also sensitive due to my own role as a researcher. It is hard to be non-judgmental when including groups in the study that represent anti-democratic and

racist values. Although I clearly distinguish my role as a researcher from being an activist, it is obviously difficult to keep the appropriate distance. The political motivation of this study is not, however, moral in the sense of identifying the ‘good’ and ‘evil’ groups involved in the events. It is an attempt to understand how the different political groups and their belief systems are reproduced in digital media and how changes in technology and different political positions that constitute counterpublics change over the course of history. The aim of understanding the relationship between technical affordances and ideology in the production of counter publicity is thus superior to the political message.

Selection of case and sites

To understand the formation of counter publicity in digital media as a process in contemporary democracies, the anti-fascist protests serve as an interesting case in several ways: The opposition to marches planned by neo-Nazis through the formation of blockades represents a conflictual situation in which two opposing political positions collide. This constellation allows for an analysis of the two conflictual parties and their self-definition as counterpublics as well as the construction of a common enemy as the basis of identity building in the plurality of political positions involved in the counter protest. The case study is thus understood as ‘an in-depth study of single unit (a relatively bounded phenomenon) where the scholar’s aim is to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomena’ (Gerring 2004, 341).

The German context serves as a relevant case for different reasons: First, the events have a historical significance relevant to the study of digitally mediated discourses as historically grounded as well as reproduced and renegotiated in digital media discourse. The historical relevance also allows for a contextualisation of the events from a historical perspective in terms of how the technical affordances of media have changed and how counterpublics formed in the past and present. The possibility of studying continuity as well as change within the case informs the conceptualisation of the relationship between technical affordances, strategies, and counterpublics on the one hand and their political ideology and positions on the other.

Second, the events receive attention by the mass media and can thus be identified as media events. This allows the analysis of the relationship with online coverage in the mass media. The publicity of the events also provides a perspective on how these groups mobilise to contest as well as adjust to the mainstream to reach an audience across the political spectrum. The relationship with institutionalised online media is one representation of the power relations and thus the structures through which activists attempt to challenge in their oppositionality. The use of the social web by both alternative and institutionalised media supports the relevance of studying their functionalities and particular strategies based on their various political belief systems relative to the dominant players and the discourse that counterpublics attempt to challenge through particular media practices and tactics.

Third, the social web and ICTs in general played an important role throughout the events, which were organised as protest events, i.e. offline street action. This underlines the interdependency of digital media and the articulation of political positions in relation to physical protest. The representation of physical action in online discourse helps us understand the strategies by which activists appropriate the technical affordances of online media in street protest. This relationship is relevant in this case due to the reproduction of physical events online what constitutes the

different discourses concerning the events according to the different political positions. The forms of street actions and the ways in which they are reproduced in online media depend both on various political ideologies and on the identification of groups as counterpublics.

As outlined in the introduction, the events studied in this project are marches organised by the New Right, neo-Nazis, and the National Democratic Party, which are accompanied by blockades composed of anarchist and anti-fascist groups, NGOs, civil society, political parties, the church, etc. The actions and strategies of the different groups in the counter protest differ according to their political positions and readiness to engage in civil disobedience. Publicly available online communication and representation concerning the following events were included in the data collection:

- Several ad hoc marches organised by the Young National Democrats (*Junge Nationaldemokraten*) under the slogan ‘Right to a Future’ (*Recht auf Zukunft*) in Leipzig, Germany on October 16, 2010 and counter protests in the form of blockades and sit-ins organised by the anti-fascist group Red October (*Roter Oktober*) and the civil society network Leipzig Takes a Seat (*Leipzig nimmt Platz*);
- Marches organised by the Youth Association of East Germany (*Junge Landsmannschaft Ostdeutschland*) and the Alliance for Action Against Forgetting (*Aktionsbündnis gegen das Vergessen*), a coalition of the National Democratic Party and otherwise non-affiliated groups in Dresden on February 13, 2011 and counter protests organised by the anti-fascist alliance Nazi-free Dresden (*Dresden Nazifrei*). This event has been referred to as the largest neo-Nazi march in history and has historical significance since it took place on the date on which Dresden, the capital of the German state of Saxony, was bombed by the British Royal Air Force (RAF) and United States Army Air Force in 1945 during World War II;
- An additional march planned by the Youth Association of East Germany on February 19, 2011 and counter protests to block the march organised by the anti-fascist group Nazi-free Dresden by mobilising anti-fascist groups from across Europe, civil society groups, political parties, and NGOs in and around Dresden.

The three sites are related to one another. Not only are they geographically close, with both cities located in eastern Germany, but the marches in Leipzig were considered preparations for the larger events in Dresden, which received more attention by the mass media and are generally an important topic in the public discourse. The march planned for February 19 was an additional event to February 13. In 2010 the march planned for February 13 did not take place. Due to a huge number of people involved in the counter protests, the police decided not to allow the marches in order to avoid the risk of violent confrontation between the groups. A train that was intended to bring participants to the location where the march was to take place, had to turn around and leave the city centre again after it was stopped by the police due to massive counter protests. The additional march on February 19, 2011 took place as a reaction by the organisers to this decision.

Since digital media are not only the space in which discourse around these events is produced and reproduced but are also the object of study, the various online media

platforms that are used are important for understanding the role played by technical affordances in the events. The different media platforms not only represent different political positions based on their institutional affiliations as well as different technical affordances that shape the ways in which they are appropriated in protest. The selection of sites in digital media is thus based on the different political positions expressed in different forms in digital media as well as on the variation in technical affordances that shape how activists produce counter publicity in online discourse. The following online media platforms or sites are included in the collection of information, communications, and representation:

Institutionalised online media: The online versions of institutionalised media such as newspapers, magazines, and public broadcasting, especially local and regional news media covering the events. The event coverage in these media represents the framing of the events in the mainstream. Reports of the events provide a perspective on the variety of discourses concerning the events as well as practices of moderation and discussion relative to alternative media or social web platforms. At the same time, institutionalised media use similar strategies to alternative media and the activist groups, for instance by using live updates (*live-ticker*), thereby making use of the affordances of the web.

Alternative online media: The alternative media platforms represent the perspectives of both sides in the conflictual events, including both different framing and different media practices. Alternative online media include platforms such as IndyMedia as well as alternatives from the opposite end of the political spectrum, such as Altermedia, which challenge the dominant discourse by propagating anti-democratic values.

Websites and blogs: The websites and blogs of the different groups involved in the event are important for identifying the different political positions represented in digitally mediated discourse. They are particularly interesting in terms of their interrelationships with one another and with the mass media. Reference to the ‘other’ is an essential element of the representation of the different political positions involved in the events and of how institutionalised media refer to them. The events centre on a conflict between two groups from the opposite ends of the political spectrum. As a result, this conflict is expressed in how these groups use their websites and blogs to express their political positions and their relationships with other groups.

Videos and YouTube: Different actors and groups use videos as a form of expression during mobilisation in the form of mobilisation clips. Most of these are distributed on the YouTube video platform. During the events, YouTube plays an important role in the distribution of user-generated videos that show an alternative perspective on activists compared with that of the mass media. YouTube is also a site for cross-ideological commenting, which strengthens the frontiers between the two sides involved in the conflict and highlights nuances between the political positions that form a unity in the events. From this perspective, the comments section on YouTube in particular helps identify the different political positions involved in the events and how they relate to one another. At the same time, reports that appear in public broadcasting are posted on YouTube and receive attention reflected by the number of comments and views in reaction to the videos.

Twitter: The microblogging platform Twitter is particularly important during the events due to its immediacy. Like YouTube, Twitter is used to offer a different perspective on the events and to challenge the mainstream discourse concerning them.

However, Twitter is both used by the mass media to disseminate their reports and as a source of information.

Facebook: The digital social networking site Facebook can be considered semi-public since the group sites are accessible to anyone who has a Facebook account. As with the other social web platforms, both sides in the conflict use Facebook to mobilise, distribute information, and inform.

Communication on and across the different platforms was collected before, during, and after the events. This includes mobilisation, information, coordination, and retrospective reflection concerning the events. The platforms' various technical affordances are analysed in relation to the different discourses and articulation of counter publicity within the events. The platforms thus become an object of inquiry and a space in which the different discourses concerning the events are articulated in accordance with particular political positions. This duality is important for understanding the interaction between political ideology, tactics, and media practices of counterpublics, the appropriation of technology in dissent, and the interaction between street protest and the expression of the political groups that form around the street action in digital media.

Studying digital media, counterpublics, and political ideology

A combination of qualitative methods provides different perspectives on the relationship between counterpublics, their political ideologies, and technology. The analysis of data sets from different digital media platforms and from different time periods leads to a detailed description of this relationship by taking into account continuity in the evolution of digital media (Lehman-Wilzig and Cohen-Avigdor 2004; Stöber 2004). Studying digital media allows the use of existing and established methods grounded in data that are only available as a result of new forms of publicity in digital media. As a result, continuity can be observed not only in the appropriation of technology as well as in the discourses of counterpublics and their identity and self-representation in discourse. The research design takes this continuity into account by including a historical perspective on the development of counter publicity. The historical encounters are used to describe what we observe today in contentious politics and the production of counter publicity and to thus contextualise the relationship between counterpublics and digital media. Seen from this perspective, the research design is based on three main methodological interests: [1] Discourse theory and critical discourse analysis as an ontological framework for analysing the relationship between digital media and political ideology in the development of counter publicity; [2] qualitative text analysis and descriptive quantitative text analysis to support the sampling process for qualitative text analysis; [3] analysis of archived documents to observe continuity in the relationship between counter publicity and media technology.

[1] Use of the ontological framework of discourse theory (see 2.3.3) is in line with the theoretical perspective of defining counterpublics in the digital age within the framework of 'radical democracy' and 'democratic pluralism' (Dahlberg 2007; Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Mouffe 2005). In this framework, we address the various oppositional and conflictual relationships between the groups forming alliances. By studying these conflictual counterpublics, we identify the different political positions of the groups involved; their relationships with one another; and the discourses they

use to identify as counterpublics, present themselves, form alliances, and describe the enemy toward which their resistance is directed.

[2] The different forms of communication, representation, and self-representation on the different media platforms are analysed as meaning in text. To sort the data, provide an overview, and identify interesting patterns, a descriptive word count precedes the qualitative text analysis. Regarding the digital data retrieved from different online platforms as an archive constructed for the purpose of analysis in this project, the descriptive text analysis has two functions: First, it offers an overview of the whole data set and allows sampling within the data. In other words, this process helps determine where to begin the qualitative analysis in the vast amount of digital media content. Second, it helps identify differences in the text according to the technical affordances of different media platforms. As a result, the textual analysis is used in an inductive and interpretive way, i.e. to complement the qualitative analysis and to study meaning in text.

[3] An essential criteria is that of understanding the relationship between the counterpublics and the different media technologies in terms of their continuity in media development. The historical analysis thus aids in understanding how counterpublics in the past used ‘old media technologies’, often referred to as ‘propaganda media’, which were centralised and linear and thus, unsuited for contentious politics and grassroots action. The identification of similarities in the appropriation of media technology for developing counter publicity in the past and present helps identify the particularity of contentious politics in digital media. This includes a change in what constitutes counter publicity or alternative political perspectives and the political ideologies on which they are based. Compared with the historical counterpublics in World War II Germany, which clearly identified the Nazis and the National Socialist regime as an enemy, the counterpublics studied in digital media are in conflict with one another, and although they both criticise the current political system, their ideals of a ‘good society’ are very different. In the following, the methodological framework and the methods used for sampling, data collection, and analysis are explained in more detail.

Collecting data online

To allow further sampling from the data from the different online platforms, the websites, blogs, or Facebook groups were downloaded as html files. These were exported into Excel sheets separating the units of text by variables such as date, author, comment, and addressee (if applicable). A script developed for this purpose supported the process of separating the text into the different variables and exporting them into Excel files. Blog posts, alternative media comments, and comments on websites of institutionalised media were likewise exported. Articles in the news media were converted into txt files, and their headlines, dates, and comments were exported into Excel files in order to obtain a better overview of the data.

Data from different online media platforms was collected before, during, and after the events. Sorting the data by particular variables made it possible to filter and sort it in different ways in order to obtain an overview of and identify patterns in the text. The criteria for the data collection depend on the media platforms in question. The Twitter stream, for example, was exported following the protest hashtags (#) of the various groups involved in the events. To download the different media formats, I used different open source software, such as the iSkysoft Free Video Downloader for YouTube videos. The comments on YouTube were downloaded and exported in

Excel files, including author, date, comment, title of video, date, time, and response to (if applicable) in a similar manner as with other forms of textual data.

In the following table the data sets are sorted according to the media platforms. The numbers of single items, such as websites or comments, are listed, including the selection criteria and variables according to which they were archived, i.e. exported into Excel files:

Type	Number	Criteria	Archived as
Online media coverage total	1,140	Keyword search on the events	Headline, body text, publication date, author (if applicable), name of medium
Institutionalised corporate online media	576	Keyword search on the events	Headline, body text, publication date, author (if applicable), name of medium
Alternative online media	129	Keyword search on the events	Headline, body text, publication date, author (if applicable), name of medium
Comments on online media coverage	4,121	Comments on online media coverage	Author, comment, publication date, publication time, response to other comment, medium, headline of article
Blogs and websites	14	Websites of groups/institutions involved in the protest events	Websites as html and txt files
Twitter	6,262	Tweets filtered according to hashtags (#) in the protest events	Author, date, tweet, in response to, retweet
Facebook	7 [groups/ events]	Facebook groups and events of groups involved in the protest events	Status updates, comments, author, publication date, group information, events
Videos on websites YouTube and Vimeo	45	Keyword search on YouTube, Vimeo	Video, author, publication date
Comments on YouTube videos	9,820	Comments on YouTube videos	Author, publication date, comment, in response to

Figure 2: Table of data sets

The complete data set of online communication concerning the events can be considered an archive from which I sampled for further analysis. The data sets for each platform are presented in the respective analysis sections².

² A detailed list of online media coverage, hashtag (#) on Twitter, Facebook groups, and videos included in the archive can be found in the appendix.

Word frequencies and combinations were identified using the open source software Yoshikoder³, which assisted in sampling from the material. Information on word frequencies and combinations helped identify recurring patterns in the complete text corpus. The software was also used to identify frequency of the same authors within a comment section or within a Twitter hashtag (#) stream. The text passages used for detailed analysis were identified on the basis of this information. The open source software Yoshikoder was thus used to count word, author, and recipient frequencies. For qualitative analysis, the open source software TAMS Analyzer was used to assist in open coding and managing the files.

The functionalities of each platform are specified in the subsections of the analysis chapters concerning technical affordances, which describe the findings for the different platforms. Most of the coverage appeared on the day of the events, but some also appeared one day before or after. The data set also includes a weekly updated collection of data concerning mobilisation, beginning one month prior to the events as well as retrospective discussion one month following the events. The creation of this rather extensive data archive had the advantage of permitting us to return to the data during the analysis, including new aspects, and being able to access the data throughout the data analysis process. Since online communication and online media coverage is still not generally archived, the material had to be made available in order for us to work with the whole data set throughout the process. By making the data available offline, the created archive also represents a construction since it does not entirely capture the constant changes in the content. The downloaded data captured a series of momentarily available online media coverage on different platforms concerning the events. Comments that were made public and were later moderated or edited could thus only be reconstructed if they were included in the data set twice. Nevertheless, the offline collection of coverage concerning the events on different online media platforms served as a good archived resource for further sampling.

Sampling from digital media

Two strategies were used to sample from the archived material. The quantitative text analysis tool Yoshikoder created an overview of the data by descriptive word count, such as word frequencies within the whole text corpus. This was especially useful for identifying important, frequently discussed, and recurring issues in the text corpus or for identifying obvious differences in the text corpuses in the online media of the different groups. These tendencies were crucial for strategically sampling from the whole data set. The word frequencies were also useful for identifying the frequency of posts, comments, or tweets from single authors compared with from less-frequent commentators. Additionally, the identification of particular word combinations was useful for gaining an overview of further tendencies within the text corpus. The Yoshikoder was thus used to support the sampling process for qualitative analysis and to obtain an overview of the archives generated concerning the events. As a result, this quantitative part of the analysis remained descriptive and can be considered part of the qualitative analysis rather than a method in itself. This was necessary in order to deal with the huge amount of data retrieved concerning the events. Exporting the data into Excel files according to particular variables such as date or authorship had the advantage of identifying the basic nature of comments, tweets, or posts and

³ <http://www.yoshikoder.org/>

making the different parts of the data available separately, for example, as just the total text corpus of comments or authors.

After using Yoshikoder to gain an overview of the data by word frequencies and identification of key issues or most active participants in the discussion, theoretical sampling was used to identify parts of the data set for further analysis (Charmaz 2006; Glaser and Strauss 1967). To support this process, the data was imported into the TAMS Analyzer qualitative analysis software, which helped manage the data and supported further analysis, coding, and concept development. Sampling within the data began with the tracing of relevant tendencies in word frequencies, followed by cues identified in the data that indicated the relevance of further documents, quotes, comments, and online media formats. The articulation of identity within political groups and the construction of frontiers against a common enemy as well as the articulation of differences between the political positions that formed a unity against a common enemy, were additional criteria that constituted cues for sampling in the data set. The sampling process was thus also carried out in interaction between theory and analysis.

Ethnographic validation

Understanding communication in digital media not only as the representation of media practices as well as strategies and tactics in contentious politics requires an understanding of these protest events in their physical form, i.e. in the form of street protest. The inclusion of ethnographic elements such as informal interviews and participant observation (Berg 2001, 115) facilitated understanding of the situations in which discourses concerning the events were produced. To permit an understanding of the events as they actually occurred and to directly observe the use of digital media in the events, I stayed in Dresden for 14 days during the protest events. I spoke with activists, participated in information and protest events, and attempted to understand the sentiments of citizens and their motivations for participating in the events. It was also important to experience the city during the protest events. These events involve a collision between groups from both ends of the political spectrum, resulting in an extremely a high level of planning and police action in the city of Dresden. The conflictual situation and related high-security actions that halt public transport and interrupt everyday life in particular geographical areas of the city for an entire day represents a different aspect of the events. At the same time, those living outside the high security zones, who are not participating in the protest events or in the actions planned by the city of Dresden to commemorate the bombing of the city, gather their information concerning the events primarily from the news media and from face-to-face communication with other citizens. It was thus necessary to observe the events on the ground in order to understand how the different political positions articulated concerning the events were reproduced in everyday conversation.

Another element that supported the analysis consisted of on-site observations and conversations with the activists, which facilitated understanding of the strategies used in online communication to produce counter publicity in relationship to street action. This includes the use of mobile communication and the various patterns of digital media use combined with analogue communication. Determining when and how these texts were produced permitted a better understanding of the digitally mediated discourse. This includes an assessment of how digital media could be used strategically and in which situations in which it was advisable to strategically avoid online public communication. As a result, the inclusion of ethnographic elements in

the study was used to validate the digitally mediated discourse and to better understand it in the context in which it was produced.

Contextual analysis

The context in which digitally mediated discourse is produced is described by explaining how the events studied here are embedded in German politics (see 4.1). This includes a brief historical framing of the events. The aim is to identify the political belief system of the groups involved in the protest events in order to identify their concerns and which ideologies the counterpublics produce and renegotiate in digitally mediated discourse. The contextual framing includes a brief literature review, a review of publications by the Ministry of Defence in Germany, and media reports. Contextualising the events facilitates understanding of the different political positions of the groups involved in the protest events and how they are mapped in their digitally mediated discourse. The context of the events includes a very brief overview of German politics; a brief literature review on Nazis, neo-Nazism, and the New Right as well as on anti-fascism, anarchism and the New Left in Germany; and an overview of their ideologies, belief systems, and media.

Answers from the past: Archival work

The ‘media context’ when studying communication processes includes not only social, political, and cultural context as well as historical context (Jensen 2012b). Connection to history is crucial for understanding the relationship between digital media and political ideology in the production of counter publicity, including an idea of how the so-called propaganda media were used to produce counterpublics. Punt (2000) supports this perspective by going back to the nineteenth century and early cinema for understanding digital media technology in contemporary society. In an essay on the 1955 exhibition ‘The Family of Man’, Turner (2012), for example, explains how this event is relevant for understanding contemporary multimedia environments. This means not only historically grounding digital media research theory and methods (Baym 2009) as well as, in this case, tracing the research back to counterpublics in World War II Germany by studying archived media outlets from the National Socialist regime. The archived material is not equivalent to the digital media archive, and the historical material is not systematically comparable with the digitally mediated material. The aim is to understand the production of counter publicity and the relationships between strategies, tactics, media practices, political ideologies, and technical affordances in different media environments.

To understand present-day changes in technical affordances and the production of counterpublics, we must turn to the archived material, which offers answers that cannot be acquired solely by studying textual representations in digital media. The misconceptions of seeing many aspects of contentious politics in digital media as a result of exaggerated expectations for new technologies can be avoided by identifying continuity in the use of media in a historical context. Including the past ‘provides access to a broader understanding of human behavior and thoughts than would be possible if we were trapped in the static isolation of our own time’ (Berg 2001, 211). This is especially true in this case since it concerns the relationship between practices of producing counter publicity and the technical affordances of digital media. Identifying similarities in strategies of the past and the present facilitates understanding of this relationship. Among other things, media history enquires as to when and why a particular group began using particular strategies (Scannell 2012,

222). In this study, rather than asking what activists do with digital media and how they started using them, I ask within the historical context how media was used to produce counter publicity prior to the present-day availability of various media platforms.

The ‘narrative exposition’ (Berg 2001, 215) developed around the archived material is always seen in relation to the results of the analysis of digitally mediated discourse. By identifying relationships and similarities in the archived material and digital media data, the work in the archive is important for understanding the role of digital media within the events in question. The data is then analysed through the selected analytical framework. This process is supported by a contextualisation in literature. The questions that are asked within this context are answered by focusing on the interpretation and appropriation of discursive practices (LeGreco and Tracy 2009, 1523).

The documents used for understanding how counter publicity was produced with the media technologies available in the political context of World War II are part of the collection in the Hoover Archive for War and Peace at Stanford University⁴. Alternative media of oppositional groups to the Hitler regime, such as serial issues published by Austrian refugees in the United Kingdom and pamphlets distributed by underground movements in the restrictive media environment of World War II Germany are included in the analysis. During a four-month to Stanford University, I had the opportunity to work with the material and make copies of the documents for further analysis.

Analysing meaning in text

The inferences made from the data analysis are rather descriptive than causal. Focus is thus on studying causal mechanisms in an explorative way rather than confirming causal effects (Gerring 2004, 352). Qualitative content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon 2005) is used to study text by applying categories to similar meanings in the text within a particular context. It is thus a method that focuses on meaning in text. Unlike quantitative content analysis based upon predefined categories (Krippendorff 2004), the qualitative content analysis concerns meaning that emerges from the text (Mayring 1999). The political positions articulated on different online media platforms and the strategies, tactics, and media practices by counterpublics in the events are represented in different forms of digitally mediated text. They are analysed as the meanings in text. The data was thus coded and given meaning during the analysis (Altheide 1996).

I used the following strategies to analyse how counter publicity is and was articulated in mediated discourse. Through a very close reading of these documents and constant comparison, I developed a complex set of codes and sub-codes. I ended up with numerous codes attached to meanings, phrases, words, and particular word usages within the text. To reach a higher level of abstraction, however, it necessary to then step back from the material, acquire distance from my data, and re-read it. This process permitted the identification of patterns, narratives, and sub-questions in my data. Through a constant process of moving back and forth between theory, literature review, and my data, I developed concept maps based on the previously identified codes, narratives, discourses, and patterns. These maps identified the relationship

⁴ For detailed list of documents included and location in the archive, see appendix.

between actors involved in the protest; different groups; and their political positions, strategies, media practices, discourses, and the technical affordances of the various digital media platforms and their historical counterparts. By comparing the maps and patterns in the data, relating them to one another, and moving back and forth between theory and analysis, it was possible to identify relationships, similarities, and patterns. On this higher level of abstraction, I again found narratives and patterns, which I summarised into categories and concepts. These were used as the basis for developing the concept of protean counterpublics as a way of thinking about counterpublics in the digital age.

Contextualizing the case

Our weapons are words on the spot / Our battle is discourse and only discourse /
Our sword is the soul / Our buckler is the truth⁵ (website of *Esclarmonde* in
Pfeiffer 2004, 196)

This quote from the website *Esclarmonde*, one of the online representations of the New Right in Germany, indicates that political struggle is not only about street action but is also a struggle over words, visibility, attention, and support for a cause. The struggle of one discourse against another concerning what should constitute truth is important in contemporary politics, especially radical ones that are on the edge of the public discourse. One way of supporting this struggle for visibility is protest in form of street action, which is accompanied by media reports on different online media platforms and in traditional media. Media technologies and media tactics that activists have at hand at a certain point in time play an important role in mobilisation, coordination, and creating a feeling of solidarity. The protest events in this study are taking place in contemporary Germany. However, they are embedded in historically grounded ideology that is renegotiated in digitally mediated discourse. The media technologies and media practices of the present have similarities with how counterpublicity was produced in the past, yet there are also differences in both the technological affordances and the counterpublics as such. We now briefly describe the ideologies and political positions of the confronting groups involved in the protest.

The contextualisation of the case is divided into three parts. The first part is a very brief description of Germany, its political system, and its media. The second part concerns the different ideological foundations of the opposing groups involved in the conflict, their activities, their occurrence in Germany, and their media use. The third part concerns the counterpublics and their media use from a historical perspective, discussing the media self-representation of resistance groups in World War II Germany. The documents, i.e. alternative publications opposing the Hitler regime, are analysed within the analytical framework developed for this study. This chapter contextualises the case within a contemporary and historical perspective by providing an overview on Nazism, anarchism, anti-fascism, and the appropriation of media technologies to express alternative political opinions in the historical context of World War II Germany.

⁵ Original German, translated by the author.

Germany in a nutshell

Germany, officially, the Federal Republic of Germany (*Bundesrepublik Deutschland*), is located in central Europe. With a population of 81,843,743 (Eurostat 2012a), it is the most populous country in the European Union. The capital of Germany is Berlin. The political system is a federal, parliamentary, representative democracy based on the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*). The fundamental principles of the constitution are the guarantee of human dignity, separation of powers, rule of the law, and federal structure. Within the population, 10.7 million inhabitants are migrants, of which 7.4 million originate from other European countries (Statistisches Bundesamt 2011). In 2011, unemployment in Germany was among the lowest in Europe, at a rate of 5.4% (Eurostat 2012b). The unemployment rate is, however, twice as high in the former East Germany compared with the western part of the country (Gallup 2012).

The head of the state is the President (*Bundespräsident*), currently Joachim Gauck, elected by the Federal Convention (*Bundesversammlung*), and has a primarily representative role. The Federal Convention consists of the *Bundestag* and state delegates. The Chancellor (*Bundeskanzlerin*), whose role is similar to that of the Prime Minister in many parliamentary democracies, is currently Angela Merkel. The Chancellor is appointed by the president and elected by the *Bundestag*. The *Bundestag* is elected directly and represents the government of the 16 federal states. The two most powerful parties are the Christian Democratic Union (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, CDU*) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD*). Smaller parties, which play an important role, are the Free Democratic Party (*Freie Demokratische Partei, FDP*) and The Greens (*Die Grünen*).

The country's economic success after World War II (1939-1945) is based on export industries, fiscal discipline, industrial relations, and welfare policies, and Germany is especially well known for technological achievements (BBC 2012). The Nazi regime is still present in the German psyche, and there is an idea that consciousness of the past will prevent similar situations from developing in the future. It is illegal in the media to display swastikas or statements that endorse Nazism. The partition of Germany by Allies following World War II divided the country from 1945 to 1990 into the Federal Republic of Germany (BRD) in the west and the German National Republic (DDR) in the east. After the 1990 reunification and the fall of the wall that divided the two parts of Germany, the government was relocated from the BRD capital of Bonn to Berlin.

According to the BBC, Germany's television market is the largest in Europe, consisting of 34 million TV households. Apart from the national public broadcasters, each of the 16 federal states has its own private and public broadcasting system. The public broadcasters are ARD and ZDF. The regional public broadcasting networks for radio and TV are organised under the umbrella of ARD. Public and commercial channels reach households in Germany, 90% of them via cable or satellite. The largest media conglomerates are *Bertelsmann* and *Axel Springer* as well as commercial TV networks such as ProSiebenSat1. The best-selling daily newspaper is the tabloid *Bild*. Other newspapers are the prestigious daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*; the dailies *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Welt*, and *Frankfurter Rundschau*; the financial daily *Handelsblatt*, *Financial Times Deutschland*; the weekly magazine *Focus*; and the news weekly *Der Spiegel*. The nationwide news agency is the Deutsche Presse-Agentur (dpa) (BBC 2012).

In 2011, Germany had 67,364,989 internet users, equivalent to 82.7% of the population. According to Internet World Stats (2011), the country had 23,251,200 Facebook users, a penetration rate of 28.5% of the population. 65% of individuals aged 16 to 74 in Germany use the internet for ordering goods and services, 78% regularly use the internet, and 50% say they use the internet to interact with public authorities, which includes obtaining information from public authority websites (Eurostat 2012a).

Nazis, neo-Nazis, the New Right, and their media

Although neo-Nazism has different components than did its historical counterpart, many of its ideas are still closely related to Nazism. Nazism is based on an anti-democratic perspective placing the nation above all else. The idea of order and structure in the German nation (*Volk*) was opposed to the Western democracy of the Weimar republic. Hierarchies and value systems replaced equity, universalism replaced individualism. It was asserted that mass society should return to an organic society based on community and family (Sontheimer 2004, 22). With this ideological foundation, the Nazis were successful in ‘amalgamating otherwise antagonistic groups into a single movement’ (Passmore 2002, 138) and came into power. Major themes in Nazi propaganda were an ‘appeal to national unity’ based on the principle of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, i.e. nation before the individual; the ‘need for racial purity’; ‘a hatred of enemies which increasingly centred on Jews and Bolsheviks’; and ‘charismatic leadership (*Führerprinzip*)’ (Welch 2004, 217). Nazism is thus closely related to fascism, and in Passmore’s definition, Nazism is a sub-form of fascism:

Fascism is a set of ideologies and practices that seeks to place the nation, defined in exclusive biological, cultural, and/or historical terms, above all other sources of loyalty, and to create a mobilized national community. (Passmore 2002, 31)

Nazism defines the nation in the form of ethnicity and the biological attribute of race and was a movement of the extreme and radical Right. The Nazis incorporated the media, educational institutions, school syllabuses, independent associations, and other organisations to disseminate their dogma throughout the society. They also had the assistance of institutions such as the army, civil service, and academics. The guiding principle was race and the biologically defined nation above all else (Passmore 2002, 69). This ideal of the biologically defined nation above all else remains a major component of neo-Nazism but is embedded in a different political environment, which fosters various sub-positions.

From 1949, with the fall of the extreme right political parties, neo-Nazi groups formed from groups of traditional Nazis and neo-Nazis together with bored young people, mostly male. Frustrated young people from diverse backgrounds growing up in poor families created an idealistic image of the Nazis and rejected the democratic political system (Braunthal 2009, 28f). The old and contemporary extreme right advocate strong leadership and law and order; are intolerant of a pluralism of ideas and political disagreement; reject democratic competition; are willing to subscribe to conspiracy theories; and hold an exclusionary perspective on citizenship (Kitschelt and McGann 1997, 43). Despite many similarities with historical fascism, neo-Nazism as a sub-form of fascism does not show the same hostility to electoral democracy (Passmore 2002, 89). The New Right in Germany, which also functions as a mediator between neo-Nazis and the public, distances itself from the cruelties of the

Nazi regime and by that also gain more acceptance in society. They are not opposed to democracy per se but wish to ethnically homogenise it in favour of the dominant nationality (Passmore 2002, 90). Due to the historical consciousness of German society concerning the National Socialist regime, careful public representation and political positioning is crucial for these groups.

In his study of *Right-wing Extremism in Contemporary Germany*, Braunthal (2009) identifies the following groups as composing the radical right of the political spectrum in Germany today: [1] right-extremist parties within parliamentary politics; [2] neo-Nazi groups and skinheads at the more radical and violent end of the spectrum, and [3] the New Right as an intellectual mediator between the public and more extreme groups. In the 1990s, the various neo-Nazi groups had around 2,000 members in total, who organised neo-Nazi demonstrations, claimed to ideologically renovate the rightist scene and often used violence to achieve their aims, such as harassment of foreigners and leftists. Neo-Nazi groups have always been divided into many subgroups, such as the Free German Workers' Party, National List, Nationalist Front, German Alternative, National Alternative, Viking Youth (*Wikinger Jugend*), Homeland Loyal German Youth, National Offensive, National Movement, and The Aid Organization for National Prisoners (Braunthal 2009). Many of these names include words such as 'alternative' or 'movement', indicating that these groups are outside of the mainstream and hold an inferior position in society. The aid organisation for national prisoners, for example, is a result of the belief that the crimes that these people committed are not 'wrong' but are a result of actions that are part of a larger political project, acting against the political system in power.

Skinheads of the extreme right direct their actions against the same enemies as do right extremists in general: foreigners, the homeless, disabled, and other minority groups (Madloch 2001, 170). According to the *Verfassungsschutzbericht* (report of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution) of 2011, skinheads in Germany have lost their attraction for young people over the past couple of years. Instead there are 'subcultural right extremist' groups which are less obviously identified by their clothes as were the skinheads but which are nonetheless ready to engage in violent action (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 54). Concealing their political identity through less obvious clothing can be considered part of a strategy to make their political affiliation less obvious and thus to deradicalise their political identity to the public.

Neo-Nazis and other extreme right groups are often concentrated in so-called National Liberated Zones, small conservative towns in the east of Germany, where left-leaning people and foreigners left because they felt threatened (Braunthal 2009, 114). Although the term 'fascism' remains taboo, especially in Germany, the ideas associated with it are still part of the extreme right. One of the reasons for racism among the German population and acceptance of right-wing and anti-foreigner politics is the lack of criticism of the perspectives of right extremists and particularly the New Right in the media (Richter 2001, 29). To distance themselves from the cruelties of the past, xenophobia is translated 'into liberal democratic language' (Passmore 2002, 92). After the reunification of Germany, right extremists spread with virtually no interference, especially in the east of Germany. This process was fostered by neo-Nazis from the west of Germany, who wished to create a more powerful right extremist movement in the east (Madloch 2001, 65).

One explanation for the rise of the radical right in Europe is that 'societal change in contemporary capitalism has increased the salience of political partisan appeals to

economically rightist positions favouring market allocation over political redistribution of economic resources' (Kitschelt and McGann 1997). Additionally, the leftist parties lost their radical positions. By developing xenophobic populism, the conservative parties distanced themselves from the left, who had shifted rightward (Passmore 2002, 94f). Nationalist populism is thus a result of updating fascism in a contemporary environment, declaring globalisation, increasing immigration flows, and the European Union as threats to the nation. Democracy is accepted by contemporary extreme rightists with the aim of using it for its racist potential, and there is no longer a widespread desire to overthrow democracy, as was historically the case (Passmore 2002, 107).

One of the main differences to the Nazi past is the distance created to Adolf Hitler and the cruelties of the National Socialist regime (Madloch 2001, 163). Although the New Right is based on values such as 'nationalism, racism, xenophobia, and the quest for a strong state', its concept of fascism is not limited to focusing on 'violence, authoritarian politics or on a mythical past' (Spektorowski 2002, 177). However, historical revisionism to reduce the cruelty of the crimes of the National Socialist regime is a common strategy of the radical right. Historical facts are revised in favour of the German nation, also resulting in a denial of the Holocaust. Some contemporary extreme right groups are characterised by historical revisionism to weaken the cruelty of Nazi Germany; racism; hostility towards the government and democracy; the use of new forms of organisation; and the formation of Anti-Antifa (anti-anti-fascists) groups, which identify and persecute anti-fascist activists (Bach 2001, 260).

Citizenship in fascism is based on race and the nation. Those who inhabit a territory but are said to be of an inferior race are not treated as citizens with equal rights. Welfare, family policy, and all other privileges of citizenship are denied to those who do not represent national characteristics in terms of ethnicity, biological race, culture, religion, or political perspective (Passmore 2002, 108). Democracy does not preserve the right for all human beings to receive equal treatment but is based on the idea that it provides the right for the majority to do what it wants, a concept that has been successfully used by national populism (Passmore 2002, 156).

Anti-foreigner and anti-Semitic crimes were usually associated with skinheads, neo-Nazis, or other clearly identifiable ideological groups. Today, one third of these violent acts are committed by informal groups without a specific affiliation. Especially for these informal groups, electronic communication plays an important role (Watts 2001). According to the *Verfassungsschutzbericht*, there were 16,973 politically motivated crime acts by right extremists in 2011. 11,475 of these were propaganda crimes, and 825 were acts of violence, of which 350 were violence against foreigners and 217 were violence against leftists (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 27ff). This, however, excludes underground movements and their crimes, which were not yet officially associated with violence motivated by right extremism. The National Socialist Underground (*Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund*) movement was not recognised until 2011 but had already existed for 13 years. The group had committed at least 10 murders that had not been associated with politically motivated violence before the group was discovered (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 44). 225 known right extremist groups existed in Germany in 2011, consisting of a total of 22,400 members, of whom 9,500 were likely to engage in acts of violence. The approximate number of neo-Nazis was estimated to be 6,000 (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 45).

The German People's Union (*Deutsche Volksunion*) and the National Democratic Party are examples of parties on the extreme right. They cooperate with the Young National Democrats and the Camaraderie (*Kameradschaften*) and participate in neo-Nazi demonstrations (Braunthal 2009, 57f). The young members of the National Democratic Party organise as the Young National Democrats (Braunthal 2009, 29). In 2004, the National Democratic Party gained 9.2% of the votes in Saxony, equivalent to the support of around 190,000 voters. This represented the party's first representation in a *Landtag* (region) since 1968 (Braunthal 2009, 70f). The party's success is related to high unemployment after unification. 'German money for German jobs' or 'Workplaces for Germans first' are examples of the party's slogans (Fekete 1999, 190). The party's most important publication is *Deutsche Stimme* (*German Voice*), with a circulation of 25,000 in 2011 (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 62).

Ideologically, the National Democratic Party is based on the idea of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Immigration, integration, and cultural pluralism threaten the nation. Only ethnic homogeneity can save the nation from the influences of capitalism and multiculturalism. The elimination of the nation, immigration policies, and the threat to the nation by contemporary politics are the seeds for acts such as the murders by the Norwegian Anders Behring Breivik. Although the party does not approve of Breivik's murders, the National Democratic Party claims that he attacked the 'right people', i.e. not the Moslems as such but the governments that lay the grounds for the *Völkermord* (the genocide of the German nation). The party does not attack democracy directly but instead attacks the liberal capitalist system. However, several speeches by party representatives emphasise the necessity of overthrowing the current system in favour of a national one based on biological cultural homogeneity. The National Democratic Party does not argue for the elimination of foreigners but, rather, for the superiority of the European Caucasian race (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 63–66). One of the ideological stances of the New Right is 'ethnopluralism', i.e. separation of ethnic groups so that the world may be governed by the superior Caucasian race (Braunthal 2009, 140f). The New Right questions individual human rights and social equality. By overcoming the cultural hegemony of the left, they wish to emphasise their own cultural importance. They oppose pluralist society through support for a ethnically pure Germany, using concepts such as *Volk* (nation) and *Heimat* (Homeland) (Braunthal 2009, 137ff).

Under the premise of freedom of expression, different extreme right groups unite for demonstrations, especially in the east of Germany. In 2011, neo-Nazis organised 167 demonstrations, addressing themes such as repression by the state and the left (their political enemy), anti-Islamism, and historical political issues such as the bombing of German cities in World War II. Although most of these events are relatively small, there are also marches with more than 1,000 participants. These events gain publicity and are perceived as a success by their participants. The funeral march on the anniversary of the bombing of Magdeburg in World War II involved 1,300 participants from the extreme right scene, and the February 19, 2011 march in Dresden for the 66th anniversary of the city's bombing in World War II had 3,000 participants, according to the *Verfassungsschutzbericht* (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 47f).

A new strategy of the neo-Nazis is the organisation of unregistered actions taking place at night in German cities. Under the theme of The Immortal (*Die Unsterblichen*), they mobilise up to 300 neo-Nazis, who meet at a particular point in

the city and from there walk around wearing white masks, carrying torches, and chanting right extremist slogans. Professionally produced videos of the events, where the number of participants in the marches appears significantly larger than is truly the case, are published on YouTube. The target groups for these actions are primarily young people (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 48). Today, joining a radical nationalist underground movement means, as a Norwegian study shows, social exclusion, i.e. a movement of ‘downwards social and *moral* mobility’ (Fangen 1999, 371). In contrast, joining the Nazi party in Hitler’s Germany meant joining a mass movement and later a hegemonic party. Nowadays, concealing one’s actual political identity also means using closed forums and forms of communication to discuss one’s actual political position, compared with the deradicalised position presented in public. Social exclusion due to one’s political opinion is accompanied by a need to conceal this political identity and to deradicalise the public expression of the political positions.

At demonstrations organised by the National Democratic Party and the Young National Democrats, participants in the demonstrations are asked not to smoke or drink publicly, to be well dressed, to not wear Nazi emblems, and to maintain strict discipline. Through this behaviour, they hope to attract more people and gain support from ‘ordinary citizens’ (Braunthal 2009, 62f). In confrontations with counter protesters from the left end of the political spectrum, they appreciate if the leftist Autonomists (*Autonomen*) start the violence, thereby allowing the right extremists to maintain their own admirable image compared with the ‘left mob’. The marches often gain attention across the globe due to the symbolic value of their actions, such as a march through the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin in 2000, which paralleled the historical parades of Hitler and featured 500 members waving imperial flags and shouting ‘Germany for the Germans’ (Braunthal 2009, 64). The national flag and the national anthem as symbols of national identity and consciousness thus become civic symbols for renewed pride in being German (Braunthal 2009, 159).

There are several steps that support the dissemination of right extremist perspectives: First, right extremist beliefs are supported by quoting from official statistics, reports, protocols or newspapers, often with skewed interpretations that add or omit facts to support the extreme right perspective. They suggest easy solutions to problems such as mass unemployment and anti-immigration politics. Second, they exaggerate and dramatise facts into a horror scenario, for instance by doubling the number of unemployed people to produce more frustration and fear. Third, they identify those who are guilty of causing the situation, usually foreigners. Fourth, they present national resistance as the saviour of the German nation from this chaotic situation, capable of producing order. These claims are directed at different segments of society, ranging from farmers to businessmen, housewives and mothers to workers. The fifth step is to condense these claims into a catchy slogan (Bach 2001, 217–220).

The New Right distributed its ideological beliefs amongst the public through small discussion groups; by founding newspapers and journals; and by recruiting professors, journalists, and politicians (Braunthal 2009, 139). They see the media as dominated by the left and hostile to their own values, and they thus publish their own writings in response in dedicated publications such as *Im Brennpunkt (Focus)*, which includes many National Democratic Party goals based on the New Right’s ideology. Additionally, New Right ideologists such as Armin Mohler write numerous essays and articles not only for conservative newspapers as well as for the liberal weekly *Die Zeit* (Braunthal 2009, 142). By tactically distancing themselves from extreme right-

wing groups and by acting as a bridge between these groups and the public, the New Right can address people from across the political spectrum (Braunthal 2009, 166).

An important actor within the print media landscape of the extreme right in Germany is German People's Union chairman Frey, who owns the movement's leading newspapers. The *Deutsche Soldaten-Zeitung* (*German Soldiers Newspaper*) was first published in 1951, and from 1999, it appeared weekly as the *Deutsche National-Zeitung* (*German National Newspaper*). There are several independently owned regional right-wing newspapers. Special steps are taken to avoid criminal proceedings against editors of journals with extreme right content, so that, for example, from 1993 to 1994, the journal *Einblick* (*Insight*) was distributed through a post office box in Denmark. The monthly journal *Nation & Europa* (*Nation & Europe*) is the most important of these publications, with a monthly circulation of 18,000 in 2007 (Braunthal 2009, 117f; Maegerle 2004). The periodical *Junge Freiheit* (*Young Liberty*) is one of the most significant publications aiming to mediate between extreme rightists and the public (Maegerle 2004). Since 1994, *Junge Freiheit* has been under surveillance by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution due to its revisionism of the crimes of neo-Nazis and its anti-democratic position (Puttkamer 2004, 111). Books and other printed media such as flyers and pamphlets are published in right extremist publishing houses and marketing companies, with 33 of these active in 2006. Some writers in these publications insist that Jews were not gassed in Auschwitz and that the Holocaust was based on falsified facts in general (Braunthal 2009, 119).

The internet is important for the communication of the numerous extreme right groups in Germany. The government's dissolution of many groups in the 1990s due to their having violated the Basic Law led to the formation of smaller local and decentralised groups (Braunthal 2009, 124f). The New Right in particular is based on networks rather than hierarchical relationships, which is reflected in their communication patterns. Informal networks help overcome differences within the movement (Pfeiffer 2004). Despite government efforts to close down numerous websites hosting illegal content, it has not always been possible to identify the websites' initiators and prevent them from moving the websites to different servers located in the USA or Canada. Many websites operate within the legal boundaries and do not provide legal grounds for closure by government agents. Websites, blogs, and e-mails, promote the foreigner-free zones in the east of Germany as well as distribute releases, position papers, and hate messages against foreigners and Jews (Braunthal 2009, 124f).

In 2011, approximately 1,000 German right extremist websites were online. However, some of these websites are not permanent because they are only used in the mobilisation of different actions. Discussion forums are popular means of communication within the right extremist scene. To mobilise for demonstrations, they mainly use blogs, though they also use social networking sites such as Facebook. The alternative online media Altermedia Germany, which succeeded Stoertebeker-Netz, is an important tool for producing an alternative to the mainstream media. Altermedia publishes political success stories of the extreme right as well as disseminates calls for demonstrations, anti-Semitic content, and portraits of right extremists who are popular within the scene (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 87–89). German right extremists use the internet mainly to present themselves, to mobilise for demonstrations, to propagate their ideology, and to disseminate their alternative perspectives on history (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 58).

In illegal action such as unauthorised demonstrations, rallies, and meetings, right extremist groups still trust the direct distribution of information over dissemination through the internet. Although they send hate messages or information concerning skinhead concerts by e-mail, they rely on info telephone lines in illegal action. Ever since many websites such as eBay, Amazon, and *Barnes and Noble* were asked to stop selling Nazi propaganda material, books, and other items including Nazi symbols that violate the German constitution, right-wing websites that link to their own stores, usually working from abroad, became important for selling propaganda material (Braunthal 2009, 127f). Music and propaganda material are now often distributed online in right extremist discussion forums and on online shops, which are usually located abroad but are advertised on the various extreme right websites in Germany (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 96). Other sources of propaganda are electronic games such as *Anti-Turk Test*, *Aryan Test*, *Adolf Hitler*, *Concentration Camp Manager*, and *Clean Germany*, which include banned Nazi symbols and glorify the war, nationalism, and racism (Braunthal 2009, 128f). These games can be downloaded for free from websites. The names of these games again suggest a clean image and positive connotation with words such as ‘manager’, ‘clean’, and ‘test’ but include a clear underlying nazist component.

Anarchism, anti-fascism, the New Left, and their media

The rise of the New Right, the National Democratic Party, and the ongoing violence and actions by neo-Nazis have faced huge counter protests by ad hoc demonstration, vigils, or chains of light. Banners stating ‘Nazis out!’ aim to show solidarity with foreigners living in Germany. Some counter protests have also received support from political parties, churches, unions, and other groups. These actions seek to show that right-wing extremism in any form is not tolerated in a democratic state. Anti-fascist organisations were active in mobilising for counter protests to demonstrations by right-wing extremists as an act of resistance to ongoing fascism in Germany (Braunthal 2009, 185f). Anti-fascism is an issue that can mobilise broad support in Germany, especially due to consciousness of the past. For activist groups, the actions against the neo-Nazi marches are, however, only one aspect of their activities, and anti-fascism is part of a larger project. For anti-fascists, escapism from the past is not a solution for dealing with Germany’s history and the cruelties of World War II; it is important, rather, to understand the National Socialist regime as part of German identity. Fascism can only belong to the past if it is discussed in a contemporary context, with constant production of awareness (Richter 2001, 17). An anti-fascism demonstrator in Berlin argues:

We have to come to terms with our past and to remember that Nazism emerged when the public was silent and indifferent. In Germany, we have learned this lesson well – you cannot keep quiet when Fascism is on the rise. If we don’t speak out now, we may have another Hitler one day, and can only blame ourselves for it. (in Braunthal 2009, 213)

The struggle for visibility to create awareness is thus part of anti-fascist activities. In demonstrations or blockades, this also includes mobilising people from across a broad political spectrum in order to create visibility in the mass media. In this framework, violent action can be considered a radicalised form of the struggle for visibility.

The *Verfassungsschutzbericht* summarises several groups with different political perspectives under the label ‘extreme left’. The aims of left-wing extremists are based

on revolutionary Marxist and anarchist ideas, i.e. the abolishment of the current social order and its replacement with a socialist, communist, or anarchist society, depending on the group's ideological foundations. Anti-militarism and anti-fascism are important components of their ideologies (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 119–120). Political parties that would usually support demonstrations and the organisation of blockades against Nazis are, according to the *Verfassungsschutzbericht*, the German Communist Party (*Deutsche Kommunistische Partei*), which bases its program on Marx, Engels, and Lenin, with the aim of overcoming political and economic power for a socialist social order and communism; the Marxist-Leninist Party Germany (*Marxistisch-Leninistische Partei Deutschlands*), which aims for a Maoist-Stalinist organisation by overthrowing the 'dictatorship of capital' and creating a 'dictatorship of the proletariat'; and The Left (*Die Linke*), which is primarily a new leftist and reformist party but accepts and supports actions of more radical groups (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 119–120). The Left aims for social justice and the empowerment of the working class (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 143–144). The Communist Platform (*Kommunistische Plattform*) is a subgroup of the party with 1,250 members (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 147). Another subgroup is the Anti-Capitalist Left (*Antikapitalistische Linke*), which is based on Trotski's ideas of anti-capitalism and anti-militarism for a democratic socialism free of class structures and exploitation (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 151–152).

The Interventionist Left (*Interventionistische Linke*) and AVANTI-Project Undogmatic Left (*AVANTI-Projekt undogmatischer Linke*) are considered mediators between the public and more radical groups. Although they do not publicly engage in violent action, they take part in civil disobedience. They usually form to protest against certain events such as the world economic summit, the EU summit, and the Castor transport of nuclear waste (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 136). AVANTI has existed since 1989 and is, according to its self-definition, a part of the radical left that aims for a revolutionary organisational structure that allows autonomy for local groups but facilitates collaboration across groups. Anti-fascism, anti-racism, anti-militarism, internationalism, and social struggle are components of its political ambitions. Although AVANTI generally rejects violence, it accepts it as a last resort in struggle and as a necessary part of revolution. It publishes political statements, for example in its newsletter entitled *Extremely Important: Leftist politics. Contributions to a Critique of the Extremism Doctrine and National Intelligence Services* (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 139–140). Red Aid (*Rote Hilfe e.V.*) was founded in 1975 and supports activists from the left end of the political spectrum who face trial and are charged with breaking the law by acting in civil disobedience. They provide financial support, consultation, and lawyers (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 167).

Anti-fascism plays an important role in anarchism and in the actions of anarchists. The word 'anarchy' in its original Greek sense means 'contrary to authority or without a ruler' (Ward 2004, 1), a sentiment that is prominent in both liberalism and socialism. For anarchists, the state is the enemy since it protects the 'privileges of the powerful'. For over a century, the most significant strand of anarchism has been 'anarchist communism', a concept that differs from socialism in its general opposition to central authority. Natural resources, land, and means of production should only be controlled by local communities in loose association with other communes (Ward 2004, 2). The word 'libertarianism' was long used synonymously with anarchism

until American scholars used it to justify the free market and thus to foster capitalism (Ward 2004, 69).

Autonomous politics from a leftist perspective are activities outside of political and economic structures, aiming to create structures that are anti-hierarchical and non-exploitive. These new structures can only be created in a collective. The subversive powers attempt to create these spaces parallel to the state but free from its structures. The subversive groups have must be anti-fascist because this is the only possible foundation for these free spaces. Solidarity and the collective in these groups do not, however, undermine the individual but respect it as an important principle within the collective (Kuhn 2007). Despite all of the differences between different forms of anarchist practice, a common denominator is thus ‘resistance to all forms of domination and authority’ (Finnell and Marcantel 2010, 156).

One reason for the identity crisis in contemporary anti-fascism in Germany is the collapse of real socialism. Historically, anti-fascism was clearly divided from fascism by the Wall. Although the anti-fascists still have an enemy, their enemy is no longer particularly powerful. Contemporary anti-fascism is divided into two positions: One is more concerned with misconceptions concerning parliamentary democracy whereas the other is more historically rooted, mostly represented by activists from the German Antifa and other groups that fight right extremists. The critical attitude towards bourgeois democracy was, however, already present in the anti-fascism of the communists in 1935 (Bramke 2001). The news coverage that anarchism receives is rarely positive, and they are often portrayed as ‘bomb throwing fanatics, eccentric utopians or idle scoundrels’ (Curran 2006, 1).

The anarchists’ refusal to participate in parliamentary and traditional politics is one reason why their ideology has not found acceptance throughout society. Despite being marginalised, anarchism has, however, influenced the contemporary political landscape as a political philosophy. The anti-capitalist, anti-globalisation, and environmental movements of the 21st century give anarchism space to reinvent itself. This reinvention remains focused on the core values of anarchism: autonomy, liberty, anti-statism, and anti-authoritarianism. Hierarchies, centralisation, and authoritarianism represent hindrances in their struggle for these ideals. The anarchists have also embraced new ideals such as ecologism, since it is claimed that both people and nature suffer from the destructive power of industrialism and capitalism. Although many movements of the New Left are inspired by anarchism and incorporate certain elements, they do not consider themselves to be anarchists (Curran 2006).

In 2011, the number of leftist extremists in Germany was estimated to be 31,800, of whom 7,100 were ready to engage into violent action. 6,400 belong to the Autonomists (*Autonomen*) (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 121). The actions of the Autonomists are grounded in the ambition for a self-determined life, free from hegemony and centred on the creation of autonomous spaces. The Autonomists regard their autonomous spaces as endangered by state and capitalist oppression. The freedom inherent in this philosophy prevents the development of general ideological convictions apart from a rejection of leadership, structure, rules, and hierarchy. The actions of the Autonomists are based on ideals such as anti-fascism, anti-capitalism, anti-patriarchalism, class struggle, revolution, and anti-imperialism. Fighting fascism and fighting the system also means fighting capitalism. Violence is regarded as a legitimate tool for fighting repression, exploitation, fascism, and oppression (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 124–125).

Behind the actions of the Autonomists and the ‘black block’ is the aim to ‘create and institutionalize “dominance-free” forms of political, economic, and social interaction’ (Leach 2009, 1044). The German autonomous movement was developed within the New Left in 1968 by activists who redefined their political agenda beyond the anti-nuclear movement and began calling themselves Autonomists. Their identity and ideology are rooted in anarchist, feminist, and critical Marxist thinking. Their oppositional politics were developed ‘around a militant anti-authoritarian subjectivism and opposition to the dogmatism of both the Old and New Left’, referring ‘to all forms of hierarchical organization, a simultaneous call for self-determination and collective responsibility at every level of society’ (Leach 2009, 1050) beyond the working class.

The actions of the Autonomists are carefully planned and carried out by anonymous groups as well as by sub-groups such as the Revolutionary Action Cells (*Revolutionären Aktionszellen*) (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 129). Part of their self-definition is radicalisation and a fight for visibility through violent action. This includes not only action against the state, police, and fascists as well as violent action to sabotage communication or transportation systems (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 135). Their militant actions, Leach (2009) argues, are based both on the tactical use of violence and a refusal to adjust to the norms and laws dictated by the dominant society. They are engaged in issues including anti-corporate globalisation to anti-fascism, immigrant rights, feminism, squatters’ rights, peace, and environmentalism. Due to their militant actions and uncompromising ideology, they are regarded as highly significant even though they represent only one-fifth of the radical Left in terms of number of participants.

Autonomy means institutional independence, freedom from organisational hierarchies, and freedom from the colonisation of everyday life. This includes the beliefs that no one has authority over anyone else within the group; the groups should govern themselves without interference from other collective actors; and that individuals have the right to resist patriarchy, capitalism, racism, homophobia, and nationalism. One of the contradictions within the Autonomist movement is the relationship between solidarity and self-determination. Although self-determination is key to the Autonomists’ ideology, solidarity of activists is important when participating in actions of civil disobedience and militant resistance (Leach 2009).

Actions of anti-fascism involve direct confrontation with the enemy, i.e. neo-Nazis and their structures and institutions. This action includes mobilisation for counter protest and civil disobedience by forming blockades against demonstrations by the neo-Nazis. Their political work includes direct action, investigations concerning neo-Nazis and extreme right political parties such as the National Democratic Party as well as the publication of anti-fascist material (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 183–186). Actions of the extreme left to express anti-repression include destroying private property or the property of public institutions and public authorities; helping imprisoned activists of the extreme left; using civil disobedience to prevent the authorities from deporting asylum seekers; using verbal violence against authorities; attacking police cars, buildings, or the property of authorities with stones or Molotov cocktails (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 174–179). The *Verfassungsschutzbericht* counts 8,678 politically motivated criminal acts in 2011 in total, including 1,809 acts of violence, of which 700 are acts of violence directed against the police and 546 against right extremists. Most acts of violence are registered in

Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Lower Saxony (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 37).

Extreme leftist activists use the internet extensively to coordinate their actions and to mobilise as well as to produce counter publicity and to directly fight the system by hacking the websites of neo-Nazis, corporations, and state organisations. Their main online media platform is IndyMedia Germany. Linksunten.IndyMedia went online in 2009 and provides space for anti-fascists to report live from actions such as the protests at the NATO summit in Strasbourg or the climate conference in Copenhagen in 2009. The platform also provides space for activists who anonymously admit acts of civil disobedience such as attacks on the transportation and communication system in order to create awareness for the cause on which the actions were based on. The background of the cause is explained in reports published anonymously on platforms such as IndyMedia (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 171f). The internet also plays an important role in providing writings that are not as complex as anarchist philosophy but that nevertheless inspire activists within these movements (Curran 2006) and mobilise civil society for mass action. Despite the advantages of the internet, print media are still important for communicating their interests, with more than 20 publishing houses being active in 2011. With a circulation of 17,000 the daily *Junge Welt*, based on Marxist perspectives, is the most important print publication of this kind (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 173f). Print publications of the extreme left include *Unsere Zeit (Our Time)*, published by the German Communist Party, with a circulation of 6,000 and the weekly *Rote Fahne (Red Flag)*, published by the Marxist-Leninist Party Germany (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 132). These publications are used to promote these groups' political programmes and to create alternatives to the mainstream media.

Between left and right

Although the differences between the political groups involved in the protest events cannot solely be explained by a left and right division, viewing their positions on this axis helps us understand their differences as well as their similarities. The traditional understanding of extremes is understood in terms of their relationship to one another. When describing a distance, extremes are the two points that are located farthest from one another. There is thus a difference not only between these points as well as between these points and the centre. Due to their difference, the extremes form an antithesis. This antithesis is part of the centre that, according to Aristotle, attempts to create balance (Backes 2006, 177). As a result, the relationships between the extremes and between the extremes and the centre are important:

The flaunting of the extreme is part of normalization discourses, in which the majority of society permanently reflects its normality and middle. In normalization discourses, cultural power struggles find their expression in the severe criticising of unpopular opponents. (Backes 2006, 178)

Groups labelled as extreme from a political perspective usually reject such a label and attempt to distance themselves from this term, as was illustrated by the strategies of the radical left and the radical right in presenting themselves to the public. The interdependence of these extreme points is obviously their self-identification not only as an anti-ideology to the extreme on the other end of the spectrum as well as as different from the centre. This relationship is expressed in anti-activities such as anti-

fascist protests or, more recently, in Anti-Antifa activities undertaken by the extreme right.

The difference relative to the centre and to the other extreme can be traced back to the development of ideas within the New Right compared with the New Left. The French thinker Alain de Benoist played an important role in developing the New Right of the 1970s in France and later in Germany. The New Right was also a reaction against the New Left, especially the student movement of 1968. Their ideology was, however, a combination of traditional right-wing sources with the ideas of particular left-wing thinkers (Passmore 2002, 92). A prominent example the relationship between New Right thinkers and the left is Horst Mahler, a former member of the Social Democratic Party, the Red Army Fraction (*Rote Armee Fraktion*), and later the Free Democratic Party and the National Democratic Party. Mahler was fighting for national liberation and against American imperialism and racism (Puttkamer 2004). Groups on the extreme ends of the political spectrum are thus based on particular political values and ideology as well as identify in opposition to the centre. Although the values of the groups on both ends of the political spectrum are different, they show similarities in their relationships to the centre and their extreme positions.

To some extent, the New Right can thus be considered a mirror image of the New Left. In this context, Kitschelt and McGann (1997, 2) speak of ‘post industrial politics’ characterized by main ideological cleavage dividing left-libertarians from right-authoritarians’. There are superficial ideological overlaps between the two sides, such as opposition to globalisation, criticism of the international hegemony of US policies, (national) liberation of the oppressed, protection of the environment (or the German soil), and criticism of cutbacks in social welfare in Germany (Braunthal 2009, 139). Although both support anti-capitalism and environmental movements, their reasons for doing so differ (Bramke 2001). The New Right opposes socialism, feminism, and capitalism because these ideologies place other criteria – such as class, gender, economic interest – above the nation (Passmore 2002, 26). In contrast, the left attempts to challenge power, leadership, authority, and exploitation.

The two extremes can, according to Bobbio, be described on two axes: the freedom axis between anarchic and illiberal and the equality axis between extreme anti-egalitarian and extreme egalitarian. The extreme leftist movement is located at the extreme egalitarian and illiberal ends of the axes, and the extreme right is located at the extreme anti-egalitarian and illiberal ends of the axes. The best-known historical example of the extreme right within this framework is National Socialism. The negation of the ‘liberty principle’ is thus the common denominator of extreme politics (Bobbio in Backes 2006, 172). Backes (2006), working on the basis of this model, argues for a constitutional axis ranging from anarchic to totalitarian and a democracy axis ranging from extreme egalitarian to extreme anti-egalitarian. Anarcho-communism is located at the anarchic and extreme egalitarian ends; Marxism and Leninism at the extreme egalitarian and totalitarian ends; and National Socialism at the extreme anti-egalitarian and totalitarian ends. The centre is composed of the constitutionally democratic spectrum. The forms of political extremism on both ends of the political spectrum within this framework are anti-democratic and anti-constitutional. The difference between extreme right and leftist movements lies along the democracy axis, i.e. egalitarian versus anti-egalitarian (Backes 2006, 187–188). However, Backes argues, ideology does not entail particular strategic behaviour when it comes to totalitarian regimes.

Adjustment to democratic discourse, i.e. to the centre that lies between the extremes is undertaken strategically in order to enter public discourse and gain acceptance across society (Pfahl-Traughber 2004). At the same time, the aim is to represent the other political extremes as inherently negative. One argument used by fascism, for example, is a critique of capitalism based on blaming big businesses for their pursuit of profit, which is posited as weakening the position of workers and forcing them into socialism at the expense of the nation (Passmore 2002, 27). Fascists, however, support some claims by feminists and socialists and are willing to support their reforms as long as they are subordinated to national interests (Passmore 2002, 135).

Identification with a political party, i.e. self-placement, is more closely related to partisanship than to ideology. However, the ideological component becomes stronger on a more politicised strata (Inglehart and Klingemann 1976). One of the reasons why right-wing and conservative political parties such as the Christian Democratic Union were successful, particularly after the reunion, was because these conservative groups offered easy solutions based on anti-foreigner politics relative to the solutions of the left, which were rather complex and demanded sacrifices (Adler 1996). However, the clear negation of Germany's Nazi past by Germans led to huge protests by civil society, for example, as a reaction to the German Republicans (the REP), a party founded in 1983, which had an electoral breakthrough in the Berlin state elections in 1989. The party's success was accompanied by 'marginalization, de-legitimation and stigmatization' (Art 2007, 338) and protest by political parties, media, and civil society. These actions 'led directly to the collapse of the REPs shortly after their initial appearance' (Art 2007, 340). One reason why German extreme right parties have not been very successful is thus that the horrors of the Nazi past result in low media resonance for far right parties, and other parties are not prepared to form coalitions with extreme right parties such as the National Democratic Party. However, despite a lack of success in party politics, Germany hosts a strong extremist subculture (Backes and Muddes 2000).

As a concept, identity is not regarded as static and unchanging but is situated in the course of time and involved in a process. It is thus a relational concept that describes the relationship between one or more people in terms of sameness or equality (Wodak et al. 2009, 11). Mutual observation between the extremes is a natural response to their existence in opposition to one another and to the centre. The conflictual relationship between the extremes is also expressed in their media use. One strategy anti-fascist groups use is the registration of domains such as 'NSDAP' (National Socialist German Workers' Party) and 'Nazis' and filling these websites with nonsensical contents in order to block them from being used by neo-Nazis (Braunthal 2009, 125). The hacking of right-wing websites run by the National Democratic Party and neo-Nazi groups is a form of action undertaken by anti-fascists, used to trace these groups' online behaviour and learn more about them. For their part, right-wing activists hacked, for example, a regional deputy's e-mail server and crashed the system with spam mails asking recipients to vote for the National Democratic Party. On another occasion, they spammed the homepage of a Jewish organisation (Braunthal 2009, 126). In these examples, direct confrontation between groups on both ends of the political spectrum is expressed in acts of confrontation using media technologies.

One form by which the clash between the two sides is expressed is through marches planned by neo-Nazis, accompanied by counter protests by anti-fascist groups, NGOs, and civil society. An ethnographic study shows how emotion, ideology, and

performance are intertwined in these marches, which bring together loosely organised far right groups in Germany. These performance events are new forms for expressing political identity as well as give participants a feeling of power in the emotional collective (Virchow 2007). The potential for right extremists to engage in violent action is especially high in confrontation with counter protesters from the opposite end of the political spectrum. This potential increases with aggressive behaviour and verbal attacks between the two groups. In the protest events on February 19 in Dresden, around 150 right extremists attacked the Praxis 'alternative living project' with stones and flagstaffs (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2011, 60).

In February 2005, a public 'funeral march' was organised by the National Democratic Party in Dresden with the asserted purpose of commemorating the deaths of the, according to their numbers, 35,000 Germans who were killed during the British and American bombing of the city in a 'terror attack' in February 1945. Around 5,000 and 6,000 demonstrators of the National Democratic Party participated in the march. One speaker was Holger Apfel, deputy chairman of the National Democratic Party, who referred to the attack as a 'bombing Holocaust of Germans'. Participants in the demonstrations waved black flags, and speakers claimed that it was not young Germans who should feel guilty about war crimes but, instead, that the balance of World War II crimes lay on the side of the Allies. The guilt, they argued, created a feeling of inferiority. In opposition to the march, democratic leaders called for counter protests by citizens of Dresden, who used signs stating 'This city is sick of Nazis'. Speakers address the falsification of history and the instrumentalisation of human suffering (Braunthal 2009, 71f).

The organisation of marches has historically been a means by which the Nazis have shown their power (Benjamin 1936). This is because neo-Nazis have been unsuccessful otherwise presenting their political ideas. In present-day Germany, they turn to anti-ideology actions such as disturbing the events of anti-fascists, anarchists, and political parties. This makes their actions more similar to those initiated by anti-fascists. The Battle of the Nations memorial in Leipzig commemorates an important battle with Napoleon in 1813. The memorial was declared a German national monument in 1913 and became a symbol of Leipzig. In the 1990s, the square around the monument became a space for parades by right-wing groups. Although the city of Leipzig tried to ban the marches, these bans were regularly lifted by the Highest Administrative Court (Irmer and Wilsch 2002).

February 13, 2011 represented the third time that neo-Nazis had marched to commemorate the bombing of Dresden in World War II. This march was accompanied by blockades by civil society and anti-fascist groups. The possibilities offered by new communication tools such as microblogs, blogs, digital social networks, Google maps, smartphones, and laptops played an important role, especially in the mobilisation and coordination of the counter protest. Compared with previous years, this event also gained attention from the mass media and began to be part of the general societal discourse. A central question in the discussion was the justification of a radical right-wing march representing undemocratic values under the premise of freedom of expression compared to the blockades, which were officially illegalised.

The digitally mediated discourses around these events are also an expression of the different political positions. Reproducing offline networks online within homogeneous online groups increases the polarisation between opinion extremes as shown by an empirical study of online and offline activities by neo-Nazi groups

(Wojcieszak 2010). This process can support identification with a radical political group. A dissertation using Bakardjieva's (2003) concept of 'virtual togetherness' analysed the Dutch extreme right forum Stormfront and concluded that, especially for groups that are stigmatised offline, online forums support community building and a feeling of togetherness (Koster 2010). The feeling of togetherness is part of a political identity.

The clash of the two extremes in the anti-fascist protests represents the expression in digitally mediated discourse of their relationships with one another as well as with the centre. The depiction of the Other at the opposite extreme is part of forming an identity in situations of conflict and is also a means of differentiating from civil society as the centre between the extremes. Presenting themselves to the public in a de-radicalised manner is a means of finding allies when organising mass action, but it is also important for extreme groups to strengthen their sense of community in closed spaces in which they are free to express their political affiliation with the like-minded. As a result of the normative character of the discussion, theories concerning both anti-fascism and right extremism are lacking in terms of examining these extremes' relationships with one another (Madloch 2001; Richter 2001). However, studying these groups in relation to one another as well as in relation to the centre is necessary for understanding their roles as political extremes and their tactics, practices, and strategies for using media technology.

Lessons from the past: Media, counterpublics, and World War II

Activists and their relationships to media were accompanied by high expectations for counterpublics to emerge and to articulate their causes. Digital media technologies were regarded as having an emancipatory potential by producing user-generated content, participation, and the possibilities of communicating a political cause to a potentially broad public. At the same time, their emancipatory potential could be used to sustain power and the dominant system. The mass media with their centralised production processes, expert knowledge for production and dissemination, high level of institutionalisation, and centralisation were seen as the counterparts to digital media, less appealing to counter protest and the production of counter publicity. However, historical counter movements used the media technologies, which were used by the regime to control and maintain power, to produce counter publicity and to develop alternatives to the propaganda regime. We now analyse publications by counter movements against the National Socialist regime in World War II Germany within the analytical framework that guides this study. The results are used to identify relationships to the media by counter movements in anti-fascist protests in 2011.

Technical affordances

The archived material taken into consideration in this study is printed material. Although the media landscape under the National Socialist regime included different media, such as broadcasting, radio, and different forms of printed material, print has the advantage of relatively low production costs compared to electronic media. The media system under the National Socialist regime was one that sought to spread a particular political agenda. Under Joseph Goebbels' control, the media had a clear propaganda function during the war. They thus had to convey a particular image of the regime in general and of Adolf Hitler as the leader in particular. Alternative political opinions were not accepted, and persecution and elimination were the results of spreading alternative perspectives, especially for those criticising the regime. As a

result, authors and producers of regime-critical material in the German Reich were exposed to a high risk. Control over media and dissemination of the regime's political perspective were essential to the German Reich's propaganda (Goebbels 2008). Presenting the nation as 'good' and the enemy in the war as well as, in this case, people of a different race or ethnicity as 'evil' were elements of Nazi propaganda. Producing an alternative to this perspective was thus also related to changing sides in the conflict.

Not all of the print media included here were published in the German Reich itself. Due to the high-risk exposure associated with publishing critical perspectives in Germany, it is difficult to compare them with media of counterpublics today. We thus also include media of refugees from occupied territories in order to understand how counter publicity to Hitler Germany was produced. The following publications are taken into account:

- Serial issues by anti-fascist Austrian emigrants in Great Britain in 1941, entitled *Young Austria*, and *Zeitspiegel - Weekly Review*, later - *Anti-Nazi Weekly*;
- Bulletins and leaflets, distributed on the western front during World War II and similar material distributed on the eastern front by the National Committee Free Germany (*Nationalkomitee Freies Deutschland*);
- Publications by Social-democrats in exile in Prague; anti-fascist pamphlets and leaflets during World War II; social-democratic periodical, published in 1933, and smuggled into Hitler Germany in a cigarette boxes; writings, leaflets, and correspondence, relating to activities of anti-Nazi organizations.⁶⁷

The periodicals of the refugees are interesting because they represent media produced in a less restrictive media environment, i.e. outside the National Socialist regime. They can be considered counterpublics to the regime since one of their main components is anti-fascism. The material distributed in the country shows the necessity of increasing author protection due to the high risk that publishing regime-critical content entailed.

Although the counterpublic material studied here does include different political positions such as refugees, imprisoned soldiers, anti-fascists, communists, and working class movements, they share a common enemy, i.e. the Nazis and the war in general. Using media for propaganda of the German Reich created a rigid media environment that did not allow any critical political opinion. The public expression of alternative political opinions was thus impossible in the German Reich but was possible elsewhere, as the example of the Austrian refugees shows. The distribution of alternative media content in Germany had to be accompanied by tactics to protect the authors. Producing counter publicity by publishing alternative media in Germany was thus only possible through exposure to a high level of insecurity. Propaganda media were under the control of the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, the chief publicist and spokesman of which was Goebbels. Additionally, control over the fine arts, theatre, and printed educational material helped spread Nazi propaganda.

⁶ All documents at the Hoover Institutions Archives, for a detailed list of publications included and location in the archives see Appendix 1.

⁷ All quotes are originally in German and translated by the author if not indicated otherwise.

Goebbels was in control of the mass media nationwide throughout the war. Radio broadcasting, magazines, newspapers, books, and the movie industry were under his control, shaping the population's cultural life and political opinion. Especially in the last two years of the war, his propaganda work contributed to maintaining public morale and support for the Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler. One of the most influential print media publications was *Das Reich*, a weekly paper for which Goebbels wrote a regular front cover editorial essay. Another important publication was *Der Völkische Beobachter* (*The Nationalistic Observer*) (Goebbels 2008).

Technically, print media had a relatively long production cycle but were easier for amateurs without technical know-how and professional training to produce and distribute. Print media were also limited in terms of space. As the editorial team of an alternative serial publication writes, 'At the moment it [the weekly] consists of sometimes eight, sometimes twelve small pages, where we try to fit content of 24 pages' (Y.A. 1941, no. 24, 6). The limitations in terms of space, production, and distribution were primary concerns for the authors of these print media. The newspaper had a limited number of pages, and the format had to adjust to the requirements of printed material. The production cycle was long compared to digital media and required careful planning and scheduling of publications and print. The layout was dependent on the format of the printing press, the copy machine, and the typewriter. The text was accompanied by drawings since photographs were still expensive to produce, print, and reproduce and were thus not used in the material studied here.

Practices, tactics, and strategies

Although the possibilities of print media for counter movements were limited compared to the variety of media available today, they were nevertheless appropriated by counter movements. Their tactics and strategies for producing counter publicity by using print media reflected their relationship to the central propaganda regime as well as their political ideology. The media practices and strategies were embedded in an environment of war that required different strategies than the simple production of counter publicity. To the Nazi regime, the groups and their media studied here were oppositional and could thus be considered counterpublics. In the following, we outline the media tactics and strategies they used to appropriate print media for their purposes and how they produced counter publicity with their media in this restrictive media environment. These practices, strategies, and tactics bear similarities to yet also display differences from those in the digital age in terms of the appropriation of media technology by counterpublics.

Producing and avoiding publicity: Although one of the aims of these groups is to produce counter publicity, publishing critical information, especially in the German Reich, was dangerous, exposing authors to high risk. Refugee groups published their print media to gain international solidarity, to inform refugees in other countries, to keep contact with other groups that shared the central idea of anti-fascism, and to develop a sense of community among the refugees. However, circulating the same kind of information as refugees did abroad within the German Reich was dangerous and thus required various forms of concealing and avoiding publicity. The level of publicity and the level of security to avoid publicity reflected the position of counterpublics relative to the public they tried to challenge. The geographical distance to the German Reich also changed the relationship between the refugee groups and their media on the one hand and the propaganda regime on the other. Due to their

location, they were able to adhere to the rules within different national boundaries, making it possible to openly criticise the regime. The interplay between producing publicity and avoiding publicity is thus an indicator of the relationship between the media of the counterpublics and the regime as well as between their location and their local political context.

Concealing: Producing counter publicity within the controlled and restrictive media environment of the German Reich required exposure to high risk and necessitated concealment tactics. Disseminating regime-critical information in Germany was considered as a crime punishable by imprisonment, torture, or death. One tactic for protecting authors and editors and for disseminating their print media was to conceal their identity and the actual content of the publications. The tactics that can be observed in the documents studied here take two forms:

[1] Concealing by text are practices of concealing the actual publications by using different forms of text. The front page of publications of the Communist Party takes the form of a textbook or a classic work of prose in order to conceal the regime-critical political message. The titles of these booklets on their cover page are *Holiday in the Alps* (Working Class Movement 1935), *Preparations for Winter Sports* (Z.K.P.O. year n.a.), *The Great Philosophers, Cicero* (Z.R.S.O. year n.a.), translations of classics for high school students, the philosophy of *Schopenhauer* (Working Class Movement 1935a), *Plato's Banquette*, and the maintenance of cactuses (Communist Party Germany 1935). Some of the cover pages include a picture, such as a drawing of a woman's head with a perfect haircut, with the headline 'Do you take care of your hair?' (Communist Party Germany 1935). Additionally, a publisher is mentioned on the cover page, such as Tourism Board Tyrol (Working Class Movement 1935), *The Little Book* (Z.R.S.O. 1936), the Alpine Association The Mountaineer (Z.K.P.O.), *Paul Zsolnay Publishers* (Working Class Movement 1935a), *K.R. Räder A.G. Publishers* in Leipzig, and *Köln-Lindenthal Publishers* (Communist Party Germany 1935). In some of the publications, the first three pages are printed with a text that relates to the cover page, such as actual information about holidays in the Alps. Then the meaning of the text takes a sudden turn without changing its appearance in font or style and continues with content concerning the programmes of the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, or the Working Class Movement, i.e. the actual publishers.

[2] Concealment through media technology includes tactics used to materially conceal the publications in order to make their dissemination possible. The booklets were printed in tiny formats, in a small font, on thin paper. This tactic made their distribution in Hitler Germany possible. They could be smuggled in a cigarette package, thereby concealing the actual regime-critical publications. Additionally, the publications were carefully targeted at specific recipients, such as members of underground movements or other resistance groups.

Creating alternatives: Print media in the National Socialist regime were generally used to spread propaganda of the Reich, yet despite their centralised production process, they were also used to create alternative perspectives. One example is *Young Austria*, a serial publication by young Austrian refugees in the UK. They wished to create an alternative to both the UK media environment, in which they were a marginalised group, and to the National Socialist regime, to which they could create an alternative perspective as a result of their geographical distance. Due to their engagement in rallies and protests, they were also considered a group acting in civil disobedience in their host country, the UK. In *Young Austria*, they write about an incident in which occupied Austria's refugees in the UK performed *Schuhplatteln*, a

traditional Austrian dance, as a public expression of their identity at the International Youth Rally, which took place in the UK. After the event, the dance was added to the black list and prohibited in London (Y.A. 1941, no. 22, 6). Due to their identity as counterpublics acting in civil disobedience, this expression of national identity became an act of civil disobedience in itself.

In a special second anniversary issue, they present the organisation and its history, concluding with a call to unite youth of all countries to create an alternative future (Y.A. 1941, no. 6, 8), representing an alternative to the National Socialist regime. The alternative print media produced by German speaking refugees from Hitler's Reich present a different reality than do the propaganda newspapers:

“The free word” is the title of a German Newspaper by prisoners of war in the Soviet Union. Germans, who have been fed with lies of Goebbels for eight years, hear the truth about Germany for the first time from a German newspaper. (*Zeitspiegel* 1942, no. 2, 1)

The article, published in the refugee publication *Zeitspiegel* is entitled ‘German press without chains’, referring to the struggle against Goebbels’ propaganda regime. The alternatives created by these print media claim to report ‘the truth’ compared to the major German-language media published within the German Reich. In a ‘message to Austria’, *Zeitspiegel* describes its own function of informing Austrians who lost their liberty to the Nazis (*Zeitspiegel* 1941, no. 42, 1). The production of alternatives expressed in alternative media was thus important in presenting the identity of the marginalised group in both their home and their host country.

Professionalisation: The level of professionalisation differs from that in the mainstream media, but there are also differences between publications representing different groups. *Zeitspiegel* is based on experts and well-known writers who oppose the National Socialist regime, which is also apparent in the way it is produced and in its more conservative and rather professional appearance. *Young Austria*, a publication of a youth organisation, is composed by an editorial team, which constantly included new members. The reports that are published are not necessarily written by experts but simply by young people, such as an essay on the front page entitled ‘An English girl looks at us’ (Y.A. 1941, no. 13, 1, English in original). Articles written by supporters of Young Austria, such as representatives of youth organisations across the world, social democrats, and revolutionaries are important components of the alternative representations in their publications. The structure of the publication in terms of its content is flexible apart from the header, the ‘short news’ section, and address of the publisher at the end of each newspaper. *Young Austria* is written on a typewriter as well as includes drawings. The headlines are handwritten. Although Austrian refugees in the UK produce both *Zeitspiegel* and *Young Austria*, these two print media are very different in their appearance, editorial team makeup, and level of professionalisation. Both subgroups develop their own forms by appropriating print media for creating alternatives dependent on their group identities.

Interacting with the mainstream media: The constant observation of the regime media as well as the media in the host country in the case of refugees, is an important component of alternative media. A report concerning ‘Young Austria in the BBC’ covers the front page of an edition of *Young Austria*, and in it, an Austrian refugee speaks of his experience listening to a radio interview with a representative of the group. The report ends with the words, ‘This is a great day for our organisation and

maybe also for Austria' (Y.A. 1941, no. 23, 1-2). The organisation's representation in the mainstream media is thus important to its work, as reflected in its own publications. As a result, the group also has strategies for influencing mass media reporting on the organisation. An important issue covered in several editions of *Young Austria* is an incident in which a report about refugee organisations in general, including Young Austria, led to a negative image of refugees in mass media coverage in the UK. Young Austria rectifies the negative reports that include statements such as that the refugee group was controlled by the communists. With a letter to the editors of the report, the T.U.C. (Trade Union Congress), they protest against the false information. The letter is printed in *Young Austria* (Y.A. 1941, no. 11, 6). In the UK, the media were a product of the elite classes and thus biased in their attitude towards *Young Austria*. Positive representation in the mass media is, however, important to the group and its acceptance in society, resulting in tactics to improve its image in the mass media.

Another function of referring to the mass media was to provide information about home countries. The *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* newspaper, which was under control of the National Socialist regime by this time, was cited for information concerning the N.S.D.A.P. (Nazi Party) in Austria (Y.A. 1941, no. 4, 4). In 'The BBC and the war', *Zeitspiegel* publishes a meta-analysis of the BBC's role in the war by reporting from the occupied states. The BBC is presented as a support for liberation from the Nazis in this article (*Zeitspiegel* 1942, no. 2, 9). Important facts concerning the situation in the Soviet Union (Y.A. 1941, no. 24, 2-3) are based on radio reports or newspaper coverage (Y.A. 1941, No. 25, 6). Reports concerning the situation in Germany (*Zeitspiegel* 1941, no. 42, 3) include quotes from the media of the propaganda regime as well as criticise their reporting and the regime's control over them. Although the mainstream media in the regime and the host country are criticised for not representing the interests of the groups, they inform the content.

Adjusting to the mainstream media: Although different groups developed their own alternative media to produce counter publicity, adjusting to the mainstream media was a strategy for producing an alternative for a group of people accustomed to a certain form of media. This also included consistency in appearance, such headers and recurring themed sections. Some issues include elements such as a quiz (Y.A. 1941, no. 23, 8). To reach a wider audience and to address English speakers, some editions of *Young Austria* are published in English. The publications of *Young Austria* end with the words 'published by Young Austria' and 'copyright reserved', including the address of the publisher. *Zeitspiegel* is produced more professionally, appealing to a different target audience, i.e. all Austrian refugees. This weekly is produced in a professional manner, similar to mainstream media. The difference is its content, which is produced by an editorial team, with written contributions from commentators, academics, and famous writers who are critical of the National Socialist regime, one example being Thomas Mann (*Zeitspiegel* 1941, no. 44, 6-7). In later editions of *Zeitspiegel*, the last page includes employment, real estate, and event advertisements. The newspaper, a form of print media, is appropriated by these groups to produce an alternative perspective in the German-speaking media environment. At the same time, the groups adjust to the mainstream media in their appearance, and their content is influenced by the mass media.

Decentralised production: Although print media are bound by a particular production process, which is rather centralised, alternative media also included alternative production processes in the editorial work. Within the limitations of the production of

print media, more participative and democratic elements were included. *Young Austria* asks readers about their opinion concerning what the newspaper should contain: ‘We have extensively reported on this discussion to make sure that all of our readers can comment on it. Please share your opinion with us!’ (Y.A. 1941, no. 1, 2). The committee that represents the editorial collective of *Young Austria* is democratically appointed by all members (Y.A. 1941, no. 13, 3). Discourses on democratic decision-making are part of the young refugees’ identity but are also reproduced in the editorial process. *Young Austria* publishes letters from supporters (see *Solidarity*), and members of the group describe their experiences while participating in events such as the International Youth Rally (Y.A. 1941, No. 25, 1; no. 24, 8). By comparison, the more professionally produced weekly *Zeitspiegel* publishes contributions by readers only as letters to the editor.

Financial support, advertisements, and donations: The financial costs of the serial publications by the refugees were covered not only by newspaper purchases as well as by donations. The price is printed on the cover page of the different publications. *Zeitspiegel* also includes small advertisements and asks for donations to the press on the last page. Generally, the different groups ask for donations in their media, not necessarily to support the publication but to support the actions of the groups behind the publications as well as third parties such as ‘Help the Soviets’ (Y.A. 1941, no. 20, 7-8; no. 24, 1) and ‘Do what you can – for the Russia Week!’ (*Zeitspiegel* 1941, no. 44, 5). The call for donations is in many cases accompanied by discourses of hope and resistance (see *Nachrichten-Dienst* 1945, no. 8, 5). Using media across platforms and advertising for other media platforms were strategies used in the various publications. The National Committee Free Germany promotes its radio broadcast on a flyer with the words ‘Listen to the broadcast of the National Committee Free Germany’. The promotion of related material also appears with reference to other publications and organisations and their actions. The financial aspects and the costs for print are thus an important component of these alternative print media.

Political positions and ideology

The media products of the groups differ depending on their political ideology as well as on their position within the political system they are resisting. The alliances formed with other groups and the political constraints in their relationships to the dominant political system are reflected in their media. The discourses that are produced as alternatives to the mainstream are discourses of resistance as well as of hope, solidarity, the enemy, and suffering. The different groups are represented not only in their media as well as by others as allies or enemies. Although they form alliances, the various political positions are clearly articulated. The different groups, their political positions, and their discourses that are relevant for resistance and the production of counter publicity are reflected in the alternative media. The discourses outline values and political positions presented in the group media.

Different actors: Resistance against the Nazis involved different actors with divergent interests and with anti-fascism as a common cause.

[1] Refugees played an important role in German-language alternative media during the National Socialist regime. They did not need to conceal their activities as carefully as did those who disseminated content criticising Hitler in the German Reich itself. Due to the more democratic environment in which they were embedded and their being resident in countries opposed to the National Socialist regime, they were allowed to be critical. As a result, they related to two different political systems, both

the one in which they were geographically embedded and in the regime that they resisted. The *Young Austria* newspaper's major aim was to write about:

what happens in world politics and what happens in our own country, concerning the English aircraft and the Russian aircraft, new books and movies, what the refugees do, and what they should do, about Viennese football (Y.A. 1941, no. 24, 6).

Anti-fascism is thus only one aspect of the group's political identity, which is also formed by living in a foreign country as refugees and a feeling of belonging and national identity. The refugee groups in the UK, represented by the *Zeitspiegel* and *Young Austria*, are connected to refugee groups in other countries.

[2] The main political parties composing the opposition to the National Socialist regime are the Social Democrats and the Communist Party. The symbol of the Social Democrats consisted of three arrows, and this is printed on the front cover of the party's publications, which describe the deeds of Hitler and their brutal reality. The publications focus on promises that were not kept by the Nazis as well as fact and fiction concerning the Jews (Die Drei Pfeile 5 and 7). Anti-fascism and anti-capitalism are key components of the party's political identity:

Hitler is the last chance of capitalism! National Socialism didn't keep any of his promises to workers, clerks, and farmers! It only helped the capitalists! National Socialism is fraud! (Die Drei Pfeile 7).

Anti-fascist and anti-capitalist writings can also be found in the publications of the Communist Party. This party's writings, however, show stronger ties to the Soviets. The publications of the Communist Party needed to be concealed when distributed in Germany since party members were considered political criminals.

[3] The working class plays an important role in the rhetoric of the political parties opposing the National Socialist regime, such as the Social Democrats and the Communist Party. 'German workers, unite in the revolutionary fight to eliminate national socialist dictatorship!' states a call to action against the Nazis by the Social Democrats (Social Democrats Germany, year n.a.). The working class movement was active in the resistance against the Nazis in different countries. Refugees mobilised for May 1 demonstrations, which originated as actions by the working class (Y.A. 1941, no. 9, 4).

[4] Immigrant workers were considered allies in the liberation movements from the Nazis, with slogans such as 'Austrians and immigrant workers unite against the enemy' (Nachrichten-Dienst 1945, no. 8, 6).

[5] Youth movements across the world organised rallies against fascism and Nazism. Freedom and liberty were key components of their rhetoric.

Unity in diversity: Mobilisation across the different political groups that resisted the National Socialist regime under Hitler occurred at international events such as International Youth Rallies and the Fight for Victory (Y.A. 1941, no. 22, 1; special edition, 1; no. 20, 5). Mobilisation included young people of different countries opposed to the Nazis. In *Young Austria*, the call for participation sought to encourage 'enthusiastic crowds of all kinds' and 'adversaries of Nazism and Fascism' to unite to 'make this world a better place' (Y.A. 1941, No. 21, 1). This cause united young people across the globe in youth rallies aimed at showing resistance to the Nazis.

Mobilisation across the various groups went beyond the rather symbolic resistance of the rallies. Austrian refugees were urged to join the Russian army to unite all 'enemies of Hitler' in their fight against Nazism (Y.A., no. 20, 1). This unity was, however, problematic due to the different situations and political positions of the groups. A reason against the formation of a sustainable 'free fighting force' uniting different refugee groups included the groups' different aims:

political and religious on the one side, and Jewish on the other. The first group wants to return to Germany when the Hitler regime is destroyed. They have the right to speak for the German nation, and their place would be in a Free German Fighting Force. The Jewish emigrants from Germany do normally not want to return and can thus not speak for the German public. Their place would be in the H.M. forces. The case of the Austrian refugees is different since they include many Jews who are Austrian patriots. (Zeitspiegel 1941, no. 46, 11)

Despite the common enemy, it was difficult to unify the various religious and political causes. Although the groups overcame their differences at individual events such as rallies, the formation of a sustainable fighting force was difficult according to *Zeitspiegel*. Although the enemy was clearly defined and involved imprisoned anti-fascists, workers, farmers, business people (Die illegalen freien Gewerkschaften Österreichs, year n.a.), and allied forces such as the Slovenian army and Russia (Nachrichten-Dienst 1945, no. 6, 4-5), there were problems in developing a sustainable fighting force due to the diversity of political positions (Working Class Movement 1935, 1).

Discourses of the enemy: The image of the Nazis in the alternative media was one of brutal and cruel liars. In the occupied countries, they were additionally described as thieves, stealing treasures from museums and castles. Discourses of oppression and cruelty accompanied the image of the Nazis. The enemy was addressed as Adolf Hitler in person as well as Nazism and the war. Due to the war situation, the enemy was clearly defined. Experiences of the Nazis' cruelties and torture were described in detail, especially the situation in concentration camps (Nachrichten-Dienst 1945, No. 8, 5). Despite the difficulties in overcoming differences between political positions for articulating their struggle, the groups were united by their common Nazi enemy.

Discourses of marginalisation: The publications of Austrian refugees in the UK not only strengthened their own community (Y.A. 1941, no. 10, 3) as well as argued for issues such as freedom of expression and freedom of thought in educational institutions, especially the universities. The discourses of marginalisation were related to oppression, persecution, and loss of national identity in the refugees' case. Alternative media were thus a way to give them a feeling of community and places to articulate perspectives that were marginalised in the mainstream media due to the refugees' marginalised position in society.

Discourses of fight and hope: Discourses of hope were created by phrases such as 'the growing resistance against the Nazis' (Nachrichten-Dienst 1945, No. 6, 4-5; No. 8, 3). Austrians form the 'strongest fighting force in history' to fight against the Nazis (Fischer 1945, 1). The Red Army that would fight Nazism created hope among refugees (Y.A. 1941, no. 24, 2). 'Hope relies on youth' (Y.A. 1941, no. 17, 1) states another slogan published in *Young Austria*. The discourses of hope appeared in relation to a strong fighting force that could overthrow the National Socialist German Workers' Party (N.S.D.A.P.) and free Germany and Austria from the National

Socialist regime. Discourses of hope also related to the end of the war, which could, however, only occur through the elimination of the National Socialist regime.

Discourses of liberation: Discourses of hope were closely related to discourses of liberation. Phrases such as ‘The Freedom Front fights for freedom and independence of Austria’ (Nachrichten-Dienst 1995, No. 6, 3) were important for the occupied countries. Liberation from the Hitler regime for the refugees meant a possibility to return to their home country. ‘A nation’s fight for liberty’ was a headline of an article in a publication of refugees in the UK (Y.A. 1941, No. 16, 4). The slogan ‘Austria will be free’ was accompanied by a drawing depicting a man breaking a swastika, double his height, into pieces (Y.A. 1941, no. 18, 1). The actions of liberation by Austrian refugees were summarised in the Free Austria Movement (Y.A. 1941, no. 22, 8), which was supported by different Austrian groups.

Discourses of identity: Discourses of identity were important in the publication of *Young Austria*. This serial publication was used as a way to represent political identity and the refugees’ identity as Austrians who had to leave their home country and live in exile. Recurring sections and themes in the publication included ‘Who we are’, ‘What we are doing’ (Y.A. 1941, no. 6, 4), ‘Our songs’, the mission of the group Young Austria, short articles concerning the weekly and its self-definition (Y.A. 1941, no. 15, 8), and introductions to different refugee groups across the UK. To strengthen the feeling of community, Young Austria organised events such as movie nights (Y.A. 1941, no. 25, 2) and home evenings (Y.A. 1941, no. 19, 8) as well as advertised and reported on events related to youth issues, such as student congresses (Y.A., no. 9, 3). Members of the group published reports about their work (Y.A. 1941, no. 25, 2); their experience of living abroad as refugees (Y.A. 1941, no. 11, 6; no. 6, 8; no. 12, 5); interactions with locals; experiences from events they attended (Y.A. 1941, no. 14, 4); experiences from participating in events and excursions organised by the group (Y.A. 1941, no. 14, 3); songs (Y.A. 1941, no. 25, 6; no. 9, 1; no. 19, 6); information on issues close to Austrians’ everyday lives, such as winter-sports (Y.A. 1941, no. 9, 3); poetry (Y.A. 1941, no. 15, 4); Austrian traditions (Y.A. 1941, no. 15, 3); educational material; history (Y.A. 1941, no.6, 3); articles on famous artists and composers (Y.A. 1941, no. 11, 1; no. 6, 5); politicians (Y.A. 1941, no. 12, 4); memories about ‘childhood in Austria’ (Y.A. 1941, no. 21, 8); and prose (Y.A., no. 8, 4 and 8) strengthened the feeling of belonging to the community of Austrian refugees and this community’s relationship to its home country. *Zeitspiegel* invited writers and academics to provide detailed analyses of the situation in Austria, Germany, and the Soviet Union. These included a prose piece beginning with the words ‘This was home’ (Zeitspiegel 1941, no. 43, 3), offering an idyllic image of the home country.

Everyday life activities that strengthened the community also included the necessity of working together to survive, with group activities such as building a new refugee hostel (Y.A. 1941, no. 15, 7). New members of the refugee community were welcomed as ‘new citizens of the world’ (Y.A. 1941, no. 8, 1). The community was also strengthened by reports from the different group branches throughout the country (Y.A. 1941, no. 6, 7), for example by a member of the editorial team writing about his visits to all of the branches (Y.A. 1941, no. 25, 1) and reports about group meetings (Y.A. 1941, no. 23, 6). The discourses of identity are strongest in the publications of the Austrian refugees. They can, however, also be found in the publications of other groups such as the Communist Party. In these cases, the identity was strongly influenced by discourses about home and the home country as well as identity as a

resistance fighter refusing to accept the occupation of one's country and ready to act upon this refusal.

Creating a feeling of solidarity: Solidarity is an important component in identifying with a particular political group and thus in publications of the counterpublics. In *Young Austria*, solidarity is usually shown by publishing letters from individuals (Y.A. 1941, no. 21, 4; no. 20, 5; no. 6, 4) or representatives of English organisations, such as the Bishop's Stratford Under Twenty Club (Y.A. 1941, no. 11, 6); the Youth Hostels Association (Y.A. 1941, no. 14, 4); the Central Council for Jewish Refugees; the American embassy (Y.A. 1941, no. 18, 3); the Woodcraft Folks (Y.A. 1941, no. 14, 4); citizens of the UK (Y.A. 1941, no. 16, 3); refugees in other countries such as the USA (Y.A., no. 10, 1; no. 18, 6), Canada (Y.A. 1941, no. 8, 6), Spain (Y.A. 1941, no. 4, 4), and Australia (Y.A. 1941, No. 11, 1); ex-Socialist or Communist Party-members; the Council of Austrians in Great Britain and the Foreign Student Services (Y.A. 1941, no. 6, 1); individuals and groups in Russia (Y.A. 1941, no. 24, 3; special edition, 1; no. 20, 8); and participants in International Youth Rallies (Y.A. 1941, No. 21, 1). *Zeitspiegel* (no. 51-52, 3) publishes the names of famous Austrians such as professors, writers, and artists who joined the Free Austrian Movement. Active resistance groups published solidarity reports by the population of Budapest in support of the Red Army (Nachrichten-Dienst 1945, 5). The solidarity of different youth groups was based on their identification with young people and their organisations as well as on their common interest in resisting the Nazis.

In their publications, Austrian refugees also show solidarity with other anti-fascist groups. These include solidarity with political prisoners and people in internment camps (Y.A. 1941, no. 11, 1-2), the Ambassador of the U.S.S.R. in Great Britain (Y.A. 1941, no. 21, 8), members of the Austrian army (Y.A. 1941, no. 25, 8), the Red Army (*Zeitspiegel* 1941, no. 46, 1; no. 2, 1; Y.A. 1941, no. 6, 9), the Free German Youth Movement (Y.A. 1941, no. 6, 9), and refugees in other countries. Solidarity was not only shown by addressing these organisations directly as well as by raising monetary donations (Y.A. 1941, no. 11, 2; no. 15, 7). Knitting warm clothes with calls such as 'Help for Russia' (Y.A. 1941, no. 23, 7) is one example of actions to show solidarity with the Russians. *Zeitspiegel* asks for donations with the slogan 'Do what you can – for the Russia Week!' (*Zeitspiegel* 1941, no. 44, 5).

Calls for resistance are printed with signatures of different supporting associations, individuals, groups, and organisations, such as the Socialist Students and the Young Zionist (Y.A. 1941, No. 21, 2). The publications collected and printed the names of supporters to show that the groups were not fighting alone but had strong supporters on their side. The solidarity shown by these supporters strengthened the political position of the groups.

Discourses of suffering: Discourses of suffering usually refer to the cruelties of the Nazis and the situation in concentration camps. A Christmas edition of *Young Austria* refers to a priest who was brought into the concentration camp to help Jews follow the commandment to 'love thy neighbour' (Y.A. 1941, no. 26, 1). The concentration camp in Mauthausen is described as 'the hell of Mauthausen' (*Zeitspiegel* 1942, no. 1, 1), referring to the murders of 660 Jews, experimentally poisoned by gas. Victims who were able to escape the concentration camps described in detail how they had been tortured and had to sleep seated on a wet floor (Y.A. 1941, no. 24, 5). 'French prisoners of war report' is the headline of an article in *Zeitspiegel* (no. 51-52, 2). The discourses of suffering not only include reports of experiences in concentration camps and prisons as well as from the German Reich during the war. 'Christmas under

Hitler' (*Zeitspiegel* 1941, no. 51-52, 8-9) is the headline of an article that reports the situation in Germany, with a lack of food and missing family members who had died in the war.

Discourses of resistance: The publications of the Austrian refugee groups portray Austria as a country with a strong resistance against the National Socialist regime (Y.A. 1941, no. 16, 1). The Germans are described as the evil conquerors and invaders. The struggle against them would only be achieved by strong unity of all Austrians, as described in an article published by the Austrian Freedom Front in South France (*Nachrichten-Dienst* 1945). With the headline 'Unity against Hitler' (Y.A. 1941, No. 6, 3), the Council of Austrian Refugees in Great Britain mobilised for their cause in *Young Austria*. To fight for their 'freedom', they had to eliminate their 'common enemy – Hitler' and his 'brutal war machine' (Y.A. 1941, No. 21, 2). The discourses of resistance are related to the common enemy and liberation through elimination of the enemy.

Discourses of anti-fascism: A message addressed to the 'Youth of the whole world' states:

Fascism threatens the honour, freedom, and life of the young generation. It is our duty to eliminate fascism and to liberate humanity from the brown plague. YOUTH OF THE WORLD, COME ALONG IN OUR FIGHT AGAINST NAZI-FASCISM!' (Y.A. 1941, no. 20, 8)

The fight against Nazism was combined with words such as 'freedom' and 'liberation' (Y.A. 1941, no. 18, 1). A call for mobilisation for the International Youth Rally states that the aim of the rally is:

to free the youth all over the world from Hitler-fascism by eliminating Hitler and his accomplices' for 'the freedom and liberation' of 'enslaved people'. (Y.A. 1941, no. 19, 1)

Again, the words 'freedom' and 'liberation' are prominent, and liberation would only be achieved by eliminating the enemy, in this case, the National Socialist regime personified by Adolf Hitler. 'Under the banner of Soviet democracy, go out and overthrow fascist dictatorship!' (*Working Class Movement* 1935, 13) is a call for mobilisation of militant resistance by joining the Soviet army. The weekly *Zeitspiegel* changed its subtitle from *Weekly Review* to *Anti-Nazi Weekly* in 1942, emphasising opposition to the Nazis. The discourses of anti-fascism were thus related to fighting, liberation, freedom, and the end of the war.

Past counterpublics and their media

Print media were appropriated in different ways to produce counter publicity. How the groups appropriated media technologies for their purposes depended on their immediate environments and the political systems in which they were embedded. This is especially obvious when comparing the public media of refugee groups compared with publications distributed in Germany and occupied Austria. The authors, producers, and distributors of critical media distributed in the German Reich were exposed to a much higher level of risk, and their media thus required concealment tactics. The alternative media were, however, also dependent on the various groups and their identities and political ideologies. This is especially obvious in the case of the refugees, where *Zeitspiegel* differs from *Young Austria* in its level of professionalisation, similarities with the mainstream media, and level of centralisation

as well as in representing different communities. The form constituting the alternative media of these past counterpublics can thus be categorised in terms of elements that belong to the production process and components that belong to the group identity, political ideology, and relationship to the dominant system. We have distinguished between these for analytical purposes, but the production process, appearance of the media, and the group identity reflect one another.

IndyMedia of the past?

The decentralisation of the production of media by counterpublics was dependent on the environment in which they were embedded. In a restrictive information environment such as the National Socialist regime, the production of alternative media content critical to the government was more difficult and required greater concealment tactics. Dissemination and appearance changed according to the level of insecurity to which the groups were exposed when publishing their political perspectives. Concealment by text and concealment by media technology were among the tactics used to disseminate publications by regime-critical groups, without the publications being recognised as such. Although these media were alternatives to the information provided by the regime, they were restricted in their dissemination and thus interaction with other groups and their media. Alternative though they may be, it is thus difficult to argue that these media produced publicity and contributed to the struggle for visibility as was the case in democratic media environments.

Serial publications by refugees were more likely to engage in the struggle for visibility due to the less restrictive media environment in which they were embedded. *Young Austria* can be considered the publication that bears the most similarities to the production processes of present-day alternative media such as IndyMedia. Despite the differences in the production cycle, which makes spontaneous comments and other forms of engagement impossible, *Young Austria* did engage with its readers. The decentralised organisation of the media is apparent in the loosely organized editorial team when the publication asks readers for their opinions concerning the serial publication's appearance and content as well as when it includes reports and letters by amateurs. Members of the group in the UK and abroad as well as other individuals affiliated to the group wrote articles for the serial publication, describing their perspectives on the group, showing solidarity, and reporting on experiences participating in different forms of political activity, and commenting on everyday life events. They were critical of the regime, and one of their aims was to create an alternative to the mainstream media in their host country concerning their marginalised group. This includes trying to change the discourse about their actions and their representation in these media into a more positive one.

Unity, collective, and identity

Studying alternative print media published to produce counter publicity to the regime in World War II also shows that, despite having a common enemy in the Nazis, personified by Adolf Hitler, the groups represented by their media were far from homogenous. According to the media reports, their different agenda could be united in single events such as rallies, but it was difficult to form a sustainable resistance against the National Socialist regime. The groups' divergent political positions showed solidarity with one another, as expressed in letters and financial support for other groups or simply reports on their situations in order to create sympathy and support. They were, however, presented as different from the supporting community

and its identity. A group's particular situation, its collective identity, and the identities and everyday lives of its individual members were thus linked to these members' political positions in their media discourses. The groups' publications differed depending on the group's identity and on its relationship to the regime.

The common enemy is presented through discourses of suffering, oppression, and torture. Liberation could only be achieved through elimination of the enemy and victory over the Nazis. Mobilisation for this cause cut across the different political positions and group identities. In other words, the fight against the enemy became part of the political identities of these groups. Their identities were framed by being marginalised victims of the enemy but were also accompanied by discourses of hope, liberation, and resistance. This differed between those groups, such as refugees, that used media as platforms for community interests and groups with publications representing political parties, such as the Social Democrats and the Communist Party. The discourses included in the media of the different groups thus differed not only in terms of political ideology, identity, and position as well as in terms of form of organisation. Although socialists, communists, prisoners, working class movements, and refugees could all be considered counterpublics relative to the National Socialist regime, their media had different purposes. The political parties had a clear political message compared to the refugees, for whom strengthening the refugee community, a sense of belonging, and discourses about their homeland were as important as the political message. The different forms of organisation were thus reflected in the media of these groups – or rather, the different groups were mapped in their media.

Counterpublics of the past

The media of the counterpublics of the past were clearly differentiated from the mainstream media. They used the same technique, i.e. print on paper, but this technique allowed them to produce distinct entities. The links between the different media were created by quotes, referencing one another, and letter writing. Since they used the same techniques, they showed similarities with the mainstream media, especially those groups that wished to use their media to publicly create alternatives. Although the groups were mapped in their media as separated entities, the relationships between the groups were apparent in their publications. This becomes especially clear in their relationship to the enemy (the regime) but is also evident in the discourses of solidarity created in the media by allies in resistance to the National Socialist regime.

The counterpublics of the past and their media can only be conceived relative to other counterpublics and to their enemy. They were embedded in a larger network of power relationships that went beyond these clearly political interests, also including discourses of identity, community, and everyday life. The media environment was restrictive in several ways. For those alternative media that were distributed in the German Reich, the regime and its propaganda, controlled by Joseph Goebbels, constrained the expression of alternative political opinions or made it impossible to articulate these interests publicly. Generally, there were fewer media technologies at hand that could support this process. Although print media could be appropriated to produce counter publicity outside of the German Reich, print media's possibilities were limited, especially regarding flexibility of production. Thus, although there are similarities in the practices, strategies, and tactics of the counterpublics of the past and the present, there are also differences due to the changes in the media environment in

the digital age and the political situation of counterpublics in contemporary democracies.

Digital media in protest

The counterpublics in the anti-fascist protests and nationalist demonstrations have different media technologies at hand in their struggle for visibility than did past counterpublics. They are embedded in different media and political environments. The protest events based not only on contestation as well as on confrontation between counterpublics from both ends of the political spectrum. Despite this different situation, there are similarities between past and present counterpublics' media practices and strategies, as will be shown in the analysis. The analysis of the digital media archive concerning the events is presented through the analytical lens introduced in the theory and literature review section. Based on the analysis of the online communication concerning these events from different political perspectives, we conclude with the concept of protean counterpublics as a means of thinking about counterpublics in the digital age.

For the marches planned by right-wing groups and the associated counter protests, digital media play an increasingly important role, especially for mobilisation, live reports during protests, and discussion after the events. Especially the emotionally weighted events in Dresden on the memorial day of Dresden's World War II bombing gain considerable attention from the mass media. The dataset is composed by different forms of online communication around the events, including online coverage by institutionalised mass media and comments on this coverage. Since 2009, Dresden, the capital of Saxony, has played an important role in the discussion of right-wing politics from a political, legal, and social perspective. The march organised by the National Democratic Party, Youth Association of East Germany, and affiliated groups occurs on February 13 (and in 2011 on February 19 as well), a day used to remember the victims of World War II as well as used by radical right groups for their actions. This has been accompanied by huge blockades by civil society and anti-fascist groups. In 2011, around 20,000 counter protesters involved in blockades opposed around 2,000 neo-Nazis⁸. The marches in Leipzig were considered preparation for the bigger event in Dresden.

In the following, the [1] technical affordances; [2] practices, tactics, and strategies; [3] and political positions and ideologies on the different media platforms are outlined. Due to the duality of online communication being the subject of inquiry as well as the site of inquiry, a detailed description of the data set is included in the discussion of the technical affordances of the different online media platforms⁹.

Technical affordances

This section does not present a detailed analysis of the affordances of the different media platforms, their organisational structure, and all of their functionalities and intended forms of use. The forms and context are presented in relation to this specific case, i.e. the technical affordances and forms that are appropriated in the protest

⁸ For more information, see case description in Chapter 3.2 and Chapter 4.1.4.

⁹ If not indicated otherwise, all quotes from the data set are originally in German and translated by the author. For a complete list of the data set see appendix.

events in the struggle for visibility of the different groups involved in the protest events. In other words, the different online media platforms allow different forms of expression of counter publicity. Along those lines, we will present the relevant technical affordances of the different online platforms for this case and the digital media archive in more detail for each platform, as briefly introduced in the methodology section.

As several studies show, activists have tactics for using the internet to enter and eventually challenge public discourse by gaining coverage in the mass media (Uldam 2010; McCurdy 2009; Lester and Hutchins 2009; Rucht 2004; Mattoni 2012). Consequently, as Downey and Fenton (2003) argue, counterpublics cannot be analysed in isolation from the mass media, which are, as Habermas (1962) demonstrates, dominant in public discourse. Media in general and, in this case, digital media in particular play an important role in the various imagined collectives that emerge around the protest events. As Anderson (2006) argues in the context of mass media, for 'imagined communities', the media play an essential role since they make it possible to develop a collective feeling of belonging between individuals who do not interact directly with one another. The imagined collectives in the case studied here – the radical right and left as well as civil society networks and citizens of the various cities – renegotiate ideologies through processes of power, taking advantage of (and being limited by) the affordances of digital media. The various digital media platforms and their different technical affordances foster different forms of interaction, which are relevant to forming these collectives and to expressing difference. Relationship to and representation in the mass media is an important component in this process. Describing the technical affordances of the various digital media platforms results of other studies that demonstrate their constraints and potential are included, additionally to the data set of this study.

Online mainstream media

News media coverage by online public and private institutionalised media play an important role in the protests. The representation of the activist groups involved in the events is important for their mobilisation and appearance in public in general. The total number of articles collected in online media coverage concerning the events is 1,140. 576 of these articles were published in institutionalised and corporate online media, such as websites of local and regional newspapers and TV stations as well as of media with national reach. The websites were downloaded as .html files, converted into .rtf files and analysed with the assistance of the TAMS Analyzer open source software for qualitative analysis.

Online institutionalised mass media generally consist of the online presence of media institutions that are already successful in other segments, such as television or print media. For news media institutions that also provide online news, the production of online content is based on a similar logic to that of producing offline content. The similarity of issues published in the online media coverage of institutionalised media relative to their offline counterparts is partly a result of their dependency on news agencies and press releases. This leads to redundancy and concentration on a limited number of issues, even as the audience is drawn to the online representations of traditional news media (Smyrniotis, Marty, and Rebillard 2010; Redden and Witschge 2010). Groups on the periphery of politics, such as civil society and radical organisations, are underrepresented and must develop strategies for producing visibility. These strategies include mass mobilisation, such as found in the counter

protests, as well as violence and the inflicting of property damage. The events studied here are considered newsworthy by institutionalised online media on account of their historical relevance, the sentiments of citizens concerning the ‘invasion’ by neo-Nazi mass action in the form of counter protests, and violent confrontation between groups at the two ends of the political spectrum.

Additional features of online news media are their interactivity, their dissemination cycle, and the convergence of various formats (De Zuniga, Puig-I-Abril, and Rojas 2009; Chan and Leung 2005). Citizen journalists and professional journalists find their spaces of expression online, but credibility is mainly the preserve of professional journalists, with citizen journalists instead playing the role of adversary (Nah and Chung 2012). This tendency is reflected in the updated information to which activists refer in the protest events. The ‘*taz*-ticker’ – live updates concerning the protest events from a left-leaning online newspaper – is deemed more trustworthy than the information provided by Nazi-free Dresden in the events in Dresden by some participants in the counter protest, despite their support for the blockades and their identification with the political cause of the anti-fascist alliance.

The live updates provide instantly updated information during the events, with each individual update including the time, date, and place of the occurrence. They thus provide a retrospective chronological overview of the events. Examples of live updates from institutionalised media are *Dresden Fernsehen*, *taz*, and *SZ online*. By using forms such as live updates, institutionalised online media move away from their traditional forms of publication by using the affordances of digital media technologies. Images are another important element of creating an overview of the events in online media. Especially for regional and local online media, images are a source of recognition for the audience of event participants. Images are displayed in photo galleries and connected to articles by a hyperlink. The collection of photos from the events is mainly composed of photos taken by professional photographers and journalists but sometimes also includes photos taken by participants in the street actions, which have been provided to the news media. A third element apart from text and images is video. Videos normally appear in separate online media that focus on video production. For the online presence of TV stations, they supplement the offline version, i.e. offer an additional space for distribution after having been broadcast on TV. Videos in institutionalised online media are produced in a professional and catchy manner, similar to news media clips on TV. The composition of videos that appear on the online presences of print media is similar to videos produced for broadcasting on TV.

Despite these new possibilities, the consumption of news online has not changed drastically relative to print and broadcasting media, and even online, the news media function as gatekeepers for certain audiences (Mitchelstein and Boczkowski 2010; D’Haenens, Jankowski, and Heuvelman 2004). This gatekeeping function is apparent in the credibility granted the institutionalised online media, especially by the less-radical segments of protest events, which consider the institutional media trustworthier than the alternative media. This changes when groups identify with radical political positions presented in alternative media. Activists at the radical ends of the political spectrum trust their alternative media platforms more than they do institutionalised media. There is thus a relationship between trust in institutionalised media and political affiliation. Despite the potentially broad audience of alternative and institutionalised online media, groups that share a particular value system compose the audiences for the various online media platforms.

Due to their professionalisation, their organisation as businesses, and thereby their financial dependency, advertising is an important part of corporate online media. Advertisements are primarily placed on the front page, and others interrupt articles or are placed alongside articles. Advertising also interrupts the photo galleries, where photos of the protest are interrupted by advertisements. Videos start with commercials that cannot be skipped over. Due to their opposition to capitalism, radical groups on both ends of the political spectrum do not approve of advertising and its resultant editorial bias in the mainstream media, which they regard as differentiating institutionalised media from alternative media.

Alternative media

Out of the 1,140 articles published online that were included in the data set, 129 were published on alternative online media platforms on both sides of the conflict, such as IndyMedia, representing the radical part of the counter protest and wider alliances, and Altermedia or Volksfont Medien, which represent those involved in the marches such as the New Right, Young National Democrats, National Democratic Party, and neo-Nazis. These media platforms differ in terms of their economic situations, modes of production, and political positions, which will be discussed later. The websites were downloaded as .html files, converted into .rtf files, and analysed with assistance of TAMS Analyzer.

Alternative media are dependent on the intentions, political values, and beliefs of the groups that employ various online media platforms to construct their alternative political perspectives. Fuchs' (2010a) concept of critical media is based on counterpublics according to Negt and Kluge (1972). He argues that critical media are characterised by both their form and content. They provide alternatives to dominant repressive perspectives like capitalism, patriarchy, racism, and nationalism; challenge domination; provide counter information; and provide a voice to the excluded. They aim to express what society ought to become, not only discuss what it is right at the present time, and by questioning structures of exploitation, they provide a base for social struggle. This perspective does not include right-wing alternative media since they cannot be considered a 'critical' left-wing project, but the perspective is useful due to its integration of both content and technical affordances. The concept of critical media thus includes not only alternative modes of production but also the political project of an alternative media platform and thus the political position on which it is based.

The most important online media platforms for this study are IndyMedia Germany (Figure 3) for the anti-fascists involved in the counter protests and Altermedia Germany on the other end of the political spectrum. The project de.IndyMedia.org is embedded in the international IndyMedia network. Altermedia Germany (Figure 4) has not been part of the international Altermedia network since 2011 but was founded under strong influence from the USA-based originator of Altermedia. Other media that describe themselves as alternatives to the mainstream and that cover some of the protest events are Volksfront Medien for the radical right and the website of the alternative local radio station ColoRadio in Dresden, which reports on anti-fascist action.

IndyMedia describes itself as a network of independent and alternative media and engaged individuals and groups, offering alternative and non-commercial reports on social and political themes. The relationship to mainstream media is defined as a possibility for developing counter publicity through the articulation of ideas and

opinion by civil society, with open posting being integral. Altermedia advertises products by and links to the Ansgar Aryan online shop for ‘street wear and lifestyle’, using the slogan ‘for true friendship, old heroes, Germanic Gods, and real ideals’ and selling clothing with symbolism reflecting their radical political position. Both IndyMedia and Altermedia regard themselves as reporting ‘the truth’ concerning the events, though from completely different perspectives. The ‘truths’ they provide thus differ considerably in accordance with their political positions. Altermedia Germany defines itself as the nationalist equivalent to IndyMedia, with the same emphasis on producing counter publicity to the mainstream media, which do not represent their interests and claims.

Both IndyMedia and Altermedia state that they consider freedom of expression, especially of those political positions that are not covered in the mainstream media, as one of their most important functions. According to their self-definition, one of their major differences from the institutionalised mass media is their non-commercial nature. Independence from commercial constraints should ideally be reflected in their independence from constraints by the mainstream and thus represents their foundation for being able to construct alternatives. The alternative media platforms on both ends of the political spectrum reject capitalism and market domination, though this is due to very different reasons based on their political ideologies¹⁰.

The alternative online media on both ends of the political spectrum describe themselves as being characterised by open publishing and lack of censorship. IndyMedia’s difference to the mainstream is also expressed in its lack of a professionalised editorial team, and the website is instead run as a collective, with a different relationship between the editorial team and its readers. Open publishing and a non-hierarchical relationship between reader and content are key components. IndyMedia’s focus on direct participation aims to enact emancipatory changes in the media landscape. According to their self-description, this should consequently spark changes in society. However, IndyMedia activists must also make decisions concerning news selection when it comes to discriminatory articles (Platon and Deuze 2003); this is carried out by a moderation collective. Although anyone can publish a report on IndyMedia, the articles are pre-read by a moderation collective that decides where the article will be placed, whether on the front page, under a theme, or in the open posting section of all reports. If an article does not follow IndyMedia’s criteria, it is placed in the waste archive. Most of the articles that are published concerning protest events are written by anti-fascist activist groups. The authors’ usernames are published alongside the articles and often indicate their group identity.

Altermedia includes the option of submitting articles, but the selection criteria are not described on the website. There is no transparency in the publication process. The names of authors are published under their articles. Nationalist activist groups such as the National Resistance (*Nationaler Widerstand*), Free Network (*Freies Netz*), or Free Forces (*Freie Kräfte*) are the authors of most of the articles concerning the events published on Altermedia.

An important element for the construction of an alternative is linking to like-minded websites, blogs, forums, Facebook groups, and Twitter streams. This is especially relevant during mobilisation, when websites of activist groups are linked to for further information. For the construction of alternatives in general, however, the existence of other websites that share the political opinion with a different function than

¹⁰ See Chapter 4.1.4.

alternative media is an important component. This becomes apparent in terms of the relationship between Altermedia and Metapedia. The wiki Metapedia, which describes itself as the alternative to the ‘extreme leftist Wikipedia’, was advertised with a banner on Altermedia until 2011. Metapedia describes itself as unconstrained by the mainstream and the pressure of conformity. One of its aims is to present a history in a ‘phenomenological way’ to uncover the truth usually hidden by ‘the bias of historians’.

Despite its claim to produce alternatives, the alternative online media platforms at both ends of the political spectrum adjust to the mainstream media to a particular extent. This development is also apparent in other political realms. In her study on NGOs and their relationship to the media, Fenton (2010) concludes that conforming to the normative values of the mainstream media is crucial for NGOs seeking to gain coverage. This process of conformation leads to a de-radicalisation of political positions. These adjustments are related to the reading habits of the audience as well as to the ability to create alternatives from a particular political perspective. A certain degree of moderation and gatekeeping is apparent in both IndyMedia and Altermedia. The level of de-radicalisation is less apparent than in the example of NGOs since both sides consider themselves radical alternatives. They must, however, remain within the legal framework, and for certain issues such as mobilisation for mass action, they wish to address a wider audience than radical activist groups alone.



Figure 3: Screenshot of IndyMedia Germany website (blurred by the author)



Figure 4: Screenshot of Altermedia Germany website

Websites and blogs

The websites and blogs by the groups that mobilised for the actions in the protest events are important for identifying the different aims and political ideologies of the groups. Due to the conflictual nature of the events, they also help identify the relationships between the groups and their representations of the Other. In total, 14 websites and blogs were taken into account. Their creators are anti-fascist groups, civil society groups, representatives of the National Democratic Party and the Youth Association of East Germany, and representatives of the City of Dresden. The websites and blogs were downloaded as .html files, converted into .rtf files, and analysed with assistance of TAMS Analyzer.

The websites and blogs of activist groups have the following functions: Information, mobilisation for action, interaction, dialogue, deliberation, communication, presentation, performance, and creative expression (Stein 2009, Dahlgren 2009). The possibility of using blogs and websites to present a particular political opinion can be considered as both a way of giving citizens a voice as well as of creating digital enclaves that only provide information about particular topics from a particular political perspective.

The lack of institutionalisation and professionalisation that initially marked the blogosphere was considered the opposite to the mainstream media due to the lack of professional gatekeeping. The anticipations associated with the affordances of blogs included the possibility for a plurality of political positions, which could be articulated on blogs and websites, as well as fragmentation and polarisation, especially of radical political perspectives. In the events studied here, representatives of the various groups on both sides of the conflict create blogs and websites mainly for self-representation, information, and mobilisation in the events. The blogs and websites represent the various political positions of the groups that form the alliances for the marches and counter protests in the events.

There is cross-ideological interaction on blogs in various political realms (Hargittai, Gallo, and Kane 2007; Benkler and Shaw 2010), not only in this particular conflict. At the same time, blogs and websites that present the political position of one specific political group can create fragmented spaces with little interaction (Papacharissi 2002; Gaskins and Jerit 2012). In the blogs and websites that mobilise for marches and counter protests, the various groups observe one another by following updates on the blog of the Other. They also refer to information published on the blog of the Other on their own blog. This strategy is particularly important for the alliances formed for the counter protests since they try to block the marches and thus need to stay informed about the actions of the Other. Generally, blogs are used in a rather static manner and do not allow for much interaction. The comments function is closed for most of the subsections on the blogs.

One of the main criteria for using a blog instead of a website is the lower level of technical knowledge required. This also means lower production costs, which is crucial for non-profit organisations and activist alliances. To support their actions, the blogs and websites on both ends of the political spectrum call for donations. The websites and blogs that mobilise for the marches of the radical right also display a pop-up window to an online shop that sells promotional material and clothes for 'national resistance'. Mobilisation and calls for action require primarily one-to-many communication, which could be the reason for the mainly one-directional

communication flow on the blogs. Google maps, WAP Ticker¹¹, news updates, Twitter hashtags, and phone numbers are included on the blogs to help communicate and coordinate the activities, keeping participants informed prior to and during the events.

Bloggers rely heavily on and cite from traditional news media and are not as insular as one might expect, especially on those blogs that are located around the centre of the political spectrum (Reese et al. 2007), as is also apparent in this study. Blogs by news media such as *The Guardian*, however, follow the journalistic role of the gatekeeper and are heavily moderated and channelled into particular issues (Matheson 2004). The boundaries between news media and blogs is blurred, and hybrids such as the ‘blogger-newsmaker’ (who influences the mass media) and the ‘journalist-blogger’ (a professional journalist who blogs) are emerging (Bakardjieva 2011). The issue of the blurring of boundaries between news and opinion in the blogosphere (De Zuniga, Puig-I-Abril, and Rojas 2009) is clear in this case since the blogs and websites that emerge around the events clearly represent the various political positions and articulate them in their attempts to mobilise for actions. They, however, become newsmakers due to the mass media following their blog updates, particularly for the alliances formed for the counter protests. The relationship between the mass media and the blogs and websites of the various groups is presented through quotes from these websites and blogs in online news media and *vice versa*.

The comments section

In total, 4,121 comments that were posted in response to articles published in the various online media that allow for commenting were collected. 2,718 of them are posted in response to mass media reports; 1,125 to reports on alternative media; and 278 to articles on websites and blogs of the various groups involved in the events. The comments were exported as .txt files along the categories of author, comment, date of publication, time of publication, response to other comment (if applicable), name of medium, and headline of article.

In online news media, comments sections were highly anticipated as a new form of participation available to citizens and a new space for interaction between journalists and readers (Schultz 2000). They are, however, usually moderated in institutionalised online media, and in some cases, comments are reviewed before they are published. Content such as, for example, hate speech, which is a component of cross-ideological discussion, gets censored. Moderators also censor comments that are off topic. An additional feature is the sorting of comments to give them headlines or let them appear under a particular discussion thread that can be created by users. Offensive comments on the alternative online media platform IndyMedia are hidden (Platon and Deuze 2003). Altermedia describes itself as more open than IndyMedia due to its tolerance towards comments by ‘the enemy’ and ‘anti-Germans’. The forms of moderation in the comments sections thus also become part of the self-definition of the various online media platforms.

One of the primary changes in online news media production is its transparency and the visibility of user participation (Karlsson 2011). Comments in online media can usually be posted after logging in with a valid email address. For the public, the authors of the comments can only be identified by their usernames and not by their

¹¹ Pre-smartphone text-based technology to receive updates via internet on the mobile phone.

real names. Registration with a valid e-mail address, however, grants the media institutions the option of contacting authors. The visibility and traceability of the comments offer the possibility of communicating to a broad potential audience from different parts of the political spectrum. There are, however, limits to this apparent openness. Moderation ensures that the comments are posted as reactions to the actual article, which also indicates that, despite the possibility of commenting on an article, the issues that are discussed are determined by the articles published and thus by the choices of editors and journalists. Forms of comments that are likely to be deleted in institutionalized online media are trolling and flaming. Interrupting a discussion through provocative and insulting comments that lead to a long discussion is usually referred to as flaming. Trolling refers to attacking naive readers with a sort of ‘trickster’ act in a playful, performative manner (G. Coleman 2012; Herring et al. 2002).

Within a constructivist approach to technology that takes the materiality of media technologies and the social discourses in technology development into account, the content of personal media is considered de-institutionalised and de-professionalised (Lüders 2008). Personal media are thus contrary to mass media, which are relatively institutional and professional. These two, however, cannot be clearly separated in the comments sections of institutionalised online media. Although the readers produce the comments, they do not reflect the whole segment of readers but only a selected number of authors who frequently comment, and discussion revolves around issues determined by the various institutions behind the online media. Despite the potential held out for cross-ideological discussion through comments in online media, this form of communication is constrained by the institutional determination of article content and by the moderation of discussion. These constraints are also apparent on alternative media platforms where comments are moderated according to the political position they present. This suggests that, despite the potential for interaction that comments sections offer, there are also limitations, and radical political positions remain in place, i.e. have better chances of articulating their political positions in alternative online media platforms that represent their cause.

The immediacy of Twitter

The data set used here includes a collection of Tweets with the particular protest hashtag (#) before, during, and after the protest took place. Tweets with #19februar (4,161); #13februar (1,688); #11610; and/or #RaZ10 (413) result in a total of 6,262 public Tweets that were collected, including login name and date. 2,937 of these were retweets. The tweets were exported into .txt files sorted by the categories author, date, tweet, in response to, and retweet. Messages on Twitter may not exceed 140 characters. The obvious advantages are speed, immediacy, updating of information, and the potential for dissemination of information. Tweets consist of the following components, which have certain functions in the events:

The hashtag as a sorting device: The immediacy of Twitter produces an apparently anarchist symbolic space in which individuals produce messages that are potentially publicly available across the globe. However, communication on Twitter follows rules and hierarchies that are inherent in the functionality of the platform, such as limitation of words. An important element within the framework of shared values and beliefs of the groups is the hashtag, with its symbolic sorting function, which produces meaning concerning a cause, event, or issue. The hashtag is not only a technical filtering tool for a Twitter stream but also carries meaning as a ‘social

marker' (Zappavigna 2011) of a group. As a result, the hashtag provides both the infrastructure for dissemination and develops a sense of imagined community (Gruzd, Wellman, and Takhteyev 2011) that can be a source of political action. In this study, the hashtag takes the form of symbolic representation of a particular political position. The hashtag also manages audiences that differ from broadcasting audiences since, on Twitter, they consist of 'random, unknown individuals' and imply 'personal authenticity and connection' (Marwick and boyd 2010, 131).

Direct messages: Direct messages, i.e. public tweets directed to @username, can serve different functions, such as coordination and mobilisation, in political protest. Despite their apparently interpersonal character, they can play an important role in interaction between counterpublics and the dominant public discourse as represented by the mass media. Although these messages are directed at a particular user, they are public. The analysis focuses on the collective component of these apparently interpersonal messages in protest. In terms of different political positions and interaction across them, Yardi and Boyd (2010) conclude that there exists heterogeneity and agreement on Twitter, although people are more likely to interact with those with whom they agree. They also argue that, although Twitter users are exposed to multiple opinions, they are also limited in meaningful discussion by Twitter's technological constraints.

Information diffusion by retweets: The distributing features of Twitter are of particular interest because Twitter is more of a dissemination platform, e.g. for news agencies (Armstrong and Gao 2010), than it is a platform suitable for deliberation. Twitter's strength, in the same tradition as other online forums, lies much more in its capacity in terms of volume and speed, especially due to word limits for each tweet. The retweet function plays a crucial role in organising spirals of communication to facilitate communication between online and offline activities. The repetition of the same message including the hashtag also functions as an amplifier of the particular tweet and the related cause or belief, i.e. the political position of an emerging counterpublic.

Video platforms

This analysis considers both videos and comments. The videos represent the ideas, symbols, and appearance of the groups, especially in the case of mobilisation videos, as well as provide an alternative perspective on the events in the case of user-generated videos. 47 videos were downloaded, transcribed, coded, and analysed with assistance of TAMS Analyzer.

The most frequently used platform for videos in the events was YouTube. Vimeo was less frequently used and was most often merely an additional platform to YouTube, i.e. videos were posted on both platforms, or videos that were banned on YouTube were then posted in Vimeo. The videos published on Vimeo do not usually include a comments function. Violent action in videos published on YouTube by both ends of the political spectrum can only be seen with restricted access. Historical revisionism in videos produced by the radical right is removed from the platform. YouTube uses age restrictions for videos that promote violence and removes videos that have been reported as violating German law (video 3). Videos posted on YouTube that include acts of violence directed against the Other or call for violent actions are age restricted, and users must log in to view them (Videos 2 and 18).

Videos gain support on YouTube by ‘likes’ as well as ‘dislikes’ from the Other. The usually much higher number of ‘likes’ than ‘dislikes’, however, suggests that the videos are more frequently viewed by those who share the video’s political perspective. A mobilisation video for the marches in Leipzig with the slogan ‘Right to a Future’ was viewed 26,412 times and received 234 likes and 71 dislikes (Video 4). Additional information can be added in a text field below the video. This information includes calls for action as well as information on place and time or links to other online media platforms.

The spectrum of actors using YouTube as a platform to publish their videos is broad. Video platforms are a space for hobby video producers, geeks, user-generators, corporate media, and music labels (May 2010). In this study, representatives of the various political groups involved in the protest on both sides of the conflict as well as of institutionalised media and politicians produce videos. This includes professional mobilisation videos, videos recorded on mobile phones during the protests, and videos in the form of news clips produced by institutionalised online media.

Some of the videos produced by the various groups, especially during mobilisation, are based on a well thought-out narrative and highly symbolic images, the persuasive element being most important in these videos. During the protest, the main goal is to present alternative perspectives on particular incidents, mainly violent action by the police or by opponents. Observers or participants in the protest events record these videos on their mobile phones. The user-generated videos during the protest events also include random short clips taken on mobile phones in the demonstrations. After the events, most videos are posted by institutionalised mass media using YouTube as an additional dissemination channel. Less frequently, radical groups post videos showing an alternative retrospective perspective on the events.

Commenting on YouTube

In total, 9,820 comments were collected, posted in response to videos on YouTube. All comments were exported as .txt files, including author, publication date, comment, and in response to, by using a script developed for this purpose. The analysis focuses on the video that received the most comments for the events in question. Viewed 123,899 times, this video accrued 3,337 comments between February 19 and July 19, 2011. These comments, including those flagged as spam, constitute the data set. The video (Video 44, Figure 12) showing the attack on The Praxis (*Die Praxis*) alternative living project by neo-Nazis was filmed and posted on YouTube on February 19, 2011, which was the day of action for the anti-fascist blockades in Dresden in response to the march organised by the Youth Association of East Germany. The video discussed here was taken on a mobile phone, i.e. represents the modes of production advocated as citizen journalism. The link to the video is the most frequent reference to YouTube on Twitter concerning the anti-fascist protests¹².

Compared with the immediacy of Twitter, the comments function on YouTube allows discussion over an extended period of time and thus includes cross-ideological confrontation. The user who posted the most comments is, according to his/her account profile, generally active on YouTube. The content published on the channel can be described as nationalist and implicitly racist, and the self-description of the user includes an outspoken criticism of left-wing parties and anti-fascists. The user

¹² The results of the analysis of comments on YouTube were published in an article in *TripleC* (see Neumayer 2012).

with the second-most comments closed down his/her account. Many of the comments posted in confrontation include hate speech and references to National Socialism. 123 comments to the video were flagged as spam by other users, which means that they are not immediately visible on the YouTube website but can be accessed by clicking on a link. 18 comments were removed and can no longer be accessed.

2,368 comments have a specific addressee, i.e. are in response to another user's comment. Unsurprisingly, the user who posted the most comments also received the most responses (468), followed by the user who posted the second-most comments (457). These two users have conflicting political perspectives, and many of their comments are an interpersonal discussion, sometimes commented on by other participants, over an extended period of time. The centrality of a few users in the YouTube comments is a tendency also observable on other social web platforms (Bruns et al. 2010; van Zoonen, Vis, and Mihelj 2011) where a few core participants dominate discussion. The 3,337 comments were posted from 678 different user accounts. 432 of these users only posted one comment, 106 users posted two comments, and just 35 posted more than 10 comments. The user who participated most actively in the discussion posted 802 comments, and the second-most active author posted 432 comments. The ongoing discussion between two or more users suggests that the affordances of comments on YouTube are not simply based on immediacy such as on Twitter but also permit ongoing confrontation, discussion, and potentially deliberation.



Figure 12: Video still of video 44

Networked representation on Facebook

The Facebook groups and event sites were especially used for mobilisation across a broad political spectrum in the counter protests and after the events for raising solidarity with activists who have been arrested. The Facebook group and event pages were mainly used for in-group communication and as an alternative to the mobilisation websites for self-representation when the authorities had shut these down. Six Facebook groups were taken into account, downloaded as .html files, including group description as well as posted status updates, comments, photos, and links. Within this study, Facebook is not considered in terms of its networking

character in particular but rather as a semi-public space in which the various groups, with their different political positions in the conflict, are represented in the form of group and event pages.

Active political participation on Facebook is mostly restricted to members of political organisations and groups. A study on Facebook users in Sweden shows that those users who are not members of any political or non-governmental organisation use the social networking site for informing themselves about political issues but remain rather passive and do not share political information (Gustafsson 2012). Similarly, the creators of group pages for the events studied in this thesis are not individuals but are groups that organise action in the events.

In terms of self-representation, Facebook, like other digital social networks, may be seen as a digitally mediated 'scrapbook', consisting of 'documents of friendship, guides in navigating new media abundance, and platforms for taste performances' (Good 2012, 13). To join a Facebook group in the events, especially in the counter protests, is an expression of identity by group members. Joining a group shows solidarity with a cause. A higher level of engagement is shown by those who actually follow the activity on the group page, engage in discussion, and participate in street action for which the group sites mobilises.

Privacy and visibility on digital social networks is a particularly well researched field of study (Vitak and Ellison 2012; Albrechtslund 2008; boyd 2010; Bossewitch and Sinnreich 2012; Bucher 2012). Apart from its technical privacy settings Facebook, has a set of unwritten rules that determine what people share and with whom (McLaughlin and Vitak 2011). The semi-publicity of the group pages and their participants is a way of showing solidarity with a political cause but is also used strategically in the protest events to identify participants in the marches and to follow the actions and articulations of the Other.

According to Wojcieszak (2010), being embedded in a social network – online and offline – generally supports political extremism. These extremist views are actively defended when challenged by opposing political perspectives. The defence mechanism even increases extremism by assisting the development of rationales that strengthen one's own perspective. These defence mechanisms can also be observed in confrontation between groups in the anti-fascist protests. However, very few incidents of confrontation occur in the data set drawn from the digital social network Facebook and included in this study.

Digital social networks are different from their offline counterparts, as shown by a study on how university students make connections in digital social networks. Far and away the most important component apart from maintaining social ties is 'information seeking', i.e. finding information on the members of one's network, rather than initiating contacts (Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe 2011). This is true for the groups surrounding the protest events, which are used to inform their members and to facilitate mutual observation between the organisers of the marches, the counter protest, and the authorities. The information-seeking component supports mobilisation in the network of friends over weak ties since the curiosity to learn more about a Facebook friend can spread awareness for the protest events due to the display of affiliation to a cause.

Due to its character as a social network, there are social norms, i.e. 'a framework through which people determine what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable' (McLaughlin and Vitak 2011, 300). Implicit social norms are not only guided by the

online representation of a group but also by its offline rules and norms. Although the platform is based upon social networks, they differ from offline networks, which are usually smaller because face-to-face contact is harder to maintain. The number of participants on the group pages of the counter protests is used as a measure of mass support for a cause even though not all group members will necessarily participate in the street actions.

In the conflictual situation between the groups, it is also important to mention which elements Facebook includes to show support for a particular cause. From this perspective, Facebook provides a 'like' infrastructure instead of an infrastructure of conflict. Members of the network can join groups, join events, or 'like' a page to show their support. As a result, Facebook's technical affordances are ones of showing support and solidarity, of uniting members of the network under a cause. This makes the digital social network a good platform for mobilising mass action, allowing in-group discussion.

Practices, tactics, and strategies

The first part of the analysis concerned the technical affordances of the various online media platforms, their various forms of expression, and how they differ and relate to one another in the production of counter publicity. This part of the analysis demonstrates how activists appropriate different online media platforms in the protest events in their struggle for visibility and their attempt to produce counter publicity. Although these two aspects are presented separately from one another for analytical purposes, they are nevertheless entangled with one another, and the line between technical affordances and practices, tactics, and strategies cannot always be clearly drawn. The same is true for the various online media platforms that are separated in the presentation of the findings but are closely related to one another, with one sometimes being an integral part of another.

Apart from social web platforms and alternative media, institutionalised online media play an important role in the practices, tactics, and strategies of the various groups involved in the protest events. Their representational character for activist groups targeting a wider public shapes online media practices, strategies, and tactics. The struggle for visibility is thus also one of the ascendant of one discourse over another, representative of the various political positions that emerge in the events. The emancipatory potential of the various online media platforms, however, differs according to their technical affordances. In other words, they foster various forms of expression, practices, and tactics over others. In the following, we explain the form taken by the various activist groups' struggles for visibility on different media platforms. This chapter thus concerns the question of how the various groups appropriate the various online media platforms, i.e. use their emancipatory potential in the protest events. The findings are structured across the various online media platforms as in the previous chapter.

Mainstream media online

The representation of the groups and alliances on both sides of the conflict plays an important role in the groups and their perception in society. A positive representation in the mainstream media is especially crucial for mass mobilisation since the violent image of radical activists produces fear in civil society and can prevent citizens from participating in blockades. In institutionalised online media, the events are mostly anticipated as massive riots that could drown the city in chaos. The headlines are:

This Saturday: Are riots and chaos threatening Dresden? (bild.de, 15/02/2011)

Leipzig's most dangerous demonstration weekend (bild.de, 14/10/2010)

February 19 – neo-Nazi march: State of emergency expected in Dresden (Kanal8, 19/02/2011)

Words such as 'chaos' and 'massive riots' frame the events with fear and violence. The protests are anticipated as massive riots produced by the neo-Nazis as well as the counter protests. The headlines are influenced by the need to make news seem newsworthy as well as to reproduce the perspective of citizens who do not participate in the protests. The huge number of police and police barricades as well as the noise of the events produce fear and hostility, which are reproduced in the mass media. Anticipation of riots and chaos lays the groundwork for catchy phrases and discussions. These, however, push the actual political message into the background by producing an image of radicalism and the need for police protection from both ends of the political spectrum. Reports of violent action against citizens are dramatised with headlines such as 'I thought I'd have to die' (DNN online, 22/02/2011). The inclusion of personal experience dramatises and produces fear concerning the events, but information about the political cause does not usually go beyond that the event is a conflict between left and right or between radical groups on both ends of the political spectrum.

Local newspapers, the audiences of which are more concerned about the events and better informed about the background information, particularly cover court decisions that take place prior to the protest events. The outcomes of the decisions are primarily reported with headlines such as:

The court decides: Demonstrators will be separated (bild.de, 11/02/2011)

Court allows one demonstration for Nazis and two stationary demonstrations at the railway station (DNN online, 19/02/2011)

Nazi opponents lose in front of the federal constitutional court (MDR, 12/02/2011)

Freedom of expression for neo Nazis too (sueddeutsche.de, 04/01/2011)

Generally, the events in Dresden get more coverage from institutionalised online media with national reach relative to the events in Leipzig, which are mainly covered by local online newspapers. In the coverage of the events in Dresden, discussion emphasises the Federal Court of Justice's decision to permit marches organised by the Youth Association of East Germany. The decision was based on the same event in the previous year when the police decided that it was too dangerous to allow the neo-Nazis to leave the train to perform their march, due to a fear of clashes with the massive numbers of counter protesters. Based on the right to freedom of expression, permission for the marches must be granted. To avoid clashes between the two sides in the conflict, the counter protests had to be carried out at a proper distance from the marches, with a river used as a natural division. Attempts to block the marches or disturb them through noise in order to express the political opinion of the counter protests was thus regarded as an act of civil disobedience. This has two results in terms of online media coverage: First, it leads to a discussion on undemocratic groups' right to freedom of expression. The negative representation of the marches results in discourses of marginalisation on the part of the New Right and the neo-

Nazis, who express their victory due to the decision in the court as well as their disapproval of their representation in the mass media. Second, it leads to discourses of marginalisation on the part of the counter protests, which are partly shared by left-leaning mass media. In the mass media, sympathy, however, goes out to civil society networks rather than to the more radical activist groups involved in the counter protests.

The march by the right-wing groups is portrayed as a misuse of the commemoration of Dresden's World War II bombing and the city's destruction as an excuse for presenting the right-wing ideology:

Extreme rightists misuse commemoration. Confusion about another neo-Nazi demonstration in Dresden (MDR, 01/02/2011)

Reports usually leave out the actual reinterpretation of the history, i.e. the victimisation of Germany in World War II and the recovery of German pride as a result of the march. Although reports present the historically stigmatised right-wing groups as the antagonists and, as a result, present the court decisions as wrong, they do not thereby support the perspective of the counter protests either. Both the neo-Nazis and the more radical counter protesters are presented as threats to society.

Another aspect by online mass media, especially local media, is practical information such as: The neo-Nazi demonstration can only take place at the central station. How will I get into the city? (bild.de, 16/10/2010). The dominance of practical information and court decisions is a result of the information that the journalists receive since online media are particularly reliant on press releases and press agencies. 32 reports concerning the events in Leipzig are published directly from press agencies, three from press releases by the church, and 18 from the Leipzig Takes a Seat civil society network. 37 reports concerning the protest events in Dresden are copied directly from press releases, and of these, seven are from press releases by Nazi-free Dresden. Although not directly copied, the police are an important source of information concerning the events. Especially the headlines after the events suggest a high tendency towards the use of police press releases:

Police reports 21 arrests for February 13 in Dresden (DNN online, 14/02/2011)

Police: Conflict between left and right (Rundfunk Berlin, 20/02/2011)

Police operation on the 66th anniversary of Dresden's destruction – memorial stone at the graveyard destroyed (DresdenEins, 13/02/2011)

The dominance of the police's perspective is, on the one hand, a result of easily accessible information. On the other hand, institutionalised online media are also less restricted in terms of space and format than are, say, print media and can thus easily integrate additional information if it is at hand, as police reports are. The information presented can potentially be diverse, but it is restricted to the information from established institutions and organisations such as the police. Considering this, it is unsurprising that violence is usually described as initiated by activists and rarely by the police since authorities provide the information. This form of media coverage results in strategies that activists use to create a different image of their own action by appropriating digital media platforms.

A predominant theme in retrospective event coverage is property damage and violence:

Massive riots at neo-Nazi-demonstration (BZ Online, 20/02/2011)

After the blockade. March prevented – neo-Nazis are angry (Der Tagesspiegel, 23/02/2011)

The continuation of discourses of violence is part of description of both sides' events. The actual political meaning is not included, and discussion is restricted to a mere description of events, in many cases exaggerated to increase the reader's attention:

After peaceful commemoration, a fight between rightists and leftists started. Firecrackers and resistance against the police and shouts of protest during the silent remembrance ceremony caused problems for the authorities. (SZ online, 14.02.2011)

The focus is on clashes between the opposing political positions, with no mention of the anti-fascists' actual aim in disturbing the commemoration. The actions take place on the *Heidefriedhof* (graveyard in Dresden) where 14 columns have been erected, each naming crimes committed by the National Socialist regime, such as the Auschwitz death camp. On the opposite side of the column, an image of a crying girl is meant to symbolise the wartime destruction of Dresden and to act as a general reminder of the terrors of war. Neo-Nazis, the National Democratic Party, and groups of the New Right participate in the wreath-laying ceremony in memorial of the war victims. They, however, remember the German victims of Dresden's 1945 bombing with the claim that this crime was equal to the Holocaust. They do this in part by citing higher numbers of victims from the bombings and lower numbers from the Holocaust. This denial of the Holocaust is, according to the anti-fascist groups involved in the protest, the reason for disturbing the ceremony. Although both sides receive press coverage by using violent action in the events, they are usually described as a clash between left and right without explanation of the political cause.

The social web plays a role in mass media coverage, especially Twitter, which was among the new ways of organising, coordinating, informing, and producing counter publicity for the events:

February 19 on Twitter: Discontent, a little bit of international standing and Justin Bieber (DNN online, 19.02.2011)

With Twitter against neo-Nazis – “Starve them out!” (LVZ online, 16.10.2010)

The role Twitter played in these protests is highlighted by these reports in regional online newspapers. The first headline refers to the #19februar on Twitter being a trending topic worldwide, mistaken with the date of Justin Bieber's birthday in the international Twitter community, which judged the ‘missing y’ in the German spelling of ‘February’ (*februar*) to be a spelling mistake. The second headline refers to strategies for using Twitter in the conflict. The media reference to Twitter in the protest events is part of the discourse surrounding new media platforms in protest, such as the #unibrennt movement in Austrian and German universities and the Egyptian revolution. The use of Twitter is referred to in a playful, humorous, and performative manner, excluding actual political statements. Twitter is, however, clearly used as a source by journalists concerning the protest events.

In the aftermath of the events, if participants in the marches have been outnumbered by counter protesters, it is usually referred to as a success for civil society. Success is credited to their non-violent actions:

Leipzig sends the Right a message (bild.de, 16/10/2010)

March of the Right prevented: Leipzig resists the neo-Nazis (Stern.de, 18/10/2010)

Peaceful protest against Nazis in Dresden (Die Zeit, 13.02.2011)

The articles are accompanied by photos of peaceful sit-ins, participants with whistles, dancers, and other non-violent performative actions. The performative character of the events also becomes obvious in online mass media coverage concerning celebrities participating in the events: ‘Wecker wants to sing ‘in the blockades’’ (SZ online, 16/02/2011), is the headline of an article in a regional online newspaper, referring to a live performance by Konstantin Wecker during the protest events. Violent action is presented as a separate entity, as a conflict between extreme right-wing and extreme left-wing groups.

Violent action by the police plays a comparatively limited role in the coverage by institutionalised online media. When covered at all, police violence was covered in centre-left oriented online newspapers, although the Amnesty International NGO criticised excessive use of violence by the police in a report concerning the events in Dresden. With the headline ‘We are peaceful, what are you?’ the liberal weekly *Die Zeit* (21/02/2011) writes about the critique by activists and politicians concerning an excessive use of violence by police in the counter protest. Other headlines are:

Police smash down protests against neo-Nazis (DerStandard.at, 19/02/2011)

High-tech police weapons in Dresden. Pepperballs against Nazi blockades. (taz, 20/02/2011)

An article in the Austrian online newspaper *DerStandard.at* was frequently mentioned in discussions on various social web platforms, used as an example of how foreign media coverage actually reports on the nature of the events, compared with German news media. Participants in the counter protests often quoted from the centre-left leaning online newspaper *taz* in their social web communications, noting to as one source that partially represented a version of the events from the activists’ perspective. Journalists from *taz* also interacted with participants during the events through the paper’s social web channels such as Twitter.

Creating alternatives

The alternative online media on both sides claim to represent an alternative to the mainstream, and confrontation between the two already becomes apparent in their self-descriptions. Both sides regard technology as playing a positive role since user-generated content in form of videos and photos provides the opportunity for reporting ‘the truth’, i.e. supports the construction of a different reality of the events. Reports concerning the events differ over the course of time. During the protest events, there seems to be unity among the various groups opposing the neo-Nazis. However, although the groups unite to fight for the same cause, they differ in their core values and strategies. After the events, they disperse again and raise criticism concerning their collaborators’ strategies in the blockades, turning their former allies into antagonists. Due to the conflict that frames these events, the perspective of the alternatives that are presented in the various online media also reproduce the image of the Other.

One strategy is to demonise the other side in the protest events, as evident in a report on Altermedia with the headline:

The day in Dresden from the perspective of the other side: 13 February 2011, alternative official and less official impressions of yesterday's events in Dresden (Altermedia, 20/02/2011)

The actual article that claims to provide a perspective from other sources on the events includes police reports and quotes from press coverage concerning violent action in the counter protests. The reports include accounts of 'violent activists breaking through police barricades' to 'disturb the stationary demonstration by the political right', burning rubbish bins, and Antifa-activists throwing bricks at police. By demonising the Other, they attempt to maintain a peaceful image of themselves. The maintenance of a peaceful image is a strategy by which the New Right attempts to improve its image and underline its victimisation and marginalisation by the 'democrats'. Quoting from the mass media is a common strategy on both sides, including critiques as to the lack of good reporting and the giving of credit when their own positions are positively represented.

Reports on alternative media published prior to the events consist mostly of calls for action from the particular activist groups' websites and constantly updated information concerning the events, such as 'Dresden – Fight your way to the right to remember', a headline on the radical right online medium *Latest National News* (*Neueste Nationale Nachrichten*, 14/01/2011). The calls for action for the marches include advice and rules to keep in mind during the protest in order to maintain a peaceful image that cannot be misused by the mass media and the opposing side (e.g. Altermedia 02/02/2011).

Publications during the events consist of updated information and live updates, similar to those found in institutionalised online media. Both sides in the conflictual events use live updates, but there are more frequent updates from the counter protests. The activists from the far right tend to use mobile communication during the protest. Radio is, however, an important element of providing updated information during the events, underlining the multi-media environments in which the counter protests are embedded. The local radio station ColoRadio states on its website: 'Action radio for February 13 and 19 – bring your mobile phone or mini-radio with you!' (ColoRadio, 11/02/2011) and features calls for participation in the counter protests. Some participants in the blockades took this advice and listened to the radio station on their mobile phones or even on a portable radio. In the area where the marches took place, the radio station could be heard through open windows in apartment blocks. The alternative online media in the events were thus used in combination with traditional media and on various platforms, depending on their accessibility during the events.

After the events, the various platforms provide reports concerning the experience of groups and individuals that had taken part, such as 'JLO and FN Nordsachsen¹³ on the events in Dresden' (Altermedia, 21/02/2011). These personal experience reports provide perspectives from one side 'within' the events. Due to the conflict on which the event is based, this also involves the two sides observing and commenting on the reports of the Other. For example, 'What the Nazis in Dresden claim to have experienced' (Netz gegen Nazis, 23/02/2011) is the headline of a report that critically comments on reports on the alternative online media platforms and on radical right websites and blogs. Constant awareness of the actions of the Other is not only a result of the conflict itself but also of definitions of the groups themselves. Being an anti-

¹³ JLO is an abbreviation for Youth Association of East Germany, JN Nordsachsen for Young National Democrats North Saxony.

fascist involves being informed about the actions of the neo-Nazis. This specific function of alternative online media platforms relative to the anti-fascist actions and groups differs from ideas concerning the development of digital enclaves safe from intrusion by and interaction with the Other. Although the 'interaction' is based on strengthening the hostility towards the Other, mutual observation and awareness of the actions of the Other are important to the creation of alternatives in this case.

At the same time, alternative online media platforms are used by the far right to present an alternative, politically ideological view of the events as well as of the history related to the events. 'A real Holocaust in Dresden: February 13, 1945. About 500,000 people were democratically exterminated in one night!' (Globalfire, 2011). This article equates the Holocaust with Dresden being bombed. Due to the historical significance of the events, historical revisionism plays an importance role. The discourses of victimisation, marginalisation, and oppression by the 'democrats' are significant strategies for constructing an enemy that can be made responsible for contemporary problems such as unemployment.

Alternative online media platforms are also used in relation with other platforms to reveal the identity of the Other. IndyMedia, for instance, posted photos from a bus of neo-Nazis on their way to the demonstration. The photos had been posted on Facebook by one of the participants in the march and had helped the anti-fascists identify people. The photos also appeared in an article entitled 'Nazi photos from the Nazi demonstration/bus Dresden 2011 part 1' (IndyMedia linksunten, 20/02/2011). The different functionalities of the platforms become apparent. The apparent privacy of Facebook meant that the posting of photos of participants in the marches did not appear to be a threat to their personal identities. This, however, was proved untrue by the publication of the photos on IndyMedia with the aim of identifying the Other and using a generally public online media platform. Mutual observation of the Other is thus also a strategy for revealing individuals' political affiliations. Although the publication of the photos appeared acceptable on Facebook, their publication on IndyMedia led to two of the identified individuals shutting down their Facebook accounts, according to the comments posted in response to the article.

Have your say in the comments section

The comments section is meant to be a place for discussing events from different political perspectives. This is true to some extent in the events studied here. There are different forms of comments, and their occurrence depends on the various online media on which they are posted. The tactics involved in commenting can be considered a specific outcome of the conflict, the construction of a common enemy that unites the various political positions, and the critical position relative to the mass media by the radical groups in the conflict on both sides. In the following, the various forms taken by the comments are presented with examples from the protest events:

Deliberative comments: Participants react to comments by others in the comments section and discuss these, sometimes over an extended period of time. In some of the online media platforms, participants seem to already be acquainted with one another and know one another's usernames. In the protest events, freedom of expression is a frequently discussed topic. In a comment entitled 'basic rights', in response to an article published by the online magazine *Der Spiegel*, a participant writes:

That's what basic rights are about. They are rights for EVERYONE, also for political opponents. Everyone should be able to discuss peacefully. Blocking registered demonstrations is not acceptable in a democracy. (Comments 126)

This comment is clearly posted by a supporter of the marches but does not include hate speech or a direct attack on the Other. The response to the argument is that freedom of expression should not be granted to groups that pursue undemocratic aims. The tone of the responding comment is argumentative and does not include hate speech or direct confrontation. The discussion includes various political positions concerning the issue and continues over an extended period of time. Although the comments are deliberative, they do normally not pursue consensus. The various participants use arguments to persuade others to join their opinion and support their political position, but it is clear that no agreement is aspired to between the two confronting positions. The participants read one another's comments and respond to them not with the aim of consensus but with that of strengthening their own political perspectives.

Reference comments: References are made to other media reports, websites, statistics, and studies concerning the issue discussed. Quotes from Wikipedia and other encyclopaedia are used to argue that another participant in the discussion misused a word, often describing a particular political ideology:

I quote: [username] does not want to accept ignorance of the authorities. [link to article] This is not ignorance by authority. This quote describes it best [link to article on the German Wikipedia concerning bureaucracy]

There is a lot to say about revision of history, for example here [link to website] (Comments 126)

Reference comments support an argument and link to websites and media articles that share the same political opinion. To prove that the opponent in a discussion is wrong, participants link to definitions of words. The sources intended to support the trustworthiness of an argument in discussions on institutionalised online media platforms are usually not those that clearly present a particular political affiliation. References that are considered trustworthy and valid to support arguments are Wikipedia, encyclopaedias, and institutionalised online media platforms. References to social web platforms are instead used as sources of information on the events themselves, such as:

If even politicians, members of parliament, and other public people participate in illegal blockades, it should be reported to authorities. Although : According to TWITTER the chief prosecutor was also there! (Comments 52)

Reference is made throughout the comments to social web platforms as sources of information on specifics of the events. These sources possess less credibility and are regarded as less 'truthful' than institutionalised online media platforms or encyclopaedias. They are not used for clarification but to add new information to the discussion.

Comments of conflict: Compared to comments that are argumentative in tone, comments of conflict directly address the Other and confront the opponent. Moderators remove comments that are directly addressed to other participants in the discussion and include hate speech. Comments of conflict thus not only directly address participants in the discussion but also the Other in a more general sense:

Nazi-scum does not need freedom of expression. (Comments 61)

-
- Dirty cops beat up peaceful demonstrators [...]
 - This day has again shown what a disgusting anti-German Jew system we are ruled by. (Comments 52)

These comments clearly include hate speech and leave no space for discussion. They were published in the comments section of the alternative online medium Altermedia and would have probably been removed by moderators in an institutionalised mass media comments section. The comments sections thus reflect their readers. Although comments of conflict also address particular participants in the comments section, they do not always consider the potential audience to which they are exposed. The actual audience, however, differs in the case of institutionalised online media as opposed to alternative online media platforms. This becomes especially clear in comments of conflict including hate speech, which can only exist in the enclaves provided by alternative online media platforms.

Moderation comments: Institutionalised online media remove comments that violate their terms of service. There are different ways of dealing with comments that are inappropriate for the online media platforms. To post a comment, users must normally register with a valid e-mail address. One comment moderation strategy is to publish the contents after they have been approved by an editorial team. Another strategy is to remove from the discussion comments that are inappropriate or that violate the terms of service. This strategy is sometimes accompanied by moderation comments such as:

Please return to the topic of the discussion thread. Thank you. (Die Zeit)

This comment was deactivated – violation of terms of service (nnz-online)

We cannot unfortunately publish this comment. Please respect our netiquette and our terms of service. (Sueddeutsche.de)

This comment was marked for investigation. (Welt online)

Removed. Please do not use historical revisionism, and validate your arguments with sources. (Die Zeit)

The online newspaper *Die Zeit* signs each moderation comment with ‘the editorial team’. In discussions, especially concerning politically sensitive topics that circulate around issues with an underlying conflict, as in this case, moderation prevents hate speech, violation of terms of service, violations of the law, and off-topic discussion. The moderation comments suggest that this form of moderation addresses participants in the discussion directly. Comments must thus meet certain criteria in order to be published: These include reasonable arguments, exclusion of hate speech, and actual on-topic discussion. Such criteria foster deliberation while excluding radical political perspectives, which are censored on institutionalised online media platforms. One result could be the de-radicalisation or general exclusion of arguments by radical political groups in these discussion sections. Due to these moderation criteria, the discussion is limited by the issues covered in the articles published by the media institution.

Correcting and defining comments: Since discussions in comments sections continue over an extended period of time, many of the comments are posted in response to other comments rather than to the article on which they comment. One strategy for these responses is to correct information, define it with more detailed information, or include a reference comment. Correcting and defining comments in this data set occurs most frequently with terminology describing a particular political position or

ideology in the protest events. The following discussion of the term ‘liberal’ is part of more than 800 comments posted in response to an article criticising police violence in the Dresden events, published on the Austrian online newspaper *DerStandard.at*:

[User 1]: 20,000 leftist ‘liberals’ block a stationary demonstration? They are not liberals, because liberals would accept others’ rights to freedom (freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, ...).

[User 2]: To protest against Nazis is liberalism at its best!

[User 1]: No. Freedom of assembly, freedom of expression,...

[User 2]: You obviously don’t have any idea about liberalism. (Comments 61)

As in the deliberative comments, this form of comment responds to the Other in a discussion concerning a particular political terminology. However, such comments rarely result in agreement on the meaning of the term. Correcting and defining comments represent the various political positions in the conflict and the ‘correct’ definition of certain terminology according to these positions’ worldviews. Such comments support the political perspectives of the participants since, by means of their own knowledge of the correct definition of a particular term, they can conclude that the Other is stupid and less knowledgeable. This process strengthens opinion about the enemy and one’s own political position.

Informative comments: Informative comments are the posting of further information relevant to an article. This form of comment usually adds new information or links to photos, videos, and other articles. Informative comments are especially dominant on IndyMedia Germany. Comments on this alternative online media platform are divided into comments that supplement information in the article and those that do not. Those comments that contain no supplementary content are hidden. This structure supports comments that provide additional information. An article concerning the attack on The Praxis (*Die Praxis*) alternative living project by neo-Nazis, which was filmed and posted on YouTube, received the following informative comments:

[User 3]: According to a comment in the live updates on de.IndyMedia, the video is also available in HD. It might be better to use the photos from that video. Good job. I hope they can find the attackers.

[User 4]: This is already HD. [...]

[User 5]: Minute 2:30 with “Good Night Left Side”-jacket. He also showed up at the gathering at the central station. [photos]

[User 6]: You mean [name] for sure. He wears this jacket. Photos are here: [photos] (Comments 98)

This article received the most comments of those published on IndyMedia concerning the events. The aim of the comments is clearly to collectively identify the neo-Nazis who were involved in the attack on the house. The comments function is thus used strategically to collectively gather information on an act of violence by the Other and to provide information that can have a collective effect, in this case, the identification of attackers by crowd-sourcing pre-existing knowledge about the people shown in the video, technical knowledge, and additional documentary material. Informative comments can also be a result of questions asked in an article or in the comments

section (e.g. Comments 5). During the protest events, these can act as a supplement to live updates and to the Twitter stream.

Affirmative comments: The comments section does not only feature criticism of reports. Some comments support the argument made in the articles to which they respond. This is especially observable on alternative online media platforms: The Other observes these platforms, but opposing political positions rarely show up in the comments sections. Articles on these platforms thus receive affirmative comments, such as this comment posted in response to an article on Altermedia:

This statement by the Youth Association of East Germany [...] and this awesome article, in which the police reports and then the regime press speak, should be disseminated as widely as possible on the net. (Comments 52)

The article was written following the events and published on the alternative online media platform Altermedia from the perspective of a participant in the march in Dresden on February 19. The affirmative comment supports the perspective presented in the article and encourages its dissemination. The comment is not only affirmative of the article but also of the actions and the political perspective represented by nationalist groups. Considering the frequency of affirmative comments, especially in right-wing and nationalist alternative media, they support the process of the retreat of like-minded groups into their own media.

Websites and blogs

In the entire text corpus of websites that mobilise against the neo-Nazis, after exclusion of articles, clauses, and personal pronouns, the words ‘Nazis’, ‘Nazi march’, and ‘neo-Nazis’ are among the most frequent words, apart from temporal and spatial references, such as the names of the cities where and the month when the actions take place. On websites and blogs that mobilise for the marches, the words ‘commemorate’, ‘German’, ‘democracy’, and ‘democrats’, the latter two of which describe the Other, appear most frequently. Words that indicate background information, such as ‘bombing’ and ‘remember’, as well as self-definition words, such as ‘antifa’ and ‘blockades’, or – on the other end of the political spectrum, ‘funeral march’ and ‘Germany’ – are less frequent than words indicating reference to the Other. A common feature on all of the websites and blogs that mobilise for the protest events is the publication of press coverage of the events and a list of supporting organisations and individuals, designed to show broad support for the particular political positions.

Mobilisation for the human chain (13 February) around the old town of Dresden may be considered an action initiated by one of the most conservative groups involved in symbolic counter activities apart from the silent vigils organised by churches. The website of the City of Dresden (Figure 5) is professionally made and allows for no interaction with readers. The mobilisation is carried out by a marketing company and includes a range of public relations media, such as posters, flyers, postcards, banners, a professional website, and a Facebook page. The only possible form of interaction on the website is a contact form. The static form of the website resembles the planning of the action itself. The human chain is planned in detail in terms of its exact placement, the five-minute ringing of church bells at 14:00 to signal the closing of the human chain, and the serving of tea along the chain. According to the website, the human chain should act as a sign of peaceful commemoration as well as act as a symbol for peace and humanity and against the misuse of the day by right-wing extremists.

Dresden should be a place of tolerance in which violence and racism are unacceptable.

The Nazi-free Dresden (Figure 6) alliance uses its website to present itself in quite a different manner. Coordination and information concerning the actions are fluid and frequently updated. Activists from other cities and from abroad are offered places to sleep at the homes of anti-fascists in Dresden. The coordination of buses works partly over the website and partly through local organisers at the places where the buses depart. Since Nazi-free Dresden is neither funded by a political party nor supported by commercial interests, the organisation uses its website to request donations to support its activities. An e-mail address is provided as a means by which the press and others can contact the organisation for information. Other promotional and mobilisation material can be downloaded, such as a 'mass newspaper'; buttons, posters, and banners can be ordered online; and functions exist for self-print and integration into websites and blogs. The website includes a newsletter that can be ordered so that the recipient is kept up to date. To show solidarity with the cause, people can sign a supporters' list by sending their names to the e-mail address [signature\[at\]dresden-nazifrei.com](mailto:signature[at]dresden-nazifrei.com). The names are then listed on the website.

Information on various activities is constantly updated, not only because of the dynamic form of the organisation but also due to the need to adjust to new court decisions. Demonstrations in the vicinity of the marches were deemed illegal by the court, and the place where the marches would take place was only announced on the day of the action. The plan of action thus needed to be flexible and constantly updated, as reflected by the dynamic website. The information given on the website also includes blockade trainings, with slogans such as '19 February in Dresden: Block the Nazis where they want to march!', which indicates the flexibility of the events. The actions had to be adjusted frequently, as this quote from the Nazi-free Dresden website shows:

Due to the massive hindrance of our protest by the police, the court, and the city, we are considering an additional form of blockade. [...] We will block the highway.

Uploaded maps and Google maps that are constantly adjusted to the new routes of the marches are an important element of the website. Updated information is provided via a WAP mobile phone ticker, Twitter, the action radio broadcasted on the local radio station ColoRadio, an information phone, and a live updates feature integrated into the website. An additional phone number could be called if activists were arrested.

The counterpublic the group represents and its acts of civil disobedience are a result of the criminalisation of its activities. The organisation includes information on civil disobedience as well as the actual political cause, i.e. how February 13 turned into an event of 'national commemoration' for the German victims of the bombings, denying the cruelties of the National Socialist regime. The call to action is published in several languages, including English:

Finally the time has come that all of you, dear sympathizers of the alliance, can and shall get active! On the 15th of January a nationwide action day is going to happen [...] It's only to make visible what we know already anyway: This year we will travel from all over in order to block the Nazis in Dresden, again! (English in original)

The call not only mobilises for participation on the day of action but also stresses the decentralised nature of the organisation. The alliance calls for activists to organise sub-events, distribute informational material, and participate in the blockades. The organisation and information concerning the events is thus quite open and flexible, as is evidenced by the frequent updates on the website. The websites of more radical groups in the protest events include Nazis Wegbassen and No pasarán¹⁴ (Figure 7). They explicitly mobilise for blockades and for fighting the Nazis by any means necessary. Although they present their own more radical identity, they direct the visitors of their websites to Nazi-free Dresden for further information.

In Leipzig, mobilisation is more divided since it does not unite all groups acting in civil disobedience under one banner, as is the case with Nazi-free Dresden. The Leipzig Takes a Seat (Figure 8) civil society network calls for civil disobedience in the form of blockades but through exclusively non-violent action. The call to action can be downloaded from the website in several languages. Other materials available for download are flyers, banners for websites and blogs, posters, etc. Further information is provided on non-violent civil disobedience and on what Leipzig residents can do during the protest. Background information pieces are entitled ‘We will not allow the Nazis to march a single meter’, ‘What does the law say about the demonstrations?’, ‘What can I do before October 16?’, and ‘3 things that everyone can do against Nazis’. On the website, the organisers ask readers to mobilise in digital social networks, i.e. on Facebook and StudiVZ, to follow the organisation’s Twitter account and retweet its messages, to send the call on to at least five people by e-mail, and to invite at least ten people to join the protest. Civil disobedience is presented as a form of non-violent political activity in which everyone can participate. The call for donations requests not only financial support but also items such as megaphones, drums, whistles, and anything that helps produce noise to disrupt the Nazis. The forms of action underline the performative nature of the events. The organisation backs up its claim of being completely non-violent by referring to newspaper articles:

It is unfortunate that the LVZ article supports the neo-Nazi march by focusing on words such as ‘blockade concepts’, which suggest that this is a so-called ‘brick-throwing’ action.

Although Leipzig Takes a Seat mobilises against neo-Nazi marches across a broad political spectrum and gains support from institutionalised media, NGOs, and politicians, it uses discourses of marginalisation by the mainstream media on its website. The criticism is based on the presentation of violent blockades and acts of violence, from which they wish to distance themselves. In Leipzig, the anti-fascist group Red October (Figure 9) mobilised using its own website and call. Unlike Leipzig Takes a Seat, Red October does not regard non-violent action as the only form of civil disobedience that should be used at protest events. Like Nazi-free Dresden, however, Red October’s call is posted on its website in several languages, including English:

With several demonstrations nazis want to march through Leipzig at 16th of October. The brown spectacle is under the slogan “Right to future“. [...]We – the antifa-alliance roter oktober (red oktober) – call all progressive-minded people to go on the streets on the 16th of october against all kinds of rascism,

¹⁴ ‘¡No pasarán!’ Is spanish for ‘They shall not pass’; the group No pasarán is one of the supporters of Nazi-free Dresden.

antisemitism and nationalism – and to prevent all nazis from marching anywhere! (English in original)

The call does not suggest major differences between the causes of the anti-fascist and the civil society networks. The difference lies in their means, which are not necessarily non-violent, and they explicitly call for acts of civil disobedience. As with Nazi-free Dresden, mobilisation material can be downloaded from the website for print and can be integrated into a website or blog. The available material consists of a call to action as a .pdf in a print-friendly A4 format, a jingle in the MP3 format, a flyer, a poster (for download or for pick up from a number of locations), stickers (for pick up), banners in different formats for websites and blogs. The march route maps are constantly updated. The website also includes a link to a YouTube video that offers tips for demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience. Organisation of buses and sleeping places is similar to that of Nazi-free Dresden, although these counter protests are smaller and require less coordination.

On the other end of the political spectrum in the events in Dresden, the Alliance for Action Against Forgetting (Figure 10) commemorates the victims of the bombings with the slogan ‘A monument for the dead – to their honour – a reminder to us’. The group organises funeral marches in various places, also using the Dresden slogan of ‘Don’t leave February 13 to the democrats’, which suggests that the actual political message overrules the claim of commemoration. Similar to the mobilisation websites for the blockades, the group asks for donations. The website includes a very detailed archive on previous activities. Apart from the actual event, the Action Week February 13 in Dresden, the organisation announces information meetings on its website. It also asks for promotional material from previous events, such as flyers and stickers, in order to create new ones. Postcards, shirts, pullovers, brochures, DVDs, stickers, posters, and flyers can be bought in an online shop. The design of the website, mainly coloured in grey and black, suggests that the group is based on a historical cause. On August 24, 2010, the organiser of the February 19 event Dresden 2011 – Fight for an Alley of Truth writes:

We don’t need endless discussions on the *Weltnetz*¹⁵ but instead continuous solidarity through resistance. The organisers of the events, independent from one another, will forward information. Groups, buses, and travel communities may register until mid-January and will receive detailed information. People who do not register, travel by themselves, or only register on the day of action cannot be considered in the coordination of the events!

The way in which information is presented on the website depends on the form of the actions in question. Since the group does not encourage spontaneous actions, these forms of online communication are somewhat neglected. The group relies on one-to-one communication with group leaders who inform their group members by phone or e-mail via a hierarchical structure. The more hierarchical nature of the organisation is also evident in its media use. Discourses of marginalisation and counter publicity to the mainstream likewise play an important role on the website:

As a reaction to the political misuse of the funeral march in Dresden, the absence of honourable commemoration and the transformation into a massive political event [...] to return to an honorary form of remembrance [...].

¹⁵ A German term for internet, originally used by language critics but never officially integrated into the German language. Nowadays, it is mostly used by the extreme right of the political spectrum.

The idea behind the alliance is historically grounded yet is embedded in the contemporary democratic system that prevents 'honourable commemoration'. The group thus considers its actions a reaction to oppression by the 'democrats'.

Although the counter protests are reactions to the marches, the mobilisation on the march organisers' websites use discourses of marginalisation due to the blockades that prevent them from exercising their freedom of expression. In its website mobilisation for the funeral march in Dresden, the Youth Association of East Germany Sachsen, proclaims: 'Clear message to the blockades: Hands off the funeral march of the Youth Association of East Germany!' The message is accompanied by a list of politicians who violated the law by participating in the blockades. To support its own image as a non-violent group, it requests that participants in the marches appear in appropriate clothes, use banners that do not violate the law, only use country flags and black flags, and avoid Nazi symbolism. The flags should be no longer than 1.50 meters, and banners should be no longer than 3.5 meters. According to the website, alcohol and smoking are prohibited during the march. Those who are responsible for buses must check participants for appropriate appearance (no steel-toed boots, Bomber-jackets, or Nazi symbolism) as they enter the bus. The maintenance of a law-abiding and peaceful image not only presents participants as respectable citizens but also allows the group to present itself as marginalised by the blockades and those who break the law. According to its website, one of the aims of the Youth Association of East Germany is 'to protect the national unity of all Germans', which excludes immigrants and those who create the framework for an 'anti-German' state.

Similar to the other mobilisation websites, the Youth Association of East Germany's website asks for donations and provides the possibility of ordering posters and postcards promoting the funeral march. Banners for website integration are available on the mobilisation website. Following the march, the group describes the events in Dresden on February 13 as a success, with an article entitled 'Successful funeral march in Dresden with 2,000 participants'. The positive overview of the group's own actions is, however, accompanied by criticism of the counter protests and their support from the 'democrats' and the political system: 'Egyptian situations in Dresden – political power and police reach out to criminals'. The criminalisation of the Other and marginalisation of its own political positions are important arguments.

The Right to a Future (Figure 11) website, mobilising for the marches in Leipzig, attempts more spontaneous forms of action, similar to those of the progressive movements. The group mobilises four different march routes, each of which is accompanied by a separate slogan and call: 'Demonstration I: Against police despotism and governmental violence'; 'Demonstration II: Smash capitalism'; 'Demonstration III: Future instead of times of crisis'; and 'Demonstration IV: Don't just talk – fight for your future'. The first calls describe the societal problems caused by the 'democrats'. They are followed by calls for actions against the 'crimes' of the democratic society that have destroyed the German nation. The group's list of supporters includes online shops that sell material for 'national resistance'. The website is composed of writings concerning the lack of opportunities for the German people and nation, with an emphasis on youths. The group describes itself as 'National Socialists of a new sort' and claims to distance itself from Hitler Germany despite representing the values of National Socialism. As on the other websites, its own representation with reference to the Other is important to its self-definition. Right to a Future argues:

that democrats not only started yesterday with their lies and false promises to lure good citizens to the voting box [...]. The words “future” and “freedom” are two of the most misused words of the democrats.

The crimes of the ‘democrats’ and Right to a Future’s own marginalisation due to the dominance of democracy must be resisted to permit the flourishing of a more prosperous future for Germans. Contemporary societal problems such as unemployment are a result of the democratic system. The organisation’s call for participation in the march clearly mobilises for resistance against democracy and for a better future for Germans:

Maybe the day will come when the last Germans, with lowered white flags, stand in front of the graves of our nation [*Volk*], lower their heads in front of their destiny, tired of their fight. [...] Sure it is that, until this last day, the flames of the last remaining resistance fighters in every German village, every German city – in all of Europe – will burn and show the way for those who are hopelessly lost in the dark. [...] October 16 in Leipzig – Right to a Future.

The call includes symbols of war, such as the lowered white flag, accompanied by strong images and a mobilisation video (see Chapters 5.2.6, 5.3.6). The language and the use of Nazi propaganda is more aggressive than on the Youth Association of East Germany website. The various marches were banned by a court decision, and only a stationary demonstration was permitted. The event had far less participants than expected but was presented as a success on the Right to a Future website: ‘Demonstrations in and around Leipzig successfully carried out – 1200 defenders of the nation [*Volkstreue*] demand their Right to a Future’. When trying to access the website today, the words ‘This domain was disabled’ appear on the screen. The website was shut down due to its violation of German law.



Figure 5 (left): Poster for Human Chain by the City of Dresden
Figure 6 (right): Poster for download on Nazi-free Dresden website



Figure 7: No Pasarán website header

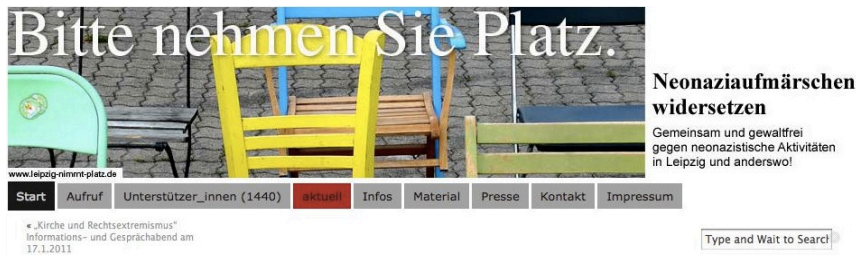


Figure 8: Leipzig Takes a Seat website header



Figure 9: Red October banner for download on website



Figure 10: Alliance for Action Against Forgetting website header



Figure 11: Right to a Future banner for download on website

Counter publicity of 140 characters on Twitter

Both sides in the events announced that relevant, up-to-date information could be found on Twitter. The hashtag (#) stream was important for differentiating between the conflicting groups in the protests. In the Dresden events, it became the symbol of the massive counter protests since the hashtag #19februar became a trending topic worldwide. February 19 also gained significant news media coverage relative to the events in Leipzig, where the Twitter stream, WAP updates, and informational phone line of the activist groups served as the main information sources. Although both sides in the conflict state on their websites that their respective Twitter profiles would be good ways of staying updated concerning the events, Twitter was used more in the counter protest, as the organisers of the marches instead used direct communication such as e-mail and phone for coordinating their actions.

The dominance of Twitter in the counter protests was also due to the nature of the actions as reactions to other events, necessitating flexible and spontaneous that can nonetheless reach a mass audience. Solidarity tweets were used to identify with a group's cause even though one was not physically present, for instance, 'I can't be there today but I am thinking of you #L1610' (16/10/2010). Citizens of Dresden/Leipzig follow the events from a distance and express solidarity with the cause by following the Twitter stream. The clear identification with a specific cause in the conflict also becomes apparent when users refer to the Other's hashtag to address, confuse, or symbolically reproduce the blockades in the streets on Twitter:

#RaZ10 #L1610 they probably need all 35 people in the streets, nobody left for tweeting (16/10/2010)

Spam the Nazi Twitter tags #GeMa, #DenkDran! (13/02/2011)

The fact that the hashtag is used to filter information on one side in the conflict was used tactically when it was intended that both opponents and supporters should receive a message including humorous tweets making fun of the Other. When this was the case, both hashtags were used. Although the tweets can potentially reach a huge audience, the users are aware of the filtering components and the messages are thus produced for a specific audience depending on the implied recipients. The spamming of the opponents' hashtag symbolically reproduces online the blockades in the streets. Awareness of the hashtag as a filtering tool was also used tactically to confuse and mislead activists by deliberately providing incorrect information, using the opponents' hashtag to enter its Twitter stream. Especially in Leipzig, incorrect information, such as false *ad hoc* actions, was tweeted in the Other's Twitter stream.

Retweets were used to support the symbolic reproduction on Twitter of the blockades in the streets:

Done. RT @name: blocking Nazis – also on Twitter: @name @name @name @name #13februar (13/02/2011)

Blockades on Twitter by retweeting to spam specific users represent symbolic acts that share the values of the protesters in the streets, even if such actions take little effort compared to the street protests.

Messages directed at a specific person by @username are publicly available and included in the information stream by using the particular hashtag. Most of the direct messages were directed to members within groups, mainly to core tweeters to keep them informed about events in the streets. These core tweeters were activist groups as

well as media institutions and alternative media. They served as central information distributors given that the events had a huge number of followers, and they were also sources of reliable and valuable information in the protest:

@[username] RT: #Nazis are not on their way to [name of station] but to the central station! #19februar (19/02/2011)

Sending information to the usernames of central activist profiles for redistribution and the informing of participants in the streets was a common tactic in all of the events, mostly used by the counter protesters. This represents the centrality of some users in terms of disseminating information despite the apparently flat hierarchies on Twitter.

Journalists use Twitter to receive information directly, investigate, and access direct quotes by activists:

RT @[journalist]: did a pepper ball hit anyone? #19februar (I am writing an article about it, right now) (19/02/2011)

By the same token, activists directly address journalists on Twitter in order to disseminate information via their media reports. Interacting with journalists by addressing them directly offers activists the opportunity to immediately react to media coverage as well as to provide information:

@[journalist]: we just received pics of the damage at the [place]: [link to pics] #19februar #fb (19/02/2011)

@[online media] I miss your tweets about Dresden! #13februar (13/02/2011)

Activists in the counter protests use the immediacy of Twitter and the possibility of direct contact with journalists to present their perspectives on the events as well as to criticise inappropriate or insufficient media coverage. This becomes especially obvious in the Dresden case due to the greater media coverage the event attracted. Reporting by institutionalised media is mainly criticised, but there are also affirmative tweets, depending on the way activists are depicted: '@dnn_online: Good job with reporting this time!' (19/02/2011). This shows that activists deem the news media normally not to be in favour of them and that positive reporting is an exception. On the other hand, general distrust of the media is expressed several times. For example:

Dear Aljazeera, please send us reporters, our media are either censored by the state or pimp their ratings #19februar #policeviolence (19/02/2011)

The public broadcaster was heavily criticised for not reporting sufficiently on the events. Although the events appeared in foreign news media such as *DerStandard.at* and live reporting by Aljazeera, the national broadcaster completely ignored the event in the first evening news of February 19. Foreign news media tend to cover violent action by police and are critical of the events in Dresden, unlike some local and national news media in Germany, which depict both fascists and anti-fascists as violent troublemakers. These issues are discussed and disseminated on Twitter and then taken up by some local and national media, sometimes leading to a different presentation of the activists in the news media. Twitter is used strategically to disseminate 'true' information via links to videos, photos, blog posts, and articles in alternative media concerning incidents at which activists are solely presented as violent by the mass media.

Twitter's affordances produce an environment in which a message can be communicated and multiplied, for example, through retweets. Generally, retweets

were used to multiply information and values, not always to challenge the mainstream or produce counter discourse. They also served as multipliers of articles in the news media:

RT @name: The LKA Saxony stormed the office of Nazi-free Dresden this evening [link to media coverage] #19februar #dd_nazifrei (19/02/2011)

This report made use of information by the activists and was thus retweeted to distribute the information. Especially with links to videos, blog posts, or IndyMedia, Twitter was used as a multiplier for spreading information produced by activists as well as by mass media in order to express a perspective on the events. Use of retweets as a multiplier of information supports the implied values in a message and the particular political position. The strengthening of counter hegemonic discourse produced to challenge the dominant discourse in mass media coverage can support the development of counterpublics that are expressed by street actions. As a result, Twitter and social media in general cannot be considered platforms of either the mainstream or counterpublics but instead serve both. ColoRadio, the local alternative radio station broadcasting live from the protest events all day, uses Twitter to distribute information, and institutionalised media use Twitter to disseminate links to their articles.

In the Leipzig events, the activists conclude ‘I have never been a friend of Twitter, but today it was very useful’ (16/10/2010) yet also express distrust of Twitter’s corporate and legal aspects:

#Twitter seems to have disabled many Twitter clients. Just in time for #19februar. Is this what capitalist democracy looks like? #linke (19/02/2011)

Twitter is a corporate platform that emerged within capitalist democracy and thus bears limitations for groups that try to fight this system. Although it reaches the masses in mobilisation, Twitter may have limitations because it does not necessarily share the political worldview of the activists.

The immediacy and publicity of Twitter can help develop counter discourse and organise protests. At the same time, activists are exposed to a high level of risk when acting in civil disobedience since police, authorities, and media institutions can monitor Twitter to learn more about their actions. Civil disobedience involves a level of insecurity expressed through the power relations between the monitored and the monitors, resulting in possible legal actions and punishment. As a result, in situations of high risk in the blockades, activists explicitly asked people not to tweet information but to use face-to-face communication or develop a secure communication that could not be monitored by the police.

Symbolic images and alternatives in videos

The videos that were posted as part of the events, mostly on YouTube, can again be divided into three temporal periods: before, during, and after the protest events. Before the events, videos mostly concerned mobilisation. The quality of the videos ranged from professionally produced mobilisation videos to user-generated videos by celebrities who supported the cause of the counter protests. During the events, the videos mostly contained information from within the events, providing an alternative perspective on what was happening, especially in cases of violent action. After the events, the institutionalised online media and the public broadcaster produced most of

the videos that were posted. In the following, the strategies used in videos to mobilise and to produce counter publicity are demonstrated.

The various groups involved in the protest events produce professional mobilisation videos that present their cause. The presented cause is simple, but the videos nevertheless carry symbolic meaning that can be considered a representation of the political position in question. The videos end with the call to action in the specific events such as, 'We call everyone to prevent this Nazi-march! By all means and on every level!' (Video 2), followed by a link to the anti-fascist mobilisation website. The mobilisation videos of the far right are particularly rich in symbolic elements, such as a graveyard that symbolises the death of the German nation, with no prospects for the future; the burning of flags as a symbol of resistance against resignation (Video 3); and a person dressed as Death, representing the death of the German nation (Video 4). The mobilisation videos are based on discourses of resistance and counter protest on both sides of the conflict. A video to mobilise for Nazi-free Dresden (Video 24) starts with the slogan, 'Let's do it again: block Nazis in Dresden!', then: 'Until the Nazi march is history!' A representative of the group Nazi-free Dresden continues:

The Nazis have tried for many years to use the bombardment of Dresden to keep existing myths alive. By doing this, they mock the real victims of the violent National Socialist regime. We are against every perversion of history. We will block the Nazis in 2011 too. (Video 24)

In the background, slogans such as 'war – never again', 'anti-fascism', 'fascism – never again' appear. A voiceover reports on the previous year's events, including film footage. The broad mobilisation across the political spectrum in the blockades becomes clear in statements such as 'Because our actions are directed against the Nazis and not the police, there will be no escalation from our side.' The video is clearly focused on the enemy, i.e. the Nazis who must be stopped. Talking heads provide the mobilisation video with a documentary character and thus the necessary seriousness for addressing a broad mass of people rather than anti-fascist groups alone. At the same time, the video includes playful and humorous elements to address young people.

The videos mobilising for the marches organised by the far right do not present a personified enemy but focus on the failure of democracy as a system. One of the mobilisation videos for the actions in Leipzig (Video 11) starts with young men talking about these failures, with statements such as 'Do we have a future?', 'an army of unemployed designates the way of the democrats', 'their politics do not represent the interests of the nation but only their own', 'a state dependent on loans and money', 'a growing financial deficit', and 'damage that cannot be fixed'. The video ends with a call to fight for a better nationalist future and a call to action for the events in Leipzig. The closing scene shows burning white flags in the background, with a banner stating 'Right to a Future'. These mobilisation videos are professionally produced, possess dramaturgy and plot, and include elements such as dramatic background music and powerful images. The discourses focus on the marginalisation of Germans by democracy and the 'anti-German' system it entails.

The mobilisation videos are not, however, restricted to these two groups within the mobilisation. Various anti-fascist groups, politicians who support the call, and additional videos produced for Nazi-free Dresden and affiliated groups mobilise for the counter protests. These videos include the strategic use of amateurism and low-cost production, for example with celebrities (Videos 29-32, 37) and politicians

(Video 19) speaking into the camera – sometimes, the camera on a laptop – and calling for participation in the counter protests. On a more professional level, politicians of various parties call for participation in the actions of Nazi-free Dresden in a video (Video 28). Videos of celebrities such as musicians, writers, and politicians supporting the call to action have a mobilising function and show solidarity by representatives of various segments of the public.

Although most of the mobilisation videos are rather serious, some include elements of humour (Videos 16, 35). A parody of the well-known German-language song *Über den Wolken* (*Above the Clouds*) by Reinhard Mey turns the lyrics into a humorous blockade song (Video 26). This blockade song was positively evaluated by viewers via likes and comments. Due to the political sensitivity of the topic, humour can, however, also be used incorrectly and become offensive, as was the case with a person imitating a foreign accent when calling for counter protests. This video was viewed 20,389 times and received 44 likes and 118 dislikes (Video 35).

The videos published by institutionalised online mass media include court decisions concerning the events, which are usually supported by rhetoric of violence when predicting the actions of the far right and the blockades. Interviews with police about dangers to public security, police control, expected violent confrontation between left and right, and hopes – however slim – for a peaceful demonstration on both sides are elements of the reports (Videos 9 and 22). The public broadcaster MDR reports primarily on the planned human chain in Dresden and ways to participate in it. That a different alliance prevented the far right's marches the previous year is only mentioned as an aside (Video 20).

The videos produced during the events are mostly user generated, produced on a small camera or mobile phone. The mobility of the recording device integrated into the mobile phone, which is used in everyday interaction and is thus also present in the protest events, is a key factor. The videos mostly present police violence, such as the use of water guns, pepper spray, and dogs, or present violence initiated by the Other (Videos 1, 6, 10, 13, 44). The video that received the most views and comments in the events is a user-generated video (Video 44) showing radical right activists attacking an alternative living project by throwing stones as the police stood by watching. The video was viewed 123,899 times and received 353 likes and 194 dislikes. The video is accompanied by a short message posted under the video. In the message, the author asks that the video be distributed to show that the police did not interrupt the violent action yet tried to prevent the blockades against the neo-Nazi marches. These videos are strategically used to influence the mainstream and show an alternative to mass media reporting.

The videos produced after the fact are mostly produced by various institutionalised mass media. Positive reporting of the blockades is usually restricted to the actions of the City of Dresden or the civil society network in Leipzig. Their success is described with statements such as 'People of Leipzig don't give neo-Nazis a chance' (Video 7), accompanied by images of peaceful protesters in raincoats, with umbrellas, shouting and whistling. Interviews with citizens and images of the silent vigils are part of the discourse of citizens resisting the neo-Nazis. Although reports also mention arson attacks on signalling stations along the railways around Leipzig, which brought rail traffic to a halt and prevented participants in the marches from travelling into the city, these attacks are not presented as part of the successful resistance. They are, rather, presented as a separate entity that produced traffic chaos, compared with the situation in which 'hundreds of counter protesters didn't give the Nazis a chance' (Video 8).

On the other hand, the public broadcaster MDR reports on the arson attacks by anti-fascists as aiming to prevent the neo-Nazis from travelling into Leipzig and on the chaos this produced in the city. Images of burning railway signs and words such as confrontation between ‘left extremists’ and ‘right extremists’ are used, with the disruption to railway services as the predominant theme. The report then shows images of the non-violent counter protests, closing with the words, ‘The Nazi demonstration ended earlier than planned due to counter protest by peaceful demonstrations of citizens of Leipzig’, showing a banner of the civil society network Leipzig Takes a Seat (Video 12).

Similarly, the human chain and the ‘night of silence’ in the Dresden *Frauenkirche* are at the centre of reports about successful counter protests on February 13 in Dresden (Video 21). The marches by the far right are presented as ‘a spooky march on a historic date,’ a perspective underlined by dramatic scenes, such as a participant in the march saying to a reporter, ‘If I see my face in a newspaper, then I will burn you’ (Video 24). ‘Confrontations between extreme leftist activists and the police’ and ‘protesters violently breaking through police barriers’ (Video 25) are the focus of videos produced by the public broadcaster concerning the February 19 blockades. The voiceover reporting on the blockades is accompanied by images of protesters breaking through barriers and an interview with a representative of the police. This is followed by images of the peaceful protest in the inner city and of politicians participating in silent vigils (Video 25).

These videos concerning the events and published on YouTube negatively present the radical segment of the counter protests and the marches. Both sides present alternative perspectives by posting their own videos on YouTube (Videos 39, 42, 44). A video uploaded by the Youth Association of East Germany, the organisers of the funeral march on February 13, presents the march as a success: Speeches took place, and the funeral march was an honourable ceremony, with participants carrying torches and flags, as classical music plays in the background (Video 42). After the events, the YouTube platform thus provides space both for institutionalised mass media to disseminate video reports – many of which are rather negative concerning the radical groups involved in both sides of the protests – and for an alternative perspective on the events.

Commenting on YouTube: deliberation and confrontation

The comments section on YouTube becomes a space for discussion and confrontation between users across the political spectrum. Unlike the comments in response to institutionalised online media, peers moderate the comments on YouTube, and discussions thus drift away from the actual video and on to more general issues. As a direct response to the video displaying a violent attack on the Praxis alternative living project during the protest events in Dresden, the different positions represented in the comments are reflected in the users’ opinions concerning the video and the question of whether it displays ‘the truth’. Users who support the actions of the neo-Nazis question the video’s credibility:

What happened before? I read that someone threw firecrackers out of the house.
Do you want to question that or would you even consider that?

Have you seen that a Nazi reposted your video and said that it was leftist anarchists who attacked the Praxis? Can you do something about that?

Although video is one of the most persuasive methods of documenting activities, it is subject to criticism and doubted in terms of credibility, i.e. what it documents and what information it deliberately omits. Questioning authorship represents one tactic for questioning the credibility of a video. This video indeed shows up under the name of a different author in order to support the neo-Nazis, claiming that it was anarchists who attacked the building. That video only received limited attention, i.e. just 290 views. Tactics for changing the facts by changing the video's meaning in accordance to one's political position suggest that user-generated 'news' and 'truth' are not necessarily the same thing, even if such users claim to be counterparts to mass mediated content. What is very obvious is that both videos point towards the oppositional group as that which is responsible for violent action. The question concerning who initiated the violent action shown in the video is an ongoing topic throughout the comments. In the discussion, the various actors appear with reference to the event, for example, the police are mentioned as an ally that is meant to interfere in violent action and produce order:

Obviously it looks like it's the same as the anti-nationals always do and the police don't do anything, what's the problem? If it is nationals or anti-nationals, it is still protest and if I was there I would have taken a police car or a bank, shopping mall, government building, and not such a small house.

In this case, violence is depicted as legitimate and something that should be used to a greater extent than was the case in the events in Dresden. The stone-throwing action is referred to as a normal act of protest. In this case, the anti-fascists are referred to as anti-nationals, which serves as a means of avoiding labelling radical right as Nazis or fascists. The various political positions represented in the comments change the meaning of the video in accordance with the realities that the various groups construct. As a result, video can be a powerful tool with which to contest mass mediated meaning, yet various political positions nevertheless influence its interpretation.

YouTube videos can thus be tactically used to challenge the perception of activists in news media reports. At the same time, activists comment on their representation in the mass media, mostly criticising it as inappropriate and one sided. The general frame of violence used to present activists comes in for particular criticism. Although attempting to challenge the predominant picture in the mass media, activists also use the mass media as sources for validating arguments. Quotes from media articles, encyclopaedias, websites, and Wikipedia appear in the comments. The discussion concerning the sources shows awareness of different positions in various online media:

What's that? [name of user] has almost published a novel, unfortunately only with the level of information of the Bildzeitung.

Mass media articles, websites, and encyclopaedias are often used as a frame of reference, but they are also questioned and critically assessed. Commentators are aware of the quality levels of certain newspapers and use them as arguments and even insults. Some sources are criticised because of their ideological bias. Wikipedia is considered left leaning by the radical right and is thus defended:

Just a moment, mainstream media are leftist because the mainstream is leftist? By the way, Wikipedia is absolutely transparent, the old versions on the site are

still online and visible if you believe in ‘conspiracy’. Additionally, I thought you didn’t want to discuss things with me anymore.

This comment shows how differently online sources are evaluated according to one’s political position. This discussion between two participants goes on over an extended period of time, revolving around various issues, which are not necessarily directly related to the video. What becomes apparent over the course of the discussion is that the comments section on YouTube is used more for discussions across the political spectrum than are any of the other platforms discussed so far. Many discussions between two or more discussants go on for several hours, usually including two political worldviews:

I didn’t call you a Nazi as far as I remember but you called me a fanatical, anti-German. So, I have to eat now

This commentator had been intensively engaged in a discussion with another commentator from the ‘other’ group, and they had been confronting one another with arguments concerning values, terminology, and personal aspects. The discussion is interrupted by an everyday activity. This ongoing interaction presents different potentials than does the rather mono-directional self-representation on websites and blogs as well as the comments sections in mass media, which are subject to stricter moderation. Although the comments do not lead to deliberation when the perspectives from both ends of the political spectrum collide, the potential for true interpersonal discussion as well as group discussion is present as a result of the platform’s less restrictive space.

Facebook as a semi-public space

Facebook pages and groups that support mobilisation of protest events are usually public and can be accessed by anyone. At the time when the events studied here took place, the members of a Facebook group were usually visible to other members of the group by default. The publicity of the Facebook page and the high number of participants was especially relevant for Nazi-free Dresden during the time in which the organisation’s website was down, and the Facebook page took over by supplying updated information. On the Facebook page, participants asked the reason for the website’s being offline and posted comments such as ‘Can we manage to do a Facebook mobilisation?’ and ‘Could someone upload the mass newspaper on this Facebook page?’ to receive through this channel the information normally provided on the website (Group 3).

The various groups involved in the protest events generally presented themselves on Facebook. However, radical groups on both sides exposed themselves to high risk by publicly participating in a Facebook event or being member of a group that engages in civil disobedience. The semi-publicity of the groups and the availability of names and profile pictures prompted some participants to use fake names and profile pictures through which they could not be identified. The participants in the events and the group members show part of their political identity by joining the particular political cause. Their political affiliation is also visible in some of the profile pictures of the event participants and group members. Profile pictures of participants in the funeral march include signs of affiliation with a particular political party and ideology. These include Anti-Antifa flags, National Democratic Party logos, buttons with black flags to show support for the events, National Democratic Party buttons, the German flag and eagle, buttons with the German flag, and party logos of the Young National

Democrats (Event 1). Members of the Nazi-free Dresden group show their political affiliation through logos of Antifa groups, with buttons in the Facebook picture indicating support for the counter protests and other movements (Group 3). This is a means of directly transferring a strategy of identification with a political cause or group, i.e. wearing buttons, into the digital social network.

Identity and solidarity are important aspects of interaction on Facebook group pages. Positive anticipation of the events and a feeling of togetherness by supporting an important political cause are expressed in several comments (Event 1, Event 2, and Group 3). Prior to the events, a comment on Nazi-free Dresden says, ‘listen to the mobilisation songs every morning. See you there!’ (Group 3). Members of the group page also express their solidarity even if they are unable to join in the street action:

I can’t be at the demonstration today but I’m there with all my heart.

I’m following the taz updates. You’re great! (Group 3)

The solidarity shown with the events and the support from various places within and outside of Germany are important to the Facebook group. After the events, the experience of being part of a political event is positively evaluated and supported by links to YouTube videos and blog posts by participants, while organisers thank participants in the group for showing their solidarity with the events on the streets as well as online (Event 1, Group 3). Prior to the events, members share their experiences with photos of posters for mobilisation that were physically distributed in various places (Group 3).

Comments on the Facebook page of Nazi-free Dresden criticise mass media coverage of the events. The main critique is that ‘left extremists’ are blamed for any violent action even though police used tear gas, pepper spray, and water guns, with reference to a report on IndyMedia (Group 3). The critique of violent action by the police is important to the discussion:

more than 200 participants in the demonstrations injured by the police; neo-Nazi attacks are not prosecuted, and the police only say in their press releases (which are uncritically accepted by the media), that there were 80 injured police officers. (Group 3)

The question of who started the violence and how violent action can be prevented if blockades are made illegal play a major role in discussion on the page. Quotes from mass media reports and the portrayal of the blockades as vandalism, chaos, violence, and criminality support the arguments. Discourses of marginalisation can be found throughout the comments before and after the events. In general, comments prior to the events are focused on mobilisation, campaigning, distribution of protest material, showing solidarity, and providing information. Discussion and deliberation are more frequent in the aftermath of the events (Group 3).

During the demonstrations, practical questions of coordination and information dominate. Some group members use the Nazi-free Dresden Facebook page as a place to receive updated information concerning the events. In a comment, people asked where the demonstration was currently taking place. Representatives of the group on Facebook answer the questions and provide updated information (Group 3). The Facebook page provides links to mobilisation clips, a call for donations, information, mobilisation material, download of mobilisation newspaper, links to IndyMedia and media reports, and links to radio interviews with representatives of Nazi-free Dresden. Questions also include technical errors such as ‘Is the ticker down?’, which is

responded to with the alternative suggestion of following the information on Twitter. To link with other events, the page also includes calls for other anti-fascist actions in other cities in Germany (Group 3). Again, this suggests that Facebook is an alternative to the website for finding information on the events. Generally, this function is used more by the counter protests than by the right-wing activists.

Political positions and ideology

The previous chapter primarily concerned the strategies, tactics, and practices that the groups in the protest events use to produce counter publicity. This part addresses the different political positions, how they form unities, how they express differences, and the discourses that express counter publicity. Again, the two chapters are divided for analytical purposes but are interrelated, and some elements are so closely entangled with one another as to be addressed in both chapters. In general, the political positions cannot be clearly separated along a left-right divide, but the alliances that form, especially in the counter protests, include positions across the political spectrum.

Relevant themes framing the history of the Nazi regime involve the winning of power, war, racism, violence, and order (Bessel 2004, 187). In contrast, as Karner (2007) concludes in his analysis of Austrian counter hegemony, anti-fascist discourse revolves around three thematic areas: counter hegemonic alternatives to ethnic or national identity and exclusion, resistance to racism, and criticism of neo-liberalism and economic globalisation¹⁶. More radical groups also engage in civil disobedience and violent action in their anti-fascist struggles. By discussing the forms of expression of political positions on the various online media platforms, this chapter addresses how they form alliances and express their diversity and counter publicity.

Mainstreamed counter publicity

The way the media portrays radical groups on both ends of the political spectrum nurtures the groups' marginalisation and oppositionality. Institutionalised online media present the alliance of New Right and neo-Nazis as a relatively homogenous group, generally with negative discourses of fear and violence. The representations of the counter protests range from a positive description of symbolic acts, such as silent vigils and the human chain in Dresden, as well as non-violent demonstrations to negative descriptions of actions by radical groups that use civil disobedience through blockades and property damage to resist the marches. Radical groups on both ends of the political spectrum that use property damage as a form of expression are usually presented in a similar fashion, with little information concerning their actual political cause. In contrast, symbolic acts are represented as successful resistance if they reach an adequately high number of participants to support newsworthiness.

The human chain organised by the City of Dresden is the focus of reports concerning the events and is usually portrayed positively:

Human chain linked in Dresden's old town – around 17,000 people participated!
(DresdenEins, 13/02/2011)

Human chain sends a clear message (Sachsen Fernsehen, 26/01/2011)

The headlines focus on the success of the human chain in the events in Dresden and present it as a positive initiative against the radical right. Although the human chain is

¹⁶ For more information see chapter 4.1.

a symbolic act that does not actually prevent the neo-Nazis from marching, it is portrayed as the main action that stopped the far right. The human chain is well documented and reported in institutionalised online media coverage, both prior to the event in the form of the call to action as well as after the event.

Similarly, the actions of the Leipzig Takes a Seat civil society network are usually presented positively in institutionalised media online. The slogan ‘Take a seat in Leipzig’ is present in numerous online newspapers, including *Die Zeit*, *Junge Welt*, and *LVZ online*, as well as on the website of the public broadcaster MDR. As with the human chain, the call is supported by politicians:

“Leipzig Takes a Seat” mayor Jung calls for protest, churches organise silent vigils (Leipzig Internetzeitung, 12/10/2010)

Conservatives and liberals strengthen the alliance against neo-Nazis: Civil society network continues mobilisation (LVZ online, 13/10/2010).

The civil society network receives support from a broad political spectrum, and its mobilisation stresses that this form of non-violent protest receives acceptance from citizens and in the mainstream media. The same can be observed following the events. Although attacks on the railway signal stations prevented people from travelling to Leipzig and participating in the marches, responsibility for the successful prevention of the neo-Nazi marches is accorded the peaceful counter protests:

Citizens of Leipzig protest against neo-Nazi demonstration (MDR, 16/10/2010)

“As we want it to be”: Peaceful protest against neo-Nazis on Saturday (LVZ online, 16/10/2010).

The events are presented as colourful and peaceful, i.e. as examples of how non-violent action by citizens can successfully prevent radical right demonstrations. Interviews with citizens and politicians support this perspective as well as the self-definition of the civil society network as using only non-violent action to articulate its cause.

The silent vigils in Dresden are often associated with the human chain and civil society, which serves as an additional sign that the whole city worked together to successfully prevent the neo-Nazi marches. These actions initiated by the churches are mentioned in several reports with headlines such as:

Happy resistance festival – 50 churches protest against extreme rightists on Saturday (DNN online, 18/02/2011)

With more than 50 silent vigils, Dresden sends a peaceful message to the Right (Inside Dresden, 19/02/2011)

The church activities, including war commemoration in Dresden’s *Frauenkirche*, are accompanied by interviews with priests, politicians, and citizens. They are considered part of the politically broad and peaceful resistance against the neo-Nazis. Exclusion of the radical groups involved in the counter protests creates a narrative of peaceful protesters resisting the neo-Nazis.

As these examples show, politicians play an important role in the online mass media reports concerning the protest events. ‘Politicians call for silent vigil in front of the synagogue’ (DNN online, 13/02/2011), reads a headline in an online newspaper. Another report states that ‘Citizens and politicians gather for a wreath-laying

ceremony at the Heidefriedhof (bild.de, 13/02/2011), in this case addressing the conservative end of the political spectrum. Politicians also play an important role in making reports newsworthy. The participation of left-wing politicians is central to the reports concerning the February 19 blockades in Dresden: 'Due to participation in blockade. Leader of leftist party threatened with criminal charges' (Frankfurter Rundschau, 11/03/2011). The criminalisation of the blockades becomes more central due to the fact that even politicians faced criminal charges.

Radical groups, regardless of their political cause, are primarily presented as producing chaos and insecurity:

A huge number of police should prevent a clash between the right demonstrators and the counter protests (bild.de, 13/02/2011)

Radical anti-fascist groups are contrasted to the peaceful sit-ins and other actions against the neo-Nazis. The clashes between the far right and far left would drown the city in chaos and cause problems for police and citizens. Violent action is referred to as extremism regardless of its political motivation. After the event, the damages are contrasted to actions that involved no or non-violent civil disobedience:

Silent vigils, human chains, demonstrations, blockades, as well as burning barricades and refuse containers and violent riots kept the city of Dresden busy on Saturday. (news.de, 20/02/2011)

According to the news media, the success attributed to the non-violent resistance and actions by civil society, the churches, the city, and politicians is disrupted by clashes between left and right activists. The mayor of Dresden says in an interview that she supports actions against the neo-Nazis but does not want to be identified with the Nazi-free Dresden group because it wishes to block the routes for the march and thus act in civil disobedience (Neues Deutschland, 26/01/2011). Whereas Nazi-free Dresden receives news media coverage due to its mobilisation across the political spectrum, the anti-fascist group Red October in Leipzig is hardly ever mentioned. The exclusion of certain groups, despite their significance in preventing the neo-Nazi marches, represents their marginalisation from the public discourse. Anti-fascist groups are mentioned when they use violent action, but in many cases, this is mentioned independently of their actual political cause:

Nazi-demonstration ended – arson attack of trains (Hamburger Abendblatt, 16/10/2010)

Neo-Nazi demonstration ended – police protects opera ball (Kanal 8, 16/10/2010)

The arson attacks in Leipzig are clearly associated with 'left-extremist groups', which are part of the counter protests but are presented in the mainstream online media coverage as independent from the non-violent disobedience. The actions are reported from the perspective of the police, who must protect the city from extremists of all political orientations. The continuation of events in Leipzig is evident from the mention of the opera ball and counter protests by anti-fascist and anarchist groups, which occurred on the evening of October 16. These actions are presented as a continuation of actions by the 'extreme left', which is not regarded in this context as an important element in the counter protests.

Similarly, the organisers of the marches are rarely described in any sense beyond the labels 'neo-Nazis', 'Nazis', and 'extreme right'. The left-leaning daily *taz*, however,

reports the Youth Association of East Germany's objectives for its funeral march and its experience with the blockades (taz, 13/02/2011). This background information is rare on both ends of the political spectrum. Only a few reports are linked to articles such as 'Background information: Development of the national socialist scene in Leipzig' (Leipzig aktuell, 23/09/2010). This article is based on a press release by the Leipzig Takes a Seat civil society network.

The inclusion of anti-fascist groups in mentions of the alliance that prevented the marches is unusual and is restricted to left-leaning online newspapers such as: 'In Dresden, civilians and anti-fascist work together to block the march by neo-Nazis' (taz, 14/01/2011). The diversity of groups is mentioned in terms of:

Those who wish to participate in the protest against the Nazis in Dresden on Saturday have many possibilities. [...] The alliance of anti-fascist groups, youth initiatives, unions, and political parties from all across Germany say that more than 250 buses from Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, and the Czech Republic are coming to Dresden to organise mass blockades. (Neues Deutschland, 16/02/2011)

Since the mobilisation for the blockades in Dresden is united under the Nazi-free Dresden banner, the group is also mentioned among the various organisations in the counter protests. The Leipzig Takes a Seat civil society network and its actions dominate reports concerning the counter protests in Leipzig on October 16, with little mention being made of Red October. The local online newspaper collected the various activities in Leipzig under the headline 'Knitting, eating, or shouting: Overview of the actions against neo-Nazis on Saturday' (LVZ online, 15/10/2010). Forty places are listed as hosting various types of actions against the neo-Nazis, such as a 'Youth Street Movie Festival for Open-Mindedness, Tolerance, and Human Dignity'; 'Prevent Nazi Demonstration – Resist the Nazi March'; 'Defend Yourself against Racists and Nazis in Your Part of Town'; 'Emancipation instead of Nation before the People' (*Volksgemeinschaft*); 'Citizens' Breakfast for Human Rights and Democracy'; 'Education Saves Democracy'; 'We Like It Colourful – Plurality instead of Monoculture!'; 'Leipzig Takes a Seat; Humanity and Charity'; 'Pink Instead of Brown!'; 'Protest Against the Three Nazi Demonstrations'; 'Drinking Coffee Against Right'; 'Queer Against Right'; 'Hartz IV¹⁷ Recipients Can also Take Part in Cultural Life'; 'Brown is Only My Tyre Print'; 'Craftsmen for Democracy and Tolerance'; 'Integration Picnic'; 'You, My God, Are the Refuge for the Weak'; 'Silent Vigil Against Right Extremism'; and 'Knitting Against Right' (LVZ online, 15/10/2010). The various groups, ranging from NGOs to educational institutions to the church, and their political positions are represented in the actions. The diversity of these actions shows the different causes that motivate these groups to organise against the neo-Nazis. The apparent unity on the day of action is determined by the common enemy despite the variety of reasons for resisting.

Which alternatives?

Mobilisation on IndyMedia consists of various political positions represented by various groups such as the Red October anti-fascist activists and Leipzig Takes a Seat civil society network in the case of Leipzig. As the name of the Nazi-free Dresden anti-fascist group suggests, the cause is simple: to block the Nazis. The pluralism

¹⁷ German unemployment benefit.

represented by the variety of interests is also reflected in mobilisation on the alternative media platform IndyMedia. An IndyMedia article quotes a Leipzig Takes a Seat press release as emphasising the diversity of groups involved in the counter protests:

With all of the differences of our political positions, we are united by determination to resist the increasingly powerful neo-Nazi structures with our conviction, our courage, our unity, and diversity. (IndyMedia, 13/09/2010)

This article positively anticipates the blockade cooperation between Red October and Leipzig Takes a Seat. It also refers to the successful collaboration between the two organisations in the year previous:

Both alliances aimed to prevent the Nazi marches last year even without the usual clashes between “autonomous antifa” and “civil society”. It seems as though the alliances want to repeat this success. (IndyMedia, 13/09/2010)

Although the mobilisation and information on IndyMedia concerning the counter protests focus mainly on Red October, mention is made of Leipzig Takes a Seat as an ally in the resistance against the Nazi-march. In order to achieve this aim, i.e. resistance against the common enemy, the alliance is necessary due to mass mobilisation and is thus positively assessed on IndyMedia. The focus on Red October’s activities is a result of the authors of the articles being ‘Alterta Antifascista’ and ‘anti-fascists from Leipzig’, i.e. being representatives of anti-fascist groups with a political position that IndyMedia represents rather than being members of a civil society network like Leipzig Takes a Seat. The article concludes with a mobilisation video from a different alliance than those mentioned in the text, accompanied by a call to action stating that, irrespective of one’s political position and group affiliation, it is important to stop the Nazi march.

Information on blockades and anti-fascist protests is treated with differing levels of trust. Several reactions to event mobilisation and analysis on IndyMedia express that the only trustworthy information is that produced by anti-fascists on IndyMedia. Although the mobilisation covers various political positions, trust in reliable information is restricted to groups sharing the same political values. This is also evident in the presentation of the events on the various alternative online media platforms compared with in the mass media.

In reports on Altermedia political parties, police, and anti-fascists are presented as an alliance for marginalising nationalist political positions and thus the marches, the media as ‘homogenised opinion leaders, not reporting the truth objectively (Altermedia, 21/02/2011). According to the discussion of the events on Altermedia, this alliance against the German nationalists made it impossible for them to execute their right to freedom of expression in Dresden despite the court decision. The participants in the blockades are described as leftist criminals supported by the police, who did nothing to prevent their actions. According to the perspective presented on Altermedia, ‘21,000 leftist criminals’ were opposed to ‘5,000 nationalists’. Using discourses of marginalisation, they legitimate their actions and call for resistance by nationalist Germans. Their enemy is an entire system of oppression, one that produces problems such as immigration for nationalist Germans. This system must be resisted by any means necessary:

If we as Germans want to live in a free Germany and in a Europe of fatherlands, far from capitalist globalisation, oppression by high finance, the cultural

annihilation by multiculturalism and mass immigration, we will have to sacrifice. Who can say whether, on that day, pistol shots will be heard [...] and what will happen when we stand in front of the police chain and are refused our Right to a Future. [...] When we know there is only total victory or total fall. (Altermedia, 26/09/2010)

The article not only expresses marginalisation by the mass media but also during street actions. The police and a system of oppression are the target of their resistance. The authors of the articles are representatives of groups such as the Free Nationalists (*Freie Nationalisten*) and subgroups of the Free Network. Their claims are clearly anti-democratic, and the left is considered the criminal part of the anti-German alliance that creates a system of marginalisation of ‘true German values’. Contemporary societal problems are produced by the system and lead to oppression of the nationalists’ own political position and the poverty of German youths. The nationalist value system frames their perception of the events as well as their self-definition as a marginalised group in the contemporary system.

The alliances formed in the counter protests against the marches disperse again after the protests are over. After the successful counter protests against a clearly defined common enemy, i.e. the neo-Nazis and their marches, such alliances are difficult to sustain. The problems that come with allies from across the political spectrum are discussed on the alternative online media platform IndyMedia. One of the main problems is a lack of substance in the calls for action and mobilisation. According to an article based on an analysis of the events by the anti-fascist group AG17, this leads to misunderstandings:

Parts of civil society see the anti-Nazi protests as a defence of their location or as ‘defence of the constitution from below’ and thus as intrinsic in the system. [...] The problem is not how to delimit oneself from civil society but how to act in relation to civil society. [...] A stationary demonstration “for free markets” is foolish even if it blocks the Nazis. (IndyMedia, 02/11/2010)

The broad mobilisation across the political spectrum by Leipzig Takes a Seat subordinates individual political positions to produce ‘anti-Nazi consensus’ (IndyMedia, 02/11/2010). The unity formed in the counter protests neither represents nor even accepts the political position of the anti-fascists that are main actors in mobilising for the protest events. Although the coalition was successful in preventing the neo-Nazi marches, it could not lead to ‘emancipation from national community and capitalist society’ (IndyMedia, 02/11/2010). The actions undermine Nazi propaganda and the alliance contributed to the success of the blockades, yet the marginalisation of political positions is an oft-discussed issue in anti-fascist intervention. Adjusting to de-radicalised discourse of civil society and the mainstream media is necessary for mobilising the critical mass of people required to block the marches. However, this de-radicalisation of political positions also weakens the political identities and self-perceptions of anti-fascist groups. Those who hold more radical political positions argue that the actions initiated by civil society have insufficient impact and no longer represent the groups’ actual political cause.

The comments section: A space for cross-ideological discussion?

Various political positions within the counter protests and among march participants become apparent in the comments sections of institutionalised online media and alternative online media. The discussions in the comments sections revolve around

topics such as the use of violence, radicalisation, and the criminalisation of actions. The use of language by participants in the discussion is dependent on the audience of the medium and its political affiliation. As a result, comments on alternative online media represent more radical perspectives than on institutionalised online media. However, the different political positions also become clear in the comments sections of the mainstream media, though less-radical language is present here, and it is the perspective of ‘civil society’ that is represented.

Permission for the marches and counter protests as well as related court decisions are important issues in the discussions, as is identification with a particular political position. In the comments section of the regional online newspaper *LVZ*, a comment criticises the fact that a person with a criminal record is leading the civil society network and that this setup ‘is a recipe for riots’ (Comments 27). A responding comment criticises the fact that four fascist demonstrations were given permission and ‘are “only right-wing” in the press [...] but people who worship the swastika are fascists’ (Comments 27). The discussion continues with the argument that anyone, fascist or left wing, should be able to express his or her political opinion. However, ‘99% of bricks and riots still come from the leftist troublemakers’ (Comments 27). In response, the participants in the marches ‘are people who deny other people their right to exist and deny the Holocaust’ (Comments 27) and thus do not present an opinion but present a ‘crime’. Several issues are covered in this discussion, and these represent the political positions involved in the protests. In general, there are supporters for both the counter protests and the marches. Identification is based on perception of the Other, criminalisation of the Other, and denial of the Other’s right to express itself. This discussion focuses on the law and violation of the law through acts of civil disobedience. Other participants in the discussion argue for a criminalisation of the radical right due to denial of the Holocaust and use of symbols of the National Socialist regime such as the swastika. Both of these arguments are in support of security, opposed to radicalisation, and in support of the system by fighting against violation of the law, thereby differing from the aims of the radical groups on both ends of the political spectrum. The claim of security for and protection of the city is a common one among law-abiding participants in the counter protests as well as in the marches.

Opinions concerning the actions used in the protest events differ in the comments sections on alternative online media platforms:

How many demonstrations have you nationalists already done in the last centuries and with what effect??? None !! Stop prostrating before those anti-Germans and start spitting right into the face of the system ... Occupy party and media centres. (Comments 2)

This comment criticises the actions even as it supports the nationalist political position the march presents. This discussant calls for more effective means of resisting the system. Everyone who does not support the nationalist cause is referred to as ‘anti-German’. Despite the support for a nationalist position, differences are evident in the evaluation of violent action in the protest. The various opinions about actions used in the marches can also be seen in other reactions to reports on *Altermedia*. A comment that describes the violent attack on the Praxis alternative living project in a positive manner is harshly criticised by other respondents:

Are you just provocative or a bit crazy? Just now, 60,000 [National Democratic Party] party e-mails were sent to the media because telecommunication secrecy

became full of holes like Swiss cheese. And now you comment positively on violent action on an unencrypted public website. [...] Statements like these on electronic media will be archived and kept forever. (Comments 52)

Violence and violent action are not considered generally negative in this comment; rather, what is negative is the public statement concerning them. Publicly glorifying violence could harm the National Democratic Party as a political party and could have consequences for the alternative online media platform and the author of the comment. A positive, non-violent public image is thus important despite more radical positions in actuality.

In comments on Altermedia, the mainstream media are heavily criticised as being supportive of the blockades and helping activists travel to Dresden to support the counter protests. Comments also critically evaluate support for the counter protests by the church and unions, advising Germans to leave these organisations. The press supports these ‘false beliefs’:

In the idiots’ press, one can read: “Dresden resists the violent Nazis.” That’s a nice description for gathering idiots from all over Germany and bringing them to Dresden to pillage freedom and right. (Comments 52)

Comments include links and references to articles in online media coverage and quotes from them to show how the ‘right’ has been marginalised and degraded. The buses organised for participants in the blockades are claimed to be financed by left-leaning political parties and other ‘anti-Germans’ and ‘democrats’. To avoid ‘oppression’ from the blockades, demonstrations should be planned differently in the future since the formal right to demonstrate does not guarantee that demonstrations will be protected from blockades. Several comments express the opinion that more spontaneous actions and networked organisation should be the future form of national resistance so as not to give the counter protests time to organise. In the comments section on Altermedia, a participant suggests wearing ‘normal’ clothes to give the mass media less of a chance to ‘manipulate’ the discourse. Symbols associated with Nazism should be avoided to produce a positive image of the march in the mass media. These suggestions demonstrate the de-radicalisation of actions in public as well as an adjustment to actions normally used in the counter protests.

Anti-fascist group supporters also raise the issue of marginalisation in the press, as this comment on an article in the left-leaning online newspaper *taz* suggests:

Nobody mentions the “Red October” alliance. Nor does the *taz* know if the cable fires [attacks on railway signals] came from the left side and damaged Nazi cars [...] The *taz* becomes more and more ... right-wing?! (Comments 49)

The centrality of Leipzig Takes a Seat in reports is criticised by anti-fascist groups. Criticism is also made of speculation – in the absence of any proof – that the arson attacks on the trains were perpetrated by the left. Generally, however, violence is demonised, and the discussion of which group is the most violent can be followed throughout the comments section:

Please use your brain if you want to engage in this discussion! Or is a burning dustbins really worse than a burning asylum seekers’ hostel. (Comments 147)

The comparison between the various groups’ violent actions is used to criticise the Other. The actual violent actions in the protest events and in contemporary Germany

are also discussed as a more general comparison between the cruelties of the political systems based on communist versus National Socialist ideals:

Without calculating too much: Stalin has killed a few million more! But the left can obviously do that ...

Communism [...] is as disgusting as national socialism; both red and brown are disgusting ... (Comments 61)

An opponent's denial of murders and cruelties carried out within its own ideological framework is regarded as worse than crimes within one's own ideological framework. To differentiate oneself from radical groups in the events, comments also claim that neither communism nor National Socialism are acceptable and that the same holds for their symbolism in contemporary protest (i.e., neither 'red' nor 'brown'). 'Citizens' do not wish to be associated with violent actions and present themselves as law abiding, unwilling to engage in violence in support of a political position:

When does the alliance "Extremism-Free Dresden" form? Because socialists are a precursor to communism, and right fascists want to fight our democratic constitution. (Comments 147)

Sorry but for a normal citizen, everyone who participates in these demonstrations is an idiot, left and right. (Comments 126)

Again, the reference to the communist and National Socialist political systems is made to support the claim that extremism in any form is negative for Dresden. The 'normal citizen' is identified as one who does not engage in civil disobedience. This claim is accompanied by the suggestion that ignoring the neo-Nazi marches could be a better form of opposition than the blockades, which gain considerable attention through mass mobilisation. The clashes between left and right would harm citizens, and their political positions are considered radical from this perspective. These comments support the claim that not all of the participants in the broad alliance of the blockades should be treated equally. The line should, according to most authors, be drawn between those who are prepared to undertake civil disobedience and violent action on the one hand and those who are not on the other. Many comments are posted by participants in the blockades who do not wish to identify with the anti-fascists' political program and forms of action. They wish to express their disapproval of the neo-Nazis through non-violent disobedience:

I think it's intolerable that all people in the blockades are presented as leftist autonomists.

There is legitimate protest against Nazis, but this is just crap covered by ideology. (Comments 147)

These comments suggest that the counter protests should be free of any political position or ideology. Their claims are thus not embedded within a wider political project such as anti-fascism but simply oppose the neo-Nazis in that single event, i.e. form alliances against the enemy but without a political cause that goes beyond this claim. In contrast, radical political groups that view their actions as part of a wider political statement claim that 'Civil disobedience is the only option!' (Comments 126). The comments section shows confrontation between the various groups' political positions, which are expressed in more detail on their websites and blogs.

Websites and blogs: Fragmentation and polarisation?

The websites and blogs in the events not only present the particular groups' political positions but also their relationships with one another and their perspectives on the Other. The political positions and ideologies framing these groups' actions are presented on their websites. Such representations include the groups' interpretations of the events, often without a political statement or a clear affiliation to a particular political ideology. A clear political statement would be counterproductive in mass mobilisation and would prevent many people with different political positions from identifying. Broad acceptance of the cause does not necessarily mean general acceptance of all of the diverse political positions represented within a broad alliance. As the more confrontational communication in the comments section shows, differences in the political positions of the various groups prompt criticism and divide the alliances again once the common enemy has been 'defeated'. On websites and blogs, these differences are evidenced by varying forms of actions, rhetoric of mobilisation, and website elements.

The website of the press office of the mayor of Dresden, entitled '13 Februar', calls for participation in the human chain and:

Invites all citizens to act on February 13, 2011 together with the democratic representatives of the city council, representatives of business and science, culture, sport, unions, and churches, with the Jewish communities and the civil society actors.

The diversity of actors addressed in this call includes politicians, businesses, and cultural and religious institutions. These actors represent conservative groups and other law-abiding institutions, which are taking part in a symbolic act rather than actual resistance. The website also includes a phone number that guests and tourists could call for information concerning their stays in Dresden. The website is framed in terms of commemoration as well as security for and protection of the city. As a result, the website includes historical facts concerning the bombing of Dresden in World War II, history, and historical symbols. The list of supporters is signed by the mayor of Dresden, the rector of Dresden University of Technology, the Foundation Frauenkirche (*Stiftung Frauenkirche*), the catholic deanery, the Jewish community, NGOs such as *Buerger.Courage e.V.*, the various political parties in the city council, and the chamber of commerce. The individuals who signed the list of supporters are representatives from civil society, various religious communities, politics, economy, sciences, culture, and sports. Statements by politicians and representatives of public institutions, businesses, and universities are displayed on the website to illustrate broad support. The website uses discourses of peace, humanity, remembrance, hope, and community that frame the call's conservatism. Related actions mentioned on the website include book presentations, discussions, religious services, and classical music concerts. The almost apolitical nature of this symbolic act becomes apparent with the Youth Association of East Germany, organiser of the funeral march, calling on its website for participation in the human chain.

A very different self-description is provided by the blog of the AK Antifa Dresden group:

The team Antifa Dresden originates from an alliance of groups and individuals across the spectrum of the left and the alternative scene in Dresden, with the aim of a clearly antimilitarist and antinational mobilisation [...]. As part of "No

pasarán”, which itself became part of the broader “Nazi-free Dresden Resists” alliance, we took part in the great success of 13 February 2010 [...]. Together with many anti-fascist forces in Dresden, Germany, and Europe, we won’t rest until one of the largest regularly occurring deployments of fascists in Europe becomes history! ¡No pasarán!

Although AK Antifa Dresden mentions in its call the broad alliance and the various groups and subgroups involved in the actions, the organisation’s political position is clearly a leftist and anti-fascist one. The criminalisation of its actions is criticised, and the public prosecution department’s decision to allow the marches and thus their support by the system is regarded an additional reason to resist the march. Most of the website consists of articles published on IndyMedia or in various local and regional newspapers. In a report entitled ‘Human chain by the mayor: Democracy versus extremism’, the AK Antifa Dresden is critical that the only function of the human chain is to detract mass media attention from the Nazis. The actions of the anti-fascists, however, would have not only symbolic meaning but would also represent actual resistance against the Nazis. Supporters who sign the call are mostly anti-fascist groups as well as bands, such as the German rock band Tocotronic. Reports following the events include one from a politician representing a left-wing party, who faced criminal charges after participating in the blockades. After the events of Friday 13 and in anticipation of the events on Friday 19, a call published on the website states:

For this weekend that means: Fight the Nazis, blow out commemoration candles, and ruin Dresden. And in general: Fight the nationalists. Abolish wrongheaded freedoms. For communism!

The call is published following a text on how the neo-Nazis regard the bombs as having victimised Dresden rather than having liberated Dresden from the National Socialist regime. The actions against the marches are thus embedded within a wider anti-fascist political cause that goes beyond the blockades alone.

The website of Nazi-free Dresden represents a wider alliance. Its call is signed by anti-fascist groups, civil society groups, unions, left-leaning politicians, student groups, political parties, singers, managers, rock bands, musicians, representatives from cultural organisations, university departments, journalists, everyday citizens, and comedians. Although support from politicians and cultural and educational organisations comes from left-leaning representatives rather than conservative ones, the alliance is very broad. Prominent supporters publish statements of support on the website. The Nazi-free Dresden call is clearly directed against the neo-Nazis in the specific events of February 13 and 19:

We will not accept that the Nazis change history and mock the actual victims of National Socialism. We reject any denial of German guilt in the war and the Holocaust. Our aim is to change the commemoration culture in Dresden, to stop the Nazi march. The different organisations in our broad union represent different political positions such as anti-fascism, anti-militarism and democracy [...]. Despite the different perspectives we want to show that a discussion of solidarity about this topic is possible.

The call highlights the broad mobilisation in terms of various political positions. It includes anti-fascism and anti-militarism, for example the AK Antifa Dresden group, as well as the wider political project of democracy. Although anti-fascist groups

usually reject parliamentary democracy, they consider themselves part of this alliance. They present themselves as allies of Nazi-free Dresden but also distance themselves by creating their own platforms for mobilisation.

On the opposite side in the events, the Alliance for Action Against Forgetting on www.gedenkmarsch.de mobilises for the February 13 funeral march and the February 19 march. The fact that representatives of important nationalist organisations actively take part in the activities of Dresden 2011 shows the significance of the events. The website asserts that the events of February 13 and 19:

should not be in competition with one another but should be a response to repression by the democrats, the continuation and possibly even increase of this repression, in 2011. The events on February 19 are not to honour the dead of our people, the victims of Dresden, but to protest against the methods of the democrats and their supporters, the authorities and police.

The event on February 13 thus seeks to commemorate Dresden citizens killed in World War II and the victimisation of Germany. February 19 is an event to resist the enemy in form of the ‘democrats’ who prevented the actions of the nationalist forces. The groups that publicly sign as supporters of the events are less diverse and include the Free Nationalists, Free Forces, Free Network, National Forces, National Resistance, National Socialists, camaraderie (*Kameradschaften*), National Democratic Party, Young National Democrats, and various online shops that sell nationalist resistance material. Although various groups compose the alliance, the names of the groups suggest they share a nationalist and anti-democratic political worldview.

Three main actors run the websites and blogs for mobilisation in the events in Leipzig on October 16: The anti-fascist group Red October, the civil society network Leipzig Takes a Seat, and the mobilisation for the marches by Right to a Future. The call by Red October reads as follows:

With various slogans, the campaign called Right to a Future wishes to march to the central station. They have shown us what they mean by their future with 13 arson attacks this year in Saxony against people who disagree with them and migrants. [...] Since their defeat on February 13 in Dresden, the terror in the streets increases. [...] The intellectual arsonist is the lovely Christian Democratic Union. [...] Now it is important to prevent them from gaining a foothold through sustainable anti-fascist intervention [...]. Therefore: Tear the veil from neo-Nazi-structures and fight them.

The call describes not just the neo-Nazis but also the Christian Democratic Union conservative political party as enemies that spread xenophobic ideas. The Christian Democratic Union is cast as an intellectual ally of the radical right, and resistance against the neo-Nazis thus includes resistance against this movement’s more politically powerful allies. The events are thus embedded in a larger anti-fascist political project. The Red October alliance identifies itself as distinct from the Leipzig Takes a Seat civil society network due to its clearly anti-fascist position.

Leipzig Takes a Seat identifies with a wider alliance and has the primary aim of blocking the neo-Nazis through non-violent civil disobedience:

“We will block the route of the Nazis.” [...] Our means are non-violent, dedicated acts of resistance. We will act in civil disobedience against those who trample over human dignity and democratic principles.

The focus on non-violent action should address a wider political spectrum, necessitating a law-abiding component. Although the group acts in civil disobedience, its actions aim to protect democracy from anti-democratic perspectives, using non-violent means that are accepted within the normative framework of civil society. The ‘take a seat’ aspect of the call suggests a rather passive form of resistance against the marches. The differences between members in the alliance become apparent in the list of supporters who signed the call on the website. Statements by the mayor of Leipzig, NGOs, and members of the city council support the call. The acts of resistance mentioned on the website include 52 silent vigils and 40 protest events, including three stationary demonstrations. 1,360 supporters signed their names to the website petition.

The Right to a Future mobilisation website for the marches consists of separate calls for the three different marches planned in Leipzig. Each demonstration is represented by an individual organiser. The website, however, claims that the demonstrations are registered by members of the National Democratic Party and/or the Young National Democrats, but they are all without party-political interests. Due to the ‘non-political’ mobilisation, it is prohibited to bring Young National Democrats flags to the demonstrations. Elements of the three different calls are:

The silent witnesses of a time, long ago, remind us, like gravestones of a dying city. [...] The last laughter of a child has died away long ago. [...] Their future is one without perspectives and hope. [...] Today you can start a new life of hope in resistance. From today, you are one of us!

Over the years, the activists and participants in demonstrations of national resistance have been victims of police violence [...] It’s time for a new future. Better now than never. On October 16: demonstrate with us against arbitrary police action and public force! See you in Leipzig!

The calls for the demonstrations stress Right to a Future’s nationalist identity. The enemies are democrats, parliamentary politics, authorities, police, and the democratic system in general. Dominant problems in East Germany, such as youth unemployment, are taken as starting points for describing the loss of a prosperous future for young people. Additional reasons are capitalism, international influence on Germany, immigration, loss of national identity, and the power of democrats. The mobilisation stresses loss of a sense of community and belonging, for which Right to a Future attempts to compensate by using phrases such as ‘us against’ and ‘you are one of us’. The group’s direct references to National Socialism, its clearly anti-democratic orientation, and criminal charges against its organisers led to a court decision that permitted only allowed a stationary demonstration rather than the four marches that had been intended. It also becomes apparent from the calls for action that the group feels marginalised on account of its political position. Opposition to oppression by the system forms a sense of community belonging, which is an important aspect of the calls for resistance.

Political positions in 140 characters on Twitter

The most frequently occurring words in the tweets, after excluding articles and personal pronouns, are ‘Dresden’, followed by ‘nazis’, ‘police’, ‘Leipzig’, and ‘antifa’. The word frequencies along reveal the main oppositional players in the events: anti-fascist protesters, neo-Nazis, and the police who protect the march. The frequency of the names of the cities in which the protests took place relates to the

centrality of place and time on Twitter. In the events, the hashtag clearly identified the enemy and was used tactically as well as to symbolically separate Us from the Other. This was particularly obvious in Leipzig, where the anti-fascists used a different hashtag than did the radical right groups:

Anti-fascists tweet with #L1610! Nazis tweet with #RaZ10!' (15/10/2010)

RaZ seems to be the right-wing #hash, #L1610 the one of the democrats. Please correct me if this is wrong. (16/10/2010)

The question concerning the correct hashtag was essential and associated with a particular group, such as 'Nazis' or 'right wing' versus 'anti-fascists' or 'democrats'. The filtering function of the hashtag was used to distinguish the right-wing groups, which organised the march, from the activists and civil society networks, which participated in the blockades. Although there was a civil society network that mobilised separately from the anti-fascists, the various groups used the same hashtag since they supported the same political cause within the event. Using the hashtag as a filtering and sorting tool assembles the implied affordance of the technology. However, an additional social and, in this case, political component was included by the various groups that identified with a particular hashtag in accordance with their political positions in the conflict. This function also becomes visible by its absence: 'Nazis use #13februar as hashtag. Something is going wrong' (13/02/2011). Although the hashtag was used to filter the Twitter stream concerning the event, it included perspectives from across the political spectrum and did not separate the conflicting groups or their conflicting perspectives on the events.

Despite the belief that online communication is usually fragmented and offers little space for cross-ideological confrontation, the direct messages on Twitter in these examples are also directed at the Other:

@[username 1] Nazis also have mobile phones. Are they allowed to? Did The Fuehrer approve that? #13Februar (13/02/2011)

The anti-fascists depict the Other, the neo-Nazis, as fundamentally centralised and driven by leadership. Direct messages as a reaction to a tweet by the Other often include a critique embedded in playful rhetoric. Cross-ideological direct messages do not usually lead to real discussion or argumentation but are, rather, reactions to comments, which underlines the immediacy of the platform. Opinion can be expressed on a current action at any given moment:

@[username 2] sure they have the right to demonstrate... and they also have the right to an (even bigger) #counterprotest! #13februar (13/02/2011)

@[username 3] There is no right to freedom of speech. Then the right wing would have it too. #13februar (13/02/2011)

These direct messages are part of a public discussion between two individual users. The right-wing groups claimed freedom of speech as a fundamental right in reaction to the massive anti-fascist and civil society blockades, which were not legally permitted in the vicinity of the marches. In direct messages, these issues are addressed and discussed in groups as well as across the political spectrum. Both sides believe that the actions of the Other are unjustified compared to their own actions and that their own side has been mistreated by the authorities' decision to either prohibit them from protesting or not to protect their protest.

The apparent alliance of the police with the neo-Nazis is visible in the textual representations on Twitter: ‘Not unusual alliance: neo-Nazis and police unite to fight democracy #19februar #polizeigewalt’ (19/02/2011). Radical right-wing users present the police as allies in suppressing the struggle by anti-fascists: ‘pure chaos in Dresden, police fights leftist anarchists but not firmly enough! Get rid of the anti-German trash’ (13/02/2011). It becomes clear that the police are seen as allied against the blockades, which are portrayed as ‘anti-German’, ‘chaotic’, and disobeying the law. Criticism of the police is scarcely raised by the radical right on Twitter and is directed, rather, at specific actions that decrease the protection of the marches.

The right-wing groups frequently refer to themselves as strong and powerful, with reference to the superiority of the German nation: ‘6 helicopters in Dresden, the government is scared of national power in Germany, we will march today, no matter what!’ (19/02/2011). The rhetoric is nationalist and expresses power and fear, with the ‘government’ being representative of democracy and afraid of nationalist actions. The historically grounded marches are themselves physical expressions of this power. The German nation must be fought for and protected. The ideological foundation of the messages is reflected in words and phrases that clearly express the group’s political beliefs.

As on other online platforms, the Twitter hashtag alliance of civil society, anti-fascists, NGOs, and Dresden citizens disperses again after the events: ‘RT @name: nice that you prevent the Nazi march. But can you ever do it without violence? Too bad.’ (19/02/2011). Some participants in the blockades differentiate themselves from the activists, not due to the political cause they pursue but due to the methods used in the struggle. Although they support the anti-fascists’ political cause, they do not accept their methods, a fact that is expressed following the protest events. Apart from the collective identity communicated by the hashtag, identification with the cause is also revealed by people using their real names on Twitter: ‘Amazing how many people identify with #RaZ10’ (16/10/2011). Other tweets criticise admitting participation in the marches through use of real names on Twitter profiles.

Both hashtags used not just to create unity but also to ensure that the message was read by the opposing groups addressed in the tweets, i.e. to provoke and to express numerical superiority over the other group. Participants in the counter protests refer to the radical right’s inability to mobilise people, relating this to the infrequency of tweets on the right. Similarly, intellectual superiority was asserted relative to the neo-Nazis: ‘What? A Spelling mistake? [...] If The Fuehrer gets to know ... LOL #L1610 #RaZ10’ (16/10/2010). Despite the immediacy and length limitations on Twitter, confrontation between the various groups and their positions, including references to the Other as inferior, are common in the Twitter stream. In general, the representations on Twitter are rather polarised between the marches and the blockade participants.

Political positioning in videos

The different political positions are apparent in the images, symbols, and forms of action used in the mobilisation videos. Masscult and rituals were important to the symbolic communication of National Socialism. The mobilisation videos of the radical right include symbols of resistance such as torches and burning white flags. One of the Right to a Future mobilisation videos (Video 4) starts with an activist dressed in black and wearing a white mask walking through the city, observing signs of the death of the nation (*Volkstod*), as exemplified by girls dressed as cheerleaders.

The camera moves to the ground and zooms in on a leaflet stating: ‘Democrats bring about the death of the nation! www.recht-auf-zukunft.tk’. The video then shows activists wearing white masks and black cowls, carrying a banner with the same message and walking through a crowded city as people look on in astonishment, some of the bystanders seeking to get hold of one of the leaflets that the activists are handing out. Background music dramatises the events. The video is related to *ad hoc* night-time demonstrations in various cities involving neo-Nazis wearing white masks and bearing torches. The camera perspective causes the number of participants to appear more impressive than might otherwise be the case. The video that mobilised for the demonstration in Leipzig received 26,412 views, 234 likes, and 71 dislikes on YouTube (Video 4).

A much greater diversity of political positions is presented in the counter protest mobilisation videos. One video by a radical anti-fascist group starts with paving stones being placed on the ground, the writing ‘16.10.’, and a voiceover stating: ‘You don’t argue with fascists. You kill them.’ The video then shows a residential building block with a bright light on one of the upper floors. Text in white letters proclaims: ‘On 16.10.2010, the Nazis plan 4 demonstrations in Leipzig. This needs to be prevented with creativity and resolve!’ The voiceover states: ‘If I meet a fascist, I say, I don’t want to discuss it with you. If I can, I will kill you.’ A banner is unrolled from one of the upper windows of the apartment block, saying: ‘16/10 No Nazis’. The video then shows graffiti and anti-fascist logos in various locations. The mobilisation text appears in white letters on a black background: ‘Come to Leipzig on October 16, and participate in actions against the Nazi marches! Whether peaceful or not, ANTI-FASCIST RESISTANCE’ (Video 18). The video includes images of resistance from an anti-fascist and anarchist perspective, with graffiti and anti-fascist logos. Although it supports mass mobilisation by calling for violent and non-violent resistance, civil society networks do not share the position against neo-Nazis presented in this video. Wider alliances would prefer using conservative images and would restrict themselves to calls for non-violent civil disobedience.

Anonymous Leipzig produced a very different form of mobilisation against the neo-Nazi marches. The video shows streets, buildings, and yards that could be anywhere, with a voiceover saying:

Hello, National Socialists. We are Anonymous. Over the years, we have been watching you. Your foul campaigns of misinformation, the spreading of unjustified hatred and lies. Note that Anonymous does not care about your moaning about dead idols and your farcical wishes for the return of the old days. [...] We will be on the streets on October 16th 2010, unmasked, apolitical, and unforgiving. We are Anonymous. We are legion. [...] (Video 14)

The interesting message of this video is the commitment of Anonymous, which normally acts online, to street action. The group claims it will join the actions as a result of the ‘National Socialists’ and its activities over the years, though with ‘apolitical’ motives, which are part of Anonymous’ self-definition.

The list of videos for mobilisation continues with graffiti-spraying anti-fascists (Video 15), German rapper Prince Pi calling for action (Video 5), mobilisation against the Nazis using a Hitler cartoon (Video 16), mobilisation by the K.I.Z. hip-hop group for Red October (Video 17), an interview with an Auschwitz survivor concerning her experiences in World War II (Video 38), and a representative from The Left political party waving a seat cushion and announcing her participation in the blockades (Video

19). Some viewers do not appreciate political messages that represent the interests of a political party or seem like campaigning in the mobilisation videos. The video with the politician is one of the few that received considerably more dislikes than it did likes from viewers. A professionally produced video in which representatives from various political parties state why they participate in the protest events in Dresden gains more acceptance and viewers (Video 28). The diversity of videos for mobilisation produced by various actors in politics and society shows that the participation in the counter protests involves a range of political motivations, including anti-fascism as a larger project, protecting the city, and remembrance of the actual war victims.

Many videos by alliances and anti-fascist groups that resist the marches are accompanied by mobilisation text supporting unity between groups with different political positions:

This ambitious goal unites us all across social, political, and cultural differences. We will not provoke any escalation of disorder. We extend our solidarity to all those who share our goal of stopping the Nazi march. We will continue to act in unity against any attempt at criminalisation. We oppose any attempts to label the anti-fascist protests as “extremist”. In 2011, we will collectively block the Nazi march – colourfully, noisily, creatively, and resolutely. No to fascism, no to war – Never again! (Video 24)

The diversity of actors involved in the counter protests is represented by Nazi-free Dresden alliance, which presents a mobilisation clip that includes no violent or offensive actions in the resistance. The group, however, represents anti-fascist groups as well as left-leaning politicians, NGOs, and civil society (Video 24). The video is directed against the neo-Nazis and their denial of the Holocaust, their violence against immigrants, their misuse of Remembrance Day in Dresden, and their criminal acts. The group omits any radical political statement in favour of a broad alliance and distances itself from all forms of extremism.



Figure 13: Video still of video 4



Figure 14: Video still of video 18



Figure 15: Video still of video 24

Commenting on YouTube

Counting word frequencies of all individual words in the comments posted in response to the YouTube video in question, including those marked as spam, after excluding articles, clauses, personal pronouns, and modal verbs, the most frequently used word is 'Nazis', followed by 'the left', 'leftists', 'people', and 'police'. These words represent the various groups presented in the discussion as well as in the friend-enemy constellations. Since the comments are unmoderated, they drift away from the actual content of the video on several occasions. One recurring issue is willingness to engage in violent action. Within this discussion, violent action becomes an important criteria for identification with a specific group as well as an accusation against the other:

[User 1]: Generally, I don't support violence at all ... but I do agree that violence can be used against fascist propaganda if there are no innocent people harmed.

[User 2]: Stupid right and left extreme mob! Just beat each other up, but leave us citizens alone!

[User 3]: Where do you see violence against citizens in the video? Blocking a march with sit-in protests is a form of violence too.

Different political positions represented in the comments become apparent in the discussion of violent action in the protests. Arguments are made justifying violent action as a radicalisation of a political position and as a legitimate weapon against the Other. Although some members of civil society support the blockades and violent action in the blockades if not directed against people, participants in the discussion also reproduce the discourse that is dominant in institutionalised mass media. Both radical ends of the political spectrum are identified through their violent action and are thus equated as extremists, irrespective of the political projects they express. Violence is thus used to differentiate core activists from civil society, the latter of which supports the cause of the blockades and may even engage in civil disobedience but would not consider itself part of violent action. Activists involved in the blockades question their own ultimate political goals when they mobilise groups across the political spectrum but lose any clear left-wing political message as a result. The dichotomy created by the political cause, i.e. supporting the neo-Nazi march versus supporting the counter protest, is frequently questioned. Commentators harshly criticise one another for generalisations and inappropriate use of language and explain the nuances of the political spectrum, in this case the difference between political left-wing and right-wing groups compared to those that engage in violent action and civil disobedience:

There is neither 'the left' nor 'the right'. Because left already starts with the political parties in Parliament, and they really don't beat anyone up... The same with right

Both sides argue that the political spectrum is more nuanced than a simple division between left and right. Readiness to engage in violent action is a key factor in differentiating between the groups. Violence and civil disobedience are significant for constructing difference between the political positions represented in the conflict. The alternative reality constructed by participants in the marches includes fear, domination, and racist comments. The German nation must be fought for and

protected. In contrast, anti-fascists are portrayed as being against everything, as increasing instability, and as challenging existing systems:

How can a movement be good and anti-fascist, if it is against everything established, functioning, ruling and thus an element of objective destruction, which is dangerous for the nation

The struggle against existing power relations and domination is presented as disruptive of security, stability, and clear structures. The anti-fascists are criticised for their struggle against domination, ruling classes, and existing power relations. The nation is presented as superior to foreign influence. At the same time, the marches themselves are justified by the premise of freedom.

An important actor within the discussion is the police force, which must uphold the democratic right to freedom of expression by ensuring that the alliance of New Right and neo-Nazi groups is able to express its political opinion:

German police help fascists. You copy our clothes, our symbols, you don't even have your own ideas.

The police are seen as an ally of the neo-Nazis since they must protect the march and prevent anti-fascists blockades. This clashes with the perception of the groups involved in the marches, which see themselves as victims of authorities, including the police. The blockades become an act of civil disobedience, which describes the struggle against authorities. A frequent argument is that the neo-Nazis and New Right use symbols and clothing as well as copy slogans from the anti-fascists.

The political position of participants in the marches becomes clear over the course of the discussion, as does the historical framing of their interests by National Socialism:

Adolf Hitler cannot be replaced, and his deeds shall not be forgotten! Now we are the ones who must continue his great work! [...] Heil Hitler! You are among us! [marked as spam]

A user marked the comment as spam, but it can still be accessed and was not removed entirely. Although comments like this are rare, they are part of the discussion and gain responses of both support and condemnation. Such comments go beyond acceptable discourses within democracy in the German context due to identification with Hitler's historical context.

A common strategy of the radical right is to use left-wing arguments to support or justify their own claims:

This [anti-fascism] is institutional racism. The (anti-)fascists refuse advantages / benefits to some groups and privilege others.... ' this shows that you fascists see yourself as a race...

This comment is in response to a comment that describes those on the radical right as racists. To reduce the validity of the argument, the anti-fascists placed on the same level, i.e. are accused of being 'fascists' and 'racists'. The commenter reacts to the accusation that gives him/her a feeling of societal marginalisation and stigmatisation by turning the accusation around. Anti-fascists are called the 'leftists', 'Antifa', 'Antifanten', 'Anarchists', 'anti-Germans', 'communists', 'neo-Stalinists', and 'anti-nationalists' by their opponents. The anti-fascists are portrayed as being against everything, as increasing instability, and as challenging existing systems:

We live in anti-land, against railway stations, against nuclear power, against airports, against industry

Being against something and challenging existing power relations and political and societal structures thus means disrupting security and stability, which are crucial for the radical right throughout the discussion. This becomes very clear when the discussion turns to racism and xenophobia:

Yes, I feel very bad and awful and project that on the poor foreigners because those who are against foreign domination are bad foreigner-hating fascists. Boohoo. Just wait until my 'xenophobia' is justified. But then the mob here will really freak out [...]

The argument in the comment is framed by anxiety. 'Foreign domination' is presented as a threat to German power, which is clearly regarded as a stable and existing relationship being challenged by the radical left.

The radical right are described by their opponents as highly centralised and dependent on hierarchical structures, order, and leadership, as compliant 'robots'. Being uncritical and just following the leader's rules is a general, historically rooted perception of the conservatives and right wing. This becomes very obvious when terms such as 'leader' and 'the Fuehrer' are used. The theme of violence is sometimes used to sarcastically question the other group's activities, for instance, 'If the Fuehrer returns, those who throw stones through windows will be the first ones sent to a concentration camp. Want to bet?' Despite the serious tone of some parts of the discussion, the historical narrative is playfully integrated into a contemporary narrative. The aim is to provoke, confront, and challenge the opponent's argumentative strength by using sarcasm and irony embedded within the macabre narrative of Nazi cruelty.

Unity and diversity on Facebook

The group with the highest number of Facebook group members was Nazi-free Dresden. Compared with the Nazi-free Dresden group, the event pages of the marches contain relatively little information and discussion on the events, instead focusing on inviting people to physical meetings. The Facebook page is, however, used to organise car pools and request donations for the Youth Association of East Germany, to be used for informational material, court costs, banners, flags, and torches at the events. The alternative they present is based mainly on 'real information concerning the history of Dresden' and the events of World War II. The Facebook page concerning the February 13 funeral march had already been removed once due to violation of Facebook's terms of services (Event 1). Comments written formally, almost in the form of letters, and posted on the event page start with 'Heil Euch!' and use wording such as 'comrades' and 'remember the victims of Dresden'. The far right presents itself as marginalised by the actions of 'the left'. One comment asserts that 'despite all of those blockades and the agitation against us, we will show that we can remember the victims of the bomb terror with dignity and respect!!' The historical reinterpretation is clearly expressed in comments such as:

Damn allies! The war is lost, and those swine bomb us! And we're the war criminals?!? Fuck you! It's a pity we didn't bomb the USA. (Event 2)

The conflicting nature of the events is also strategically expressed on the Facebook group page for Nazi-free Dresden, symbolically reproducing the street blockades by

telephone: ‘Don’t forget to call the Nazi’s information phone from time to time!’ (Group 3). This is aimed at tying up the telephone line, just as the physical blockades stop marches in the streets. The page Nazi-free Dresden also includes humorous and playful comments such as:

The Nazis support global warming and melt the polar ice because the sun reflects off their baldheads! We can’t take that! (Group 3)

Humorous comments such as this receive a large number of likes as well as humorous responses. One of the comments with the highest number of likes is, however, the following:

Are we all criminals? [...] Shutting down our website didn’t help last year either. [...] We need your solidarity! Help us prevent this: civil disobedience is legitimate and not criminal! (Group 3)

Criticism from group members is provoked by the criminalisation and marginalisation of Nazi-free Dresden as a result of the court decision that illegalised the blockades illegal by physically separating the opposing demonstrations.

After the events, discussion concerning the various groups united in the protest events takes on a more important role in the Facebook group:

the action was a great success only because leftist forces worked together in solidarity! It should be like this from now on! Look at the films of the demo! If dogs, water guns, and pepper spray attack us for no reason, then setting dustbins on fire is innocent. (Group 3)

This comment is in reaction to two points in the discussion in the aftermath of the events. One is a critique of the mass media’s superficial reporting, which fails to acknowledge the actions of the radical leftist groups and depicts them negatively without focusing on their political cause. The other critique is against the discussion within the alliance that developed in the protest events, i.e. between radical anti-fascist groups and regular citizens. Criticism is also raised concerning the human chain:

holding hands for 5 minutes and then going home to drink coffee while the history deniers demonstrate their sick ideology. Thank you those of you who remained. A pity that Dresden hasn’t learned anything. (Group 3)

The groups that united for the protest events went their separate ways again after the events. Radical groups blame symbolic actions for being insufficient to stop the neo-Nazi marches. Civil society, meanwhile, does not wish to be associated with violent action. After a demonstration to show solidarity with imprisoned organisers of the blockades, participants criticise the presence of flags from the left-wing party Die Linke as well as communist flags. Carrying symbols of political affiliation in the demonstration would distract attention from the actual cause, i.e. a protest against the criminalisation of the blockades (Group 3). These discussions suggest that, despite the unity formed during the protest events against the common enemy, a more stable formation of this kind of unity in diversity would be difficult to sustain.

Sketching out a space for radical politics

In the previous chapters, we presented the results of the analysis within a framework developed in the theoretical discussion. To understand how contemporary media

environments permeate activist tactics and practices, it is clear that we must regard the various activist groups relative to one another. Digital age counterpublics exist across the following three dimensions: [1] technical affordances; [2] strategies, tactics, and media practices; and [3] political positions and ideology. These dimensions form the space in which radical politics take place in the digital age. The dimensions form an analytical framework for understanding the role of digital media in counterpublics at both ends of the political spectrum.

Dimension I: Technical affordances and resistance

The emancipatory potential of technology described by Feenberg (2010; 2002) is used not just by anarchists and anti-fascists but also by New Right and neo-Nazi groups. As Bakardjieva (2005) argues, different users invent new use genres related to their immediate situations and projects. These use genres are structured by technical and social affordances, which are described by their potentials and constraints. The different use genres that activists develop in the conflict situation studied here are classified according to the aspects of communicative action that they structure, such as time, space, privacy, publicity, audience, interaction, representation, and forms of expression. These potentials and constraints cannot be understood by means of conceptualising the internet or ICTs as a mere platform that provides different forms of communication. It would likewise be misleading to regard all available media platforms in a traditional sense, merely equipped with additional interactivity. Instead, the use genres are parts of the media environment in which counterpublics navigate their struggles for visibility. These media environments exist within a larger social, political, and technical environment.

The online media platforms were discussed separately from one another for analytical purposes yet are interwoven with one another, and functionalities and use genres cut across the various platforms. Some use genres have recently emerged while others, as the historical analysis has shown, already existed in the pre-digital media environments of World War II and are not novelties of digital media. The following use genres appear in the results of the analysis, embedded in the protest and conflict situation in a particular media environment: Mass mediated mainstream; mediated alternatives; self-representation; technologies of immediacy; technologies of mobility; confrontation, discussion, and deliberation; play, humour, and performance; hate speech, flaming, and trolling; technologies of semi-publicity; and restricted access and concealment.

Mass mediated mainstream is a highly institutionalised use genre in the form of media corporations and public media institutions. Mass mediated mainstream delegates the usual gatekeeping function to professionals such as journalists and editors, who select and present news in an apparently objective manner that is easily accessible to the public. News production is embedded within a wider network of news agencies and organisations that determine narrative and content. This use genre influences the practices, strategies, and tactics develop by the counterpublics in this study inasmuch as the mainstream mediated representation of these counterpublics affects public perception of them. To encourage positive presentation in the mainstream media, for example, organisers of the marches ask participants not to smoke, wear offensive clothing, or carry flags and to instead show a powerful but peaceful and ‘civilised’ demonstration of their political position. At the same time, the groups struggle for visibility in the mass mediated mainstream. As a result, they adjust but also oppose mass mediated mainstream. This use genre is usually incorporated into traditional

media institutions and is thus subject to the market rules of advertising and the general format of newsworthiness. Technologies of online mass mediation are, together with their offline counterparts, influential in forming public opinion concerning certain issues and excluding radical positions from these since they could be offensive to the audience to which they are addressed. As a result, activists from both extremes of the political spectrum are critical of their own representation and attempt to enter and challenge the mass mediated mainstream.

Alternatives to the mainstream include gatekeepers but are framed by different aims and values than is the mass mediated mainstream, involving a collaborative production process, and aiming to produce alternatives to the mainstream based on radical positions that do not necessarily appeal to a wider public. Similar to the previously discussed use genre, this form is not new, as the alternative media of World War II Germany show, but the web provides new functionalities. The networking character of online media is used for collective production within a particular radical political perspective. Due to the potentially large audience and publicity, radical online media are read by both mainstream media and political opponents as a source of information on the protest events. Because of their oppositionality, such alternative media not only express the wrongs in society but also the kind of society that ought to exist within their radical political framework. As a result, alternatives to the mainstream are not necessarily restricted to alternative online media platforms such as Altermedia and IndyMedia but can also integrate other online media platforms to produce alternatives, for example YouTube videos or the Metapedia nationalist wiki.

Self-representation is dependent on a particular political position in the events, but these positions need not be alternative to the mainstream. Self-representation is used to present an actor, group, or broad alliance united against a common enemy. The technical affordances of various media platforms are used to present a particular ideology and, in this case, political identity through text. In the case studied here, many different groups create self-representation, mainly in the form of websites and blogs but also in forms such as YouTube videos. Self-representation can be used in various ways, depending on the particular political position and ideology framing a group, including choice of narratives, symbols, images, and discourses. Calls for mobilisation designed to appeal to a wider alliance use single-issue campaigns and de-radicalise political positions as a means of representing a broad political spectrum. However, even representations of those wider alliances that resist the neo-Nazi marches in the form of blockades: Their represented narratives, actors, symbols, discourses, and issues differ significantly from those of political actors that plan symbolic acts of resistance. The representations of the radical right likewise differ significantly in symbols and discourses relative to their counterparts on the radical left.

Technologies of immediacy consist of short and frequently updated messages such as Twitter and live updates. Due to their short-length format, the production process of these messages is quick, permitting immediate reaction to current surroundings. The filtering and sorting of short message technologies of immediacy take on different forms. Live updates appear as a stream of chronologically listed updates on a website while Twitter uses hashtags as a sorting device. Technologies of immediacy direct their messages to a potentially large audience, yet as in the other use genres, the actual audience is smaller. For the different groups in the protest events, this form is especially useful for coordinating and organising protest. Immediacy allows the

dissemination of updated information on actions that are flexibly planned and frequently changed. These technologies thus become especially important in the organisation of blockades in the counter protests since the blockades must constantly react to the actions of their opponents in the marches. Expressions of time and place play an important role in technologies of immediacy in the protest events.

Technologies of mobility are closely related to technologies of immediacy. Whereas immediacy concerns the time component, mobility focuses on place and location. Independence from a particular location and special technical equipment makes it possible to distribute information and report alternative film, photos, and text on location at the events. Smartphones play an important role in this context since they make possible different forms of content production on an ever-accessible mobile device. Combining immediacy and mobility, i.e. time and place, in the updated information during the events produces a new kind of narrative, one that is assembled from updated information originating different locations at a particular time in the events. The publicity and combination of individual updates into a stream, series of events, or series of images turns these updates into a narrative that is sorted and filtered by tags. Although technologies of mobility are used strategically to produce visibility, they are avoided in actions that expose activists to high levels of risk. Those participating in acts of civil disobedience and insecurity thus avoid technologies of mobility due to their traceability.

Discussion, confrontation, and deliberation: Compared to technologies of immediacy, discussion, confrontation, and deliberation provide the potential for discussion by two or more participants over an extended period of time. This use genre becomes especially important after the events, when immediacy plays less of a role and when issues can be discussed over an extended period of time. If the interaction turns into discussion, confrontation or deliberation depends on the actual report, video, image, etc. to which the reaction refers, i.e. the issue at the centre of the interaction. The readiness of participants in these interactions to listen to other opinions and to possibly change their own points of view depends on the content they discuss as well as on their political positions. In the events studied here, deliberation and consensus are unlikely outcomes. A more likely result is the affirmation of ones' own political position through confrontation with the Other. Despite its interactive character, this use genre highlights political differences – rather than similarities – between discussion participants.

Humour, emotions, and performance: Despite the seriousness of the confrontation between the groups, humour, emotions, and performance play an important role in the forms of expression on the various online media platforms. Humorous elements are used to devalue claims by opponents, to question the seriousness of opponents' political positions, and to strengthen one's own position in the conflict. This includes the playful renegotiation of historically developed ideologies by means of digitally mediated expression in the conflictual situation. Performance and emotions are, however, also important criteria for identification with a cause and hence in mobilisation for the events. This use genre hosts interaction between the street actions and their symbolic and often playful reproduction in online media, for example with the symbolic reproduction of the blockades by spamming or tying up an opponent's Twitter stream or phone line. Performative action – online and in street action – is also used in the struggle for visibility in the mass media. The political project behind the actions of both, radical right and left in the protest events remain mainly invisible in reports of mainstream online media. Performative actions, humour and emotions

are thus not only a part of the self-portrayal of these groups and a way to degrade and mock the Other as well as a tactic to gain media attention.

Flaming, hate speech, and trolling: In the events, the online platforms also provide space for confrontation, including flaming, hate speech, and trolling. Moderation ensures that this use genre does not appear – or at least, does not abide – on highly institutionalised platforms. It is instead present in rather radical or unmoderated spaces. Hate speech in particular appears on online platforms that provide space for articulating radical political positions with reference to the Other. For example, hate speech is used in the comments sections following a frustrating experience for the organisers of the marches due to massive counter protests. Hate speech can directly address the Other on the opponents' websites, thereby interrupting conversation and provoking confrontation, but it can also reference the Other in an internal discussion. Planting incorrect or provocative information is also used on several occasions to bring into question the credibility of statements, videos, or comments; to cause tactical confusion; to mock the Other; or to symbolically reproduce the street action by spamming particular online media channels. The presence of trolling supports the performative and playful character of the events despite their historically and politically sensitive origins. Although trolls often consider themselves apolitical tricksters exploiting the anonymity of the web, they are entangled in this study within a sensitive political topic: This leads to trolling involving racist comments on one end of the political spectrum, jokes about the naivety of the neo-Nazis, and references to the Nationalist Socialist regime. The presence of this use genre makes obvious the transgressive nature of political conflict and ideology.

Technologies of semi-publicity: The use genres listed so far are technically public, i.e. visible to anyone who accesses them. Technologies of semi-publicity are not public by default but are accessible to anyone who joins a network, group, or forum, provided that there are no restrictions or membership requirements. These semi-public spaces can integrate all the forms mentioned so far, without the component of publicity. Semi-publicity is the case given that, for example, digital social networks such as Facebook have so many members that content subject to no privacy restrictions is available to practically anyone. Technologies of semi-publicity usually require an individual to register and later log in to view and respond to content. The registration and login process offers the feeling of leaving a public space and entering a private or more restricted one, even though some forums display all of their discussion content publicly, and Facebook groups and events are either publicly available or are available to anyone with a Facebook account. Spaces within technologies of semi-publicity can be turned into private spaces ones by means of restricted access. How this use genre appears to viewers, readers, and discussion participants thus depends on how the technologies of semi-publicity are managed, controlled, and understood by an organisation, group, corporation, or institution and on how users adapt their settings if possible.

Restricted access and concealment: This use genre is neither semi-public nor strictly private allowing only one-to-one communication. The technical affordances are used to provide spaces for private discussion within a group, for coordination, and for secure communication between two or more people. This use genre is especially important for groups acting in civil disobedience. For such groups, publicity is concomitant with surveillance by the police and public authorities and thus with exposure to high risk. Restricted access and concealment are thus not used to publicly

present a political position in the events but can be used to plan actions that may later gain visibility or enter the mainstream discourse.

Dimension II: Old strategies, tactics, and practices in new packaging?

The previous section introduced the various use genres related to the political projects and situations of the counterpublics. These use genres are structured by technical and social affordances. The counterpublics' strategies, tactics, and media practices are based upon these use genres and hence upon the media environment through which the counterpublics are navigating. Activists appropriate or adapt within a broader political and media structure. The media environment thus permeates activists' practices and tactics as well as their identification as being oppositional to the mainstream and to their political environment. The interrelatedness of tactics, strategies, and media practices of counterpublics today and in World War II become evident within the present study. Similarities and differences emerge within their actual strategies, tactics, and media practices; the change in their media environments; and their wider political environments.

As argued in the previous section, the use genres that activists develop in situations of conflict are classified by the aspects of communicative action that they structure, such as time, space, privacy, publicity, audience, interaction, representation, and forms of expression. The strategies, tactics, and media practices that activists use to produce counter publicity and the way they tactically develop new use genres are thus structured by the same categories. Although these changing structures in digital media environments provide different forms of communicative action compared to the media environments of World War II Germany, there are also similarities. Strategies such as creating a feeling of solidarity, decentralised production of content, mobilisation of supporters, creation of unity across different political positions, and concealment in high-risk situations exist in the media of counterpublics both prior to and in the digital age. Solidarity can be expressed through letters and in tweets or Facebook comments. Alternative media can be mediated in the form of a print serial publication or an alternative online media platform. Mainstream media reporting can be influenced by letters to the editor as well as by comments in online media, YouTube videos, or tweets. Decentralised forms of content production can involve increased interaction between readers and the editorial team as well as articles written by amateurs or even collaborative content production on alternative online media platforms. As a result, despite these are different use genres based on different communicative actions provided by the various media environments, the overall strategies for producing counter publicity are similar in the present day and in a historical context.

Digital media technologies provide forms of expression, interaction, and communication, the production processes of which are more immediate, flexible, and diverse and less dependent on physical location. The different forms of articulation of counter publicity are traceable in digital media. As a result, the formation of alliances in addition to discussion and interaction before, during, and after the events are visible aspects of the oppositional alternatives that the counterpublics present. This includes the expression of different alternatives and of the mainstream on a single platform, such as Twitter or YouTube, though such expressions are divided by sorting devices such as hashtags. Due to the lack of a physical carrier in form of one publication for each alternative perspective, boundaries between the mainstream and the alternatives, the publics and the counterpublics on online media platforms are fluid. This fluidity,

diversity of interaction, and differentiation of political positions are used strategically in the conflict situations and the struggle for visibility, for instance in marches and counter protests.

Even in World War II Germany, print media were appropriated to produce alternative perspectives, including decentralised production of content within the limitations of the technology. The overall strategies for producing counter publicity bear similarities such as adjusting to and being oppositional to the mainstream, seeking to influence the mainstream, concealment of content and activist identity during acts of civil disobedience, creating a feeling of belonging in a radical oppositional group and solidarity with like-minded groups, and producing alternatives to the mainstream. These similarities in actual strategies, despite many differences in implementation and translation into mediated counterpublics, show that the media technologies that are usually associated with control and propaganda could also be appropriated for the production of alternatives. The mediated alternatives do however differ from their counter parts on digital media. The similarities and differences are results of the technical affordances and use genres that are part of the contemporary media environment. The media environments in today's Germany and World War II Germany are, however, also embedded in political environments that differ considerably.

The differences in political environment are important for understanding how media technologies are appropriated to articulate counter publicity and to produce criticism of the government. Democracy and freedom of speech belong to the vision of how the world ought to be that is expressed in publications by counterpublics in World War II Germany. Discourses of freedom and hope are prominent in their publications produced in resistance to the propaganda of the National Socialist regime. In contemporary Germany, the New Right and neo-Nazis use democracy and freedom of speech to justify their actions. Although 'democrats', 'the democratic system', those actors that support the democratic system, multiculturalism, and immigrants present a threat from the nationalist perspective, the nationalist groups nevertheless justify their actions with reference to freedom of speech. This right grants them the opportunity to present their positions at stationary demonstrations and marches and to express their oppositionality through digital media.

The right to freedom of expression does, however, have limits when speech acts or actions violate the law. Counter protests, such as blockades, that go beyond mere symbolic resistance are banned by court decisions and are thus transformed into acts of civil disobedience. Radicalised forms of action such as property damage are used tactically to gain media attention but also to prevent the marches. On the other end of the political spectrum, speech acts such as Holocaust denial are prohibited. Holocaust denial and other banned National Socialist speech acts are avoided on websites, although they are not always avoided well enough, resulting in the closing down of such websites by the authorities, as occurred with the Right to a Future mobilisation website. Expression of past counterpublics' oppositionality in Hitler Germany exposed the groups and individuals involved in alternative media production and authorship to high risk and required secure communication and concealment, as evidenced by the pamphlets the communist parties smuggled into Hitler Germany in a cigarette box. The media practices and strategies used by activists are thus dependent on the system they seek to challenge. Adjusting to the mainstream and acting within the boundaries of the law serve to frame counterpublics' strategies, tactics, and media practices.

The change in political environment also turns both ends of the political spectrum into counterpublics, which feel marginalised in the mainstream and develop a feeling of belonging in their online communities as well as in actions such as the marches and counter protests. Although resistance against the National Socialist regime was carried out across a range of political positions (such as Social Democrats, the Working Class Movement, prisoners of war, and refugees), they possessed a common enemy in the form of the regime, and their political project was to resist and create alternatives to Hitler Germany. Oppositionality against the regime was thus a left-wing project.

The counterpublics in contemporary Germany can be found on both ends of the political spectrum. In the events studied here, they are in direct confrontation to one another. Both political extremes feel underrepresented, marginalised, and oppositional to the mainstream. Since their enemies are the radical groups on the opposite end of the political spectrum as well as authorities and the mainstream, their struggle cannot simply be seen as one against domination but also of the ascendant of one counter discourse over another. This constellation prompts the use of strategies of propaganda in conflict and counterpublics, protest, and struggle in resistance. The alliance of different political positions against the neo-Nazis is unsustainable but is, rather, fluid and fleeting. The counterpublics composed of various groups on the radical right articulate visions that are anti-democratic and exclusive: These are the direct enemies of the anarchists and anti-fascists.

The analysis shows that some strategies, tactics, and media practices in the marches and counter protests are common to groups on both ends of the political spectrum. They are thus a result of a group's position in society and its oppositionality to the mainstream rather than a result of political values. The strategic use of technology in resistance is thus only partially dependent on a group's political ideology in any absolute sense, having more to do with a group's role as a counterpublic. In other words, an essential factor is a group's political placement vis-à-vis other political players, other social and ideological formations, and the mainstream discourse when it comes to the frequency and accuracy of its representation.

Dimension III: Values and political positions of counterpublics

IndyMedia is a collective of independent media organizations and hundreds of journalists offering grassroots, non-corporate coverage. IndyMedia is a democratic media outlet for the creation of radical, accurate, and passionate telling of truth. (IndyMedia)¹⁸

In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act.
(George Orwell, quoted on Altermedia)¹⁹

These two quotes appear on the banners of the alternative media platforms IndyMedia and Altermedia respectively. IndyMedia emphasises 'collective', 'grassroots', 'non-corporate' news coverage as a 'democratic media outlet'. Altermedia describes its role as an alternative, undertaking 'a revolutionary act' in the face of 'universal deceit'. Both of quotes highlight as their respective organisations' main purpose the

¹⁸ Originally in English, translated into German on IndyMedia Germany.

¹⁹ Originally in English, translated into German on Altermedia Germany.

‘telling of truth’ as an alternative to the corporate mainstream media. Both organisations describe themselves as oppositional to the mainstream. The political positions on which this opposition is based and the political ideology framing the reports are, however, quite distinct on the two media platforms. An important aspect of the anti-fascists’ political project is to observe the neo-Nazis and learn about their actions and their leading actors. The same goes for the neo-Nazis, as exemplified by the Anti-Antifa, which aim to reveal the identities of the anti-fascists. The alternatives they construct normally remain within their own fragmented spaces, within a group of people who share the same political perspective. In the events studied here, these perspectives collide and come into direct confrontation. Despite this confrontation, both groups seek to enter the public domain through their actions in order gain attention for their claims and, in the long run, to alter the mainstream discourse.

The different groups in the anti-fascist protests on the one hand and the nationalist demonstrations on the other thus form alliances and make their voices heard in historically important events. One result of the digital media environment and its technologies of immediacy is the possibility for more rapid coordination and mobilisation of protest events in terms of space and time. These events are, however, often decontextualised and depoliticised to appeal to the wider mass of people necessary for the production of effective counter publicity. The construction of a common enemy is one method for successful mobilisation across the political spectrum. In the anti-fascist protests, such mobilisation is, however, only temporary and is directed against the neo-Nazis in specific events on the basis of disparate underlying political rationales held by the groups involved: Such motivations include security and defence for the citizens of Leipzig and Dresden, protection of democracy from anti-democratic objectives, protection of the constitution against Holocaust denial (a criminal act under German law), religious values, and a wider anti-fascist political project.

Especially for the New Right and the neo-Nazis, the historical significance of the events brings them into the spotlight of public debate and media discourse yet also prompts broad resistance. The self-representations of the groups that form to organise the marches are thus based on historically grounded ideologies that are re-negotiated in these events of conflict. Such renegotiation of historically grounded ideologies through discourse can be explained by Atton’s (2006) concept of ‘liquid ideologies’. The marches are demonstrations of the groups’ power, unity, and acts of resistance against the ‘democrats’. Their enemies are not embodied by the Jewish community in particular but by democrats, immigrants, and the democratic system in general, which is considered a threat to the German nation. These discourses are related to contemporary problems such as unemployment and lack of opportunities for young people, especially in the Eastern part of Germany. In their attempts to prove their legitimacy, the groups exercise the democratic right to freedom of expression and avoid reproducing symbols of the National Socialist regime in order to appeal to the public and the mass media through a peaceful image. These attempts are evident in the groups’ self-representations as well as in their direct confrontation with groups at the other end of the political spectrum.

The ideological claims and political positions of radical groups within the protest events are de-radicalised to appeal to the mainstream and to permit successful mass mobilisation across the political spectrum. This is evident in the counter protest mobilisations, which appeal to civil society with a call for non-violent civil disobedience. These processes of mobilisation, identification, a formation of claims

based on a particular political ideology or position are enabled by digital media technologies and by forms of self-representation, immediacy, interaction, confrontation, and discussion. The media practices are thus also dependent on the groups' identities their positions relative to the public. This is, for example, obvious in the more flexible use of technologies of immediacy by the counter protests compared to by the marches, reflecting the former's more flexible forms of action relative to those of the latter, which insist on registration of group leaders prior to the events and which communicate through mobile top-down communication. Nevertheless, the radical right groups in the events also use digital media and have begun adjusting to the more flexible forms of action, coordination, and communication that these technologies potentially provide.

Understanding of the media practices of groups that identify themselves as oppositional and marginalised, i.e. as counterpublics, requires that attention be paid to both ends of the political spectrum. Contestation in this mediated world can be clarified by means of the concept of 'mediation opportunity structure', which takes the 'different media actors with different forms of organisation, adopting various formats and different ideological frames' into account within the framework of 'the active user and technology as a sources of resistance' (Cammaerts 2012, 119). This includes the various forms of 'self-mediation' that are actively used in resistance. The various forms of communication and the various political positions emerge as distinct entities yet also exist in conflict with one another.

The different groups that are oppositional to the mainstream in their online media discourse can be regarded as a multiplicity of publics, defined by their relationships to the mainstream as well as to each other. The expression of these relationships is strongly influenced by a desire to 'protect our city' from the neo-Nazis in the counter protests, with emotions playing an important role. Such expressions of emotion by citizens to protect the city can be understood through Dahlgren's concept of 'civic cultures', i.e. as a participatory and political element framed by a non-political statement. In the protest events, resistance against the marches can take on more radical forms, with the involvement of radical groups that consider the resistance to be part of a wider political project. These different groups form alliances against the 'common enemy' (Mouffe in Carpentier and Cammaerts 2006) and act together in non-violent civil disobedience as well as in more radicalised forms of expressions such as property damage.

The court decision to ban blockades in the vicinity of the marches transformed the counter protests into acts of civil disobedience. Participants in the blockades thus regard themselves as oppositional and distance themselves from mere symbolic forms of resistance, and *vice versa*. The resistance is thus primarily against the New Right and the neo-Nazis and their actions, but for those taking part in civil disobedience, the resistance is against the authorities as well. To resist the neo-Nazis anti-fascist groups, alliances are formed consisting of civil society, NGOs, politicians, celebrities, and other groups covering a diversity of political positions. These alliances can be referred to as alliances of different subject positions within 'the political' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Mouffe 2005), which is composed of the field of contestation as well as of the various friend-enemy constellations. Some of these constellations can transform into wider alliances, but those in direct confrontation at the ends of the political spectrum are instead affirmed in the friend-enemy constellation in confrontation. The alliances between different subject positions are, however, unstable and in flux, form temporarily and disperse again after the events. Digital media play an important role

in forming these alliances as well as in highlighting diversity and difference in discussions. The self-representations of the different groups, if they are not formed specifically as broad alliances, emphasise these differences, embed the groups' actions within a larger political project while nevertheless stressing the necessity of mass mobilisation in the events.

Protean counterpublics in the digital age

One characteristic of counterpublics that emerges across the three dimensions is mutability. The counterpublics are flexible, developing tactics for adjusting to and challenging the mainstream in their digitally mediated environments. This process is interdependent with the actual street actions, which are likewise flexible in their coordination and organisation. Forms of expression of dissent range from performance to property damage, and political positions range from one end of the political spectrum to the other. Both the marches and the counter protests unite different political positions under a common cause for the sake of confrontation and acting in oppositionality. The mutability of the counterpublics involved in the events can be demonstrated across the three dimensions.

The *first dimension* is described by the *technical affordances* of digital media yet also by the wider media environment that the affordances create and the use genres that the counterpublics develop. In the overmediated environments of the digital age, different forms of communication converge and become part of the public representation of different oppositional groups. Self-representation, information, mobility, immediacy, discussion, deliberation, and confrontation are all potentially visible to the public. For example, the traceability and publicity of in-group discussion means that various speech acts become a visible part of the counterpublics. The imagined collectives that form online are thus visible, public, and traceable.

Alternatives to the mainstream, including radical groups from both ends of the political spectrum, present themselves through their own alternative media, websites, and blogs as well as on mainstream platforms such as YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. The publicity of the different use genres leads to adjustment due to the rules set by the particular online platform, such as de-radicalisation on account of moderation in the mass mediated mainstream. Mediation of the different forms of communicative action leads to adjustments depending on the online media platform and the group in question. Certain online media platforms foster some use genres more than others, for example technologies of immediacy and mobility versus discussion, confrontation, and deliberation. Certain use genres are developed with a conflictual character, fostering mutual observation, confrontation, hate speech, and trolling but also humour, emotion, and performance in acts of oppositionality.

The publicity of information online can be used strategically to produce visibility. At the same time, technologies of restricted access are used in the planning and coordination of actions to produce visibility through civil disobedience. A counterpublic's mutability is thus dependent on its imagined and actual audiences, time, space, and traceability, and the counterpublics engage in various forms of expression. In light of the diversity of publics they wish to address and their relationships to other ideological formations, expressed in conflict and confrontation, opposition and the formation of alliances, the counterpublics adapt their use genres, which are potentially diverse as a result of the technical affordances of digital media.

The *second dimension* describes how counterpublics adjust to this media environment in their articulation of oppositionality through particular *strategies, tactics, and media practices*. Mutability through adjustments to this environment becomes particularly evident in the actions and self-representations by the organisers of the marches. The public self-representation as peaceful, ‘civilised’, and powerful is expressed online, leading to discussions concerning the groups’ public identity, yet it is also necessary for their actions to maintain a peaceful public image. The wider alliances in the counter protests seek to mobilise the masses by reducing their political projects to the common cause of ‘stopping the Nazi march’. De-radicalisation, adjustment to mainstream discourse, reduction to a single cause, and avoidance of radical positions are tactics that the counterpublics can mutably use relative to the particular public they address.

The traceability and publicity of different forms of communication makes their mutability especially visible in the digital age. It is not only carefully formulated causes and action plans that are visible to the public; the public can also observe confrontation, discussion, group formation, the negotiation of aims, and withdrawal into smaller ideological formations when alliances break up and their constituents disperse. In order to mobilise the masses, activists must address people across the political spectrum, yet activists are simultaneously aware that violent acts, i.e. radical expressions of their political positions, increase their newsworthiness. This again requires mutability in how such groups present themselves to the public and thus how they communicate and present themselves online. Mass mobilisation becomes a media practice in itself since the mobilisation of masses is also a tactic for influencing news reporting.

Although there are considerable differences between the groups at the two ends of the political spectrum on account of their divergent values, they nevertheless use similar strategies, tactics, and media practices on account of their common position as counterpublics and thus their identification with oppositionality to the prevailing system. The two radical ends of the political spectrum do not, however, agree as to the identity of the mainstream itself. Organisers of the marches regard the mainstream as composed of ‘democrats’ and ‘anti-nationals’ whereas radical groups in the counter protests regard the mainstream as composed of the police, the establishment, parliamentary politics, and government authorities that support fascism. When the two groups from the extremes of the political spectrum confront one another, they end up reaffirming their own political positions instead of listening to one another or engaging in actual discussion.

The *third dimension* of *political positions, values, and ideologies* completes the space in which the protean counterpublics of the digital age take place. The ideologies and value systems on which the groups are based become evident in a group’s appearance and rhetoric. The organisers of the marches make particular use of historical references, and their discourses are clearly nationalist and directed against the ‘democrats’ and the democratic system in general. At the same time, the groups from both ends of the political spectrum engage in similar discourses, such as marginalisation, resistance, and oppositionality to the mainstream due to their positions as counterpublics. In order to mobilise across the political spectrum in the counter protests, the wider political project is omitted in favour of the more limited objective of preventing the neo-Nazi march.

As a result, the values and forms of action that the various participants in mass protest represent are mutable as well and can be reduced to the narrowest common

denominator, i.e. the fight against the neo-Nazis in the counter protests. These issue-based formations are united by a very specific target but are framed within a variety of different general political projects, such as protection of the city, action against historical revisionism, respectful remembrance of the victims of the National Socialist regime, and the wider project of anti-fascism. Their actual political positions are reflected in the wide range of forms of actions used in the counter protests. Tactics can differ due to different forms of organisation, such as more or less hierarchical forms, resulting in preferences for direct communication or diffused communication respectively. At the same time, the neo-Nazis and New Right attempt to adjust to decentralised and more spontaneous forms of action and present themselves differently to the public than they do in closed forums.

Although not usually prepared to engage in civil disobedience, regular citizens feel as though they are participating in ‘something greater’, as though they are disobeying the law and engaging in protest. This form of engagement goes beyond the political activities in which they would normally engage. They feel as though they belong to a greater political purpose and are politically active even if they do not identify with the wider project and more radical actions of the radical groups in the counter protests. Concealment and restricted access allow communication within groups of a particular political position, particularly those that are prepared to engage in civil disobedience and use tactics such as property damage. Protean counterpublics thus change shape over the course of time in the context of these single-issue actions (i.e. before, during, and after the protest events), and they do so in accordance with their political values and the strategies they use.

The counterpublics are thus mutable, not stable. This *mutability* is described by *the different ways in which counterpublics take place across the three dimensions* as well as their *relationships* with each other. The mutability that becomes evident in this study suggests that we can refer to the counterpublics of the digital age as *protean counterpublics*, thereby demonstrating their versatile and changeable nature. ‘Counterpublics’ (Negt and Kluge 1972; Warner 2002; Brouwer 2006) and ‘subaltern publics’ (Fraser 1992) are concepts developed as alternatives to the Habermasian focus on rational-critical debate in the public sphere. They are ascribed with ‘generative potential [...] expanding our objects of inquiry beyond rational-critical norms of public deliberation’ (Brouwer 2006, 198) since not all speech acts occur in official public forums. This highlights the uniqueness of each counterpublic and the existence of a multiplicity of counterpublics. The relationship between the subordinate and the dominant public is, according to Brouwer, dialectic and is reflected in their articulations, rhetorical structures, and practices. Their subordinate status relative to the dominant public is, according to Warner, expressed in a ‘hierarchy of the media’, including ‘speech genres’ (Warner 2002, 119). Temporary employments of oppositionality, such as those in the alliances that take part in the marches and counter protests, are contemporary forms of social movements. As Tilly and Wood argue, they represent an additional form relative to more sustainable and continual involvement in ‘political decision-making power’ (Tilly and Wood 2012, 123).

The generative potential of the counterpublics in this study and their dialectical relationships with a dominant public are evidenced in the data. The counterpublics studied here also, however, exist in a dialectical relationship with their opponents. The political identity of the anti-fascists is rooted in actions against their enemies, the fascists. Alliances formed in conflict consist of multiple publics that temporarily

unite, then disperse again once the ‘common enemy’ (Mouffe in Carpentier and Cammaerts 2006) has itself dispersed. These counterpublics are fluid, versatile, and dependent on the publics to which they relate and on the forms of expression they use. The traceability of different communication processes and the publicity of online communication, discussion, confrontation, deliberation, and self-representations relative to other publics become part of these counterpublics’ identities. Many speech acts that once were private have turned public in digital media environments.

Protean publics have been discussed in the context of privacy and the convergence of the private and public distinction (Jarvis 2011). The visibility of different forms of communication that become part of public appearance through this visibility is one aspect that describes the mutability of protean counterpublics. Dahlgren argues that it is important to understand the public sphere in terms of its relationship to the ‘protean ideal of democracy’ (Dahlgren 2001, 23), which does not necessarily lead to consensus. Dean (2003) suggests that the networked architecture of the web fosters conflict and contestation rather than a Habermasian public sphere. The counterpublics in this study not only transcend rational-critical debate but are also publics of conflict and confrontation, both forming alliances and contesting the mainstream in a dialectical relationship. The radical counterpublics on both ends of the political spectrum to a certain extent adapt due to their contrasting political values, but their strategies, tactics, and media practices are highly dependent on their positions as counterpublics, i.e. as marginalised, excluded, and underrepresented – as oppositional to the mainstream.

The counterpublics are protean since they are not sustainable unities and since they are formed on the basis of specific events in which they use the logics of mass protest to challenge mainstream discourse. After the events, they disperse into different publics once again, and as the alliances separate, the events come to be regarded as elements of these publics’ distinct political projects. After separation, the groups remain within their own circles, both because they no longer possess the attention achieved through mass action and because they no longer possess a common enemy in the conflict events. These smaller formations are more sustainable in terms of their political projects and positions but are less influential than mass alliances that form across political divides.

The counterpublics thus change shape as they form, disperse, and reform. They express their mutability in the tactics, use genres, and political positions they articulate in conflict, in the formation of alliances, and in opposition. The media practices of protean counterpublics are thus a result of relationships between publics, which can change over the course of time, and of the various publics’ political positions and ideologies, which are themselves fluid, historically grounded, and adaptable to changing situations. The protean character of counterpublics in the digital age thus depends on the position of the group in the political realm vis-à-vis other political players, other social and ideological formations, and the mainstream discourse when it comes to the frequency and accuracy of its representation. A counterpublic’s protean role as opponent, friend, enemy, alliance partner, contestator, rebel, marginalised group, and imagined collective is thus important on the contested field of political reality.

Discussion, limitations, and future research

In this final section, we discuss the wider implications of the role of the protean character of counterpublics in the digital age and suggest paths for further research based on the results of this study. In doing so, we return to the primary question this study asked: How do the technical affordances of different online media platforms shape the representations, strategies, and media practices of conflicting groups in their struggles for visibility in nationalist demonstrations and anti-fascist protests? We have suggested that different online media platforms possess different functionalities, which foster certain activities rather than others. They must nevertheless be considered in combination in order for us to understand how they shape the struggle for visibility in the anti-fascist protests within a highly mediated environment.

The analysis was divided into three parts to clarify this process in terms of interrelationships. These three parts or dimensions related to groups involved in the events are: technical affordances; strategies, tactics, and media practices; and political ideologies and positions. On the basis of the results of the analysis, we suggested the concept of protean counterpublics, based on earlier notions of counterpublics (Fraser 1992; Negt and Kluge 1972; Brouwer 2006; Warner 2002) but including the temporary, issue-based formation of alliances exploiting the various functionalities of digital media technologies and a relational perspective between groups with different political positions. These counterpublics are protean due to their changing shape over the course of the actions they undertake, their relationships with other counterpublics and the mainstream, and their different forms of expression through digital media.

The protean character of these counterpublics is embedded in the notion of ‘the political’ (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Mouffe 2005; Carpentier and Cammaerts 2006). This includes antagonism and agonism, and thus of discussion, confrontation, and deliberation, which permit the formation of alliances across diversity, taking differences into account. Protean counterpublics within the case studied here consist not only of anti-fascist groups but also of groups on the other end of the political spectrum, which possess anti-democratic, racist, and nationalist worldviews. The ideologies of these groups are historically grounded but are renegotiated in these contemporary protest events and in digitally mediated discourse (van Dijk 1998b; Atton 2006). Including these groups as one form of protean counterpublics in the digital age sheds light on the premises of their self-definition as marginalised and oppositional. Their media practices, tactics, and strategies are partly influenced by this self-perception. Understanding their role as counterpublics thus helps us understand their role in democracies in two ways: [1] as marginalised groups, which motivates individuals to join these groups and develop a feeling of belonging yet also to conceal their actions due to stigmatisation in society; and [2] as enemies in the mobilisation of counter protests, which is a form of political expression involving broad alliances across political positions.

This study is based on a detailed analysis of communication in digital media in three interrelated events within a particular geographical area. The focus on the nationalist demonstrations and anti-fascist protests in Germany has limitations but also raises many questions that result in suggestions for further research. This study has shown how protean counterpublics form, connect, relate to other publics, and dissolve again through their expressions in digital media in the anti-fascist protests and the marches. Further research could indicate if these processes are similar in other forms of spontaneous alliance formation and in other forms of protest in which digital media

play an important role. More importantly, further research could show how these limited events are part of a larger and more sustainable political project that can eventually lead to social and political change. In other words, as Castells argues, a struggle can only be successful 'by connecting with each other, by sharing outrage, by feeling togetherness, and by constructing alternative projects for themselves and for society at large' (Castells 2012, 229).

This, however, also raises the question of whether the alternatives that are constructed are ones that are acceptable as part of 'the political' (Mouffe 2005). Although some of them share anti-democratic and exclusive values, they foster the formation of alliances for resistance and thus foster citizens' political engagement in conflictual events. Further research is needed to understand the role of both protean counterpublics and more sustainable counterpublics that foster issues such as anarchism, or anti-fascism but also those that base their claims on anti-democratic and nationalist values. The interplay between the various groups' political positions and ideologies on the one hand and the groups' adaption to contemporary forms of protest and thus the formation of protean counterpublics needs to be clarified. Examining their role as counterpublics relative to other counterpublics would contribute to an improved understanding of how racist, nationalist, and exclusive discourses can enter the public discourse and the political realm. Their identification with discourses of marginalisation and oppositionality is an important element of their role as counterpublics in contemporary society. Understanding their relationship to the mainstream and to other publics can assist in understanding their actions outside of theories of propaganda and war. Clarity concerning these formations can result in policy suggestions. By the same token, classic theories of propaganda (Lasswell 1927) and confrontation can, as this study shows, help explain the construction of a common enemy, the formation of alliances, and situations of confrontation in contemporary politics. A strategic analysis of the media practices of groups with different political ideologies, as some studies have already shown (Benkler and Shaw 2010; Hargittai, Gallo, and Kane 2007; Wojcieszak 2010), are required if we are to further develop an understanding of the relationship between political ideology and technology.

Such an analysis should consider these groups' various forms of expression, including concrete practices for gaining visibility in a mediated world within the broader concept of social movements and opportunity structures (Cammaerts 2012). It must also be clarified how media practices and formations of protean counterpublics influence civic culture and participation (Dahlgren 2009; Dahlgren 2000) as well as how they influence the identity of the individuals and political groups involved in such formations. This not only includes the alliances they form to gain visibility but also how citizens articulate themselves in their everyday lives in the form of subactivism (Bakardjieva 2009); how those private utterances that are traceable online relate to the formation of counterpublics; how their claims are discussed within this private realm; the nature of their political positions; their protean character; how they can be used as to indicate what could make these alliances more sustainable; and how the gap might be bridged between counterpublics and policy makers.

Finally, as this study shows, many strategies, practices, and tactics for producing counter publicity by using media technology are similar to those used with completely different media technologies in a historical context. Relating the understanding of contemporary developments in technology to contentious politics could help overcome exaggerated expectations for the impact of technology in society and to

understand them in the context of actual political situations and actions. This is not to deny the emancipatory potential of technologies but aims instead to understand how media technologies were used in the past, thereby assisting us in understanding what these technologies mean for political action, conflict, and contestation in a particular mediated and political environment in the present.

Conclusion

This thesis did not attempt to reconfirm ideas concerning any deterministic effect that technology may have on changing society. It did not seek to argue for a functionalist perspective that implied that technology can be applied for a specific purpose in a specific context. Rather, this study has argued in favour of understanding specific cases in our overmediated environment by regarding it as part of a larger – in this case, political – environment in which particular actions are located. This involves stepping back and finding answers by examining similar questions in various media environments with similar aims – in this case, counter publicity. The conceptual framework of protean counterpublics, which take place across the three dimensions of [1] technical affordances; [2] strategies, tactics, and media practices; and [3] political positions and ideology, is thus more of an invitation to future discussion than it is the final word on the subject. By studying the protean character of counterpublics in contemporary media environments from this perspective, we can acquire a better understanding of the counterpublics' values, practices, and various forms of expression through digital media technologies in contemporary democracies. The inclusion in this analysis of radical political groups from both ends of the political spectrum represents an attempt to understand their struggles and relationships with other publics and counterpublics. While we may not agree with the political values that some of the radical groups in this study espouse, their roles are important for understanding radical politics in the mediated environments of contemporary democracy. The struggles of these counterpublics represent a segment of the political battlefield of conflict and contestation, which are usually carried out in an exclusive form but which, in this case, temporarily enter the public discourse. A counterpublic's protean role as opponent, friend, enemy, alliance partner, contestator, rebel, marginalised group, and imagined collective is thus an important part of the protean radical political landscape in the digital age.

[Proteus] indeed, had the power of assuming every possible shape, in order to escape the necessity of prophesying, but whenever he saw that his endeavours were of no avail, he resumed his usual appearance, and told the truth. When he had finished his prophecy he returned into the sea. (Homer, The Odyssey, in Atsma 2000)

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Archived material

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———. No. 51-52. Third year. 12/12/1941.

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Zentralkomitee der Revolutionären Sozialisten Österreichs [Z.R.S.O., abbreviation for in text quotes by author]. Booklet. Vienna, 1936. Austrian subject collection, Box no. 1, Hoover Institution Archives.

Zentralkomitee der Kommunistischen Partei Österreichs [Z.K.P.O., abbreviation for in text quotes by author]. Booklet. Vienna, (year missing). Austrian subject collection, Box no. 1, Hoover Institution Archives.

Appendix 2: List of videos

[*video number*: posted by. Title, publication date. length in minutes:seconds; views; likes, dislikes; published at.]

Video 1: ESIGNERd. Nazis am Hauptbahnhof, Ostseite, warten, dass Tommy sie wieder nach Hause bringt, October 16, 2010. 2:00; 14,174 views; 6 likes 10 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 2: ag1610le. Antifa Leipzig - 16. Oktober - Naziaufmarsch verhindern! Mobivideo 1 kurz, September 13, 2010. 3:06; 1,186 views; 12 likes, 7 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 3: Recht auf Zukunft. Mobilisierungsvideo zur Demonstration in Leipzig am 16. Oktober 2010, September 21, 2010. 1:41; n.a.; n.a.; Volksfront-Medien.org (FVM) videoprojekte.

Video 4: Recht auf Zukunft. Der Volkstod läuft mit - Recht auf Zukunft, February 18, 2010. 1:47; 26,412 views; 234 likes, 71 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 5: Ag1610le. Antifa Leipzig - 16. Oktober - Naziaufmarsch verhindern! Mobivideo 3 Prinz Pi, September 13, 2010. 1:24; 2,259 views; 8 likes, 6 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 6: User-generated content. Removed from YouTube. 0:25.

Video 7: Bildungskanal. Nazi-Aufmarsch in Leipzig 16.10.2010, October 17, 2010. 0:34; 8,482 views; 3 likes, 6 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 8: Schlandfunk. Demo in Leipzig 16.10.2010 (MDR), October 16, 2010. 4:38; 16,226 views; 19 likes, 15 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 9: LVZ online. LVZ online. Videonews, October 15, 2010. 2:02; n.a.; n.a.; LVZ online.

Video 10: User-generated content. Removed from YouTube again. 00:50.

Video 11: MediaFNSiegerland. [Inoffizielles] Mobilisierungsvideo zur Recht auf Zukunft Demonstration in Leipzig [16.10.2010], October 10, 2010. 2:14; views: 7,975; 40 likes, 37 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 12: Schlandfunk. Brandanschläge der Antifa in Leipzig am 16.10.2010, October 17, 2010. 2:26; 5,683 views; 4 likes, 5 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 13: Wolkenreich. 16.10.2010 – Leipzig nimmt Platz, October 16, 2010. 3:38; 5,885 views; 7 likes, 5 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 14: AnonLe. Anonymous: Message to Neonazis 16.10.2010, September 29, 2010. 1:55; 3,357 views; 26 likes, 26 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 15: AlertaSachsen. 16.10. Leipzig - Antifa Mobi II, re-posted October 29, 2011. 2:23; 231 views; 0 likes, 0 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 16: n.a. GebrüderOst und KrobTV gegen Rechte Gewalt, n.a. 2:01; n.a.; n.a.; removed from YouTube.

Video 17: Ag1610le. Antifa Leipzig - 16. Oktober - Naziaufmarsch verhindern! Mobivideo 2 KIZ, September 13, 2010. 3:00; 9,410 views; 38 likes, 28 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 18: Aranginaish. Antifa Streetart Mobi 16.10. Leipzig, October 10, 2010. 2:13; 5,303 views; 46 likes, 20 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 19: Linksdresden. 13. Februar 2011 - Nazis Blockieren, January 4, 2011. 00:41; 6,741 views; 21 likes, 43 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 20: MDR. Sachsenspiegel, n.a. 1:55; n.a.; n.a.; MDR online.

Video 21: Bild.de. Bild online report, n.a. 1:47; n.a.; n.a.; Bild.de.

Video 22: Spiegel.de. Linke vs. Neonazis. Konfrontation in Dresden erwartet, n.a. 1:33; n.a.; n.a.; Spiegel.de.

Video 23: Spiegel.de. Spiegel report, n.a. 3:11; n.a.; n.a.; Spiegel.de.

Video 24: Dresden nazifrei. Mobilization video Dresden Nazifrei!, n.a. 4:10; n.a.; n.a.; Dresden Nazifrei! website.

Video 25: ARD. Sachsenspiegel, February 19, 2011. 8:03; n.a.; n.a.; ARD website.

Video 26: Vegantifa. Dresden Neustadt 2010 - Blockadesong - Karen Eliot & The Antifa Swingers, February 14, 2010. 2:36; 14,080 views; 162 likes, 39 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 27: ThePirateNation. Fatal für Nazis - Dresden 2011 - Karen Eliot & the Antifa Swingers, January 22, 2011. 3:13; 8,812 views; 67 likes, 26 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 28: ZusammenGegenNazis. Bundestagsabgeordnete rufen zur Anti-Nazi-Demo in Dresden auf, January 24, 2011. 2:07; 25,156 views; 124 likes, 52 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 29: LautGegenNazis. "Dresden nazifrei!" - 13.02. + 19.02.2011 - Sebastian Krumbiegel ruft auf!, February 6, 2011. 0:33; 5,604 views; 27 likes, 45 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 30: LautGegenNazis. Smudo ruft über "Laut gegen Nazis" für den 13. Februar 2011 in Dresden auf!, February 9, 2011. 0:55; 13,277 views; 76 likes, 71 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 31: NetzGegenNazis. Tobi Schlegl ruft auf!, n.a. 0:31; n.a.; n.a.; YouTube.

Video 32: Dresden nazifrei. Konstantin Wecker and Commander Shree Stardust, n.a. 1:39; n.a.; n.a.; Dresden Nazifrei! website.

Video 33: Wombattalion. Daniel Kahn - Nakam (6 Million Germans) - Anti-Nazi Dresden 2011, January 30, 2011. 5:17; 1,662 views; 19 likes, 3 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 34: Katapoulpe. Dresden 13 Febriar 2011.flv, January 23, 2011. 4:51; 3,254 views; 10 likes, 15 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 35: Bringzwei. Antifa ruft auf - Dresden 2011 - Bring2, January 20, 2011. 0:34; 20,389 views; 44 likes, 118 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 36: xXmuerteXx. [MOBIVIDEO] Dresden - Nazis Blockieren - No Pasaran [19.02.2011], January 10, 2011. 1:19; 19,736 views; 82 likes, 35 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 37: Bringzwei. Die Killerpilze - Bring2 - Gegen den Naziaufmarsch in Dresden 2011, February 7, 2011. 0:27; 2,938 views; 46 likes, 23 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 38: Dresden Nazifrei!. Celina van der Hoek ruft zum Widerstand gegen Nazis auf, n.a. 4:31; n.a.; n.a.; Dresden Nazifrei! website.

Video 39: MrAliHoehler. Recherche Video Neonazis Dresden 19.02.2011, February 21, 2011. 14:04; 12,007 views; 24 likes, 40 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 40: Berlin Soundstrike. Friedenswanderer Stefan Horvath - Anti-Nazi Demoaufwurf Dresden 13. Feb., February 8, 2011. 1:03; 135 views; 1 likes, 0 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 41: LinksjugendBGDDOst. Mobilisierung gegen Naziaufmärsche - Linksjugend, Roter Stern Dresden-Ost, February 1, 2011. 0:42; 372 views; 2 likes, 2 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 42: Boehseronkael. Dresden 13.02.2011 JLO Trauermarsch Hauptbahnhof, February 14, 2011. 3:29; 3,386 views; 8 likes, 14 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 43: GuddySmith. Konstantin Wecker - "Empört euch" - 19.2.2011 - Kundgebung "Dresden Nazifrei", February 21, 2011. 2:53; 3,276 views; 16 likes, 0 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 44: TheHerrJeh. 19.02.2011 Naziangriff auf "Praxis" in Dresden-Löbtau 19. Februar, February 19, 2011. 2:47; 123,899 views; 353 likes, 194 dislikes; YouTube.

Video 45: Manhattanmoments. Wasserwerfer am 19. Februar. Dresden Münchner Platz, February 19, 2011. 2:24; 228,743 views; 242 likes, 48 dislikes; YouTube.

Appendix 3: Twitter hashtags (#)

[saved as username, date, tweet, @user, retweet]

#19februar, n=4,161

#13februar, n=1,688

#11610 and/or #RaZ10, n=413

Appendix 4: List of mobilization websites and blogs

[website, link]

13 Februar, City of Dresden, <http://13februar.dresden.de/>

ag1610, <http://www.ag1610.wordpress.com>

AK Antifa Dresden, <http://dresden1302.noblogs.org/>

Aktionsbündnis gegen das Vergessen, <http://www.gedenkmarsch.de/dresden/>

Bring Zwei, <http://www.bringzwei.com/>

Dresden Nazifrei, <http://www.dresden-nazifrei.com/>

JLO Sachsen, <http://www.jlosachsen.de>

Leipzig nimmt Platz, <http://www.leipzig-nimmt-platz.de/>

Nopa, No Pasarán!, <http://www.no-pasaran.eu/>

Recht auf Zukunft, <http://www.recht-auf-zukunft.tk/>

Roter Oktober Leipzig, <http://1610.blogsport.de/>

Appendix 5: Coverage in online media, websites, blogs

[name of medium/website/blog. Headline. Date. Categorized as]

AB Gera gegen Rechts. Bis der Naziaufmarsch Geschichte ist. 28/10/2010. Blog.

———. Vier! Naziaufmärsche in Leipzig am 16.10.10. 26/09/2010.

abgefickt.de. Naziaufmarsch 16.Okt.2010 in Leipzig!!! 17/09/2010. Mass media.

Achse des Guten. Leipzig erwacht. 30/09/2010. Blog.

Ad Hoc News. Stadt Leipzig verbietet Neonazi-Aufmärsche. 14/10/2010. Mass media.

addn.me. Dresdner Aktionskonferenz beschließt Massenblockaden. 13/10/2010. Alternative media.

———. Rückwärts immer, vorwärts nimmer. 11/02/2011.

adhissla. Nazis in Leipzig. Aufruf zum Widerstand am 16.10.2010. 23/09/2010. Blog.

AG 17. Informationsveranstaltung - Roter Oktober. n.a. Antifa.

AG Antifa Leipzig. Nazis wollen am 16. Oktober doppelt demonstrieren. 8/9/2010. Antifa.

AG Friedensforschung. Eine Menschenkette vor der Nazi-Demo. 27/01/2011. NGO.

AG Merseburg. 16. Oktober 2010 – Demonstration in Leipzig – Recht auf Zukunft! 5/9/2010. Radical right.

AG Schwaben. 16.10. 2010 in Leipzig: Wir haben ein Recht auf Zukunft! 29/09/2010. Radical right.

AG Rheinland. Das Laufen neu gelernt. 17/10/2010. Radical right.

AJZ Chemnitz. Call For Action. 10/10/2010. Political party.

AK Antifa Dresden. Aktueller Stand zum „Roten Oktober“ gegen die Naziaufmärsche in Leipzig am 16.10. + Anreise aus Dresden. 13/10/2010. Antifa.

———. Infoveranstaltung in Dresden: Naziaufmärsche am 16. Oktober in Leipzig verhindern! 13/02/2010.

Aktionsbündnis Erzgebirge. Recht auf Zukunft – Am 16.10. auf nach Leipzig! 11/10/2010. Radical right.

Aktionsbündnis Leipzig. 16. Oktober 2010: Demonstration III – Zukunft statt Krisenzeiten. 12/9/2010. Radical right.

———. 19. Februar Dresden – Dem Recht auf Gedenken eine Gasse erkämpfen! 11/01/2011. Radical right.

Aktionsbüro FN Nordsachsen. Dresden 2011 – Recht auf Gedenken – Der Wahrheit eine Gasse! 09/01/2011. Radical right.

Aktionsbüro FN Nordsachsen. 16. Oktober 2010 – Demonstration in Leipzig. 7/9/2010. Radical right.

———. Recht auf Zukunft – Es beginnt bei dir! 11/9/2010.

Aktionsbündnis Courage. Shuttlebus Naziaufmärsche in Leipzig stoppen. 11/10/2010. NGO.

Aktionsbündnis Erzgebirge. Dresden 2011 – Recht auf Gedenken – Der Wahrheit eine Gasse! 7/9/2010. Radical right.

———. Großdemonstration der Deutschen Jugend für ein „Recht auf Zukunft“ - Juristische Phase 16. Oktober- angelaufen – Kein Verbot! Demonstrationen finden statt! 14/10/2010.

Aktionsgruppe Merseburg. Dresden: erfolgreicher Trauer- und Gedenkmarsch (offizieller Bericht vom Aktionsbündnis). 14/02/2011. Radical right.

Aktionsnetzwerk. 16. Oktober: Aufmärsche der rechten Szene in Leipzig verhindern! n.a. Alternative media.

———. 16.10.2010: Naziaufmarsch in Leipzig verhindern. n.a.

Aldhisla. Nazis in Leipzig. Aufruf zum Widerstand am 16.10.2010. n.a. Blog.

Alerta.dk. Af sted til Dresden! 20/01/2011. Antifa.

Allgäu online. Kein Platz für Rechtsextreme in Leipzig. 16/10/2010. Mass media.

Altermedia. “Stricken gegen Rechts”, “Frühstücken gegen Rechts” ... – Leipzig wehrt sich gegen Rechts. 17/10/2010. Alternative media.

———. Demo-Twitter für Leipzig (16.10.10). 16/10/2010.

———. Freies Netz Köln zur nationalen Leipzig-Demo am 16. Oktober. 30/09/2010.

———. Freies Netz Unna: Aufruf zur Demo nach Leipzig am 16. Oktober. 25/09/2010.

———. Recht auf Zukunft: Nationale Demonstration am 16. Oktober in Leipzig. 8/10/2010.

———. Junge Landsmannschaft Ostdeutschland und FN Nordsachsen zu den Ereignissen in Dresden. 21/02/2011.

———. Gedenkmarsch.de: Auflagen zum Trauermarsch in Dresden am 13. Februar 2011. 02/02/2011.

———. Der Tag in Dresden aus Sicht der anderen Seite: 13.02.2011 alternative Amtliche und nicht ganz so amtliche Eindrücke vom gestrigen Tag in Dresden. 20/02/2011.

Amnesty International. Mehr Verantwortung bei der Polizei. 23/02/2011. NGO.

AN Wetzlar. 16.10.2010 Recht auf Zukunft Demonstration in Leipzig. 11/10/2010. Radical right.

———. Auf nach Leipzig am 16.10.2010. 6/10/2010.

Analog soul. Aufruf // A FOREST STELLT SICH QUER. 14/02/2011. Blog.

analyse & kritik - Zeitung für linke Debatte und Praxis. Nr. 556. Zweierlei Denkmalstreit. 17/12/2010. Alternative media.

anarchia dresden. Roter Oktober. 4/10/2010. Antifa.

Anarchistische Gruppe Freiburg. Roter Oktober: Naziaufmärsche verhindern! n.a. Antifa.

Anarchistisches Netzwerk Suedwest. Roter Oktober: Naziaufmärsche verhindern! n.a. Antifa.

Anti-Antifa Wetzlar. Trauermarsch in Dresden am 19.01.2011. 26/01/2011. Radical right.

Antifa Bad Oldesloe. Kampagnenstart – Dresden Nazifrei 2011! n.a. Antifa

Antifa Coburg. OPFERMYTHOS UND GESCHICHTSREVISIONISMUS BEKÄMPFEN! n.a. Antifa.

Antifa Dresden. Polizei-Macht macht kirre – lahmer Versuch den Protest zu schwächen. 04/02/2011. Antifa.

———. Dresden: Neben Nazi-Aufmarsch am 19.02.2011 Fackelmarsch am 13.02.2011 geplant. 17/12/2010.

———. Dresden opferfrei. n.a.

———. Dresdner Denkmal Stories - Widersprüche zwischen Wiederaufbau und Opferidentität. 15/01/2011.

Antifa Frankfurt. Bundesweites öffentliches Plakatieren. 18/01/2011. Antifa.

———. Mobilisieren. n.a.

———. Hessisches Mobilisierungstreffen. 22/01/2011.

Antifa Halberstadt. Informationen. 28/09/2010. Antifa.

Antifa International. Naziaufmarsch am 19.02.2011 in Dresden verhindern. n.a. Antifa.

Antifa Jena. Pressemitteilung der Initiative »Keine Versöhnung mit Deutschland« vom 13.02.2011. n.a. Antifa.

Antifa Koeln. Kölner Neonazis an Angriff beteiligt. 24/02/2011. Antifa.

———. 19.2. Dresden-Action // Nazis Blockieren – Extremismusquatsch und Opfermythen Bekämpfen! 25/12/2010.

———. Antifa all inclusive in Leipzig! 7/10/2010.

Antifa KOK. No pasarán! Dresden 2011. n.a. Antifa.

Antifa Leipzig. Route der Nazis am 13.02. bekannt. n.a. Antifa.

Antifa Neukoelln. 16.10. Naziaufmärsche in Leipzig verhindern! 28/09/2010. Antifa.

Antifa Oranienburg. Leipzig / 16. Oktober / Call For Action > Aufruf zu antifaschistischen Protestaktionen. n.a. Antifa.

Antifa Pankow. Leipzig: Nazis konnten nicht marschieren. n.a. Antifa.

Antifa passau. Leipzig / 16. Oktober / Call For Action > Aufruf zu antifaschistischen protestaktionen. 2/9/2010. Antifa.

Antifa Pbg. Kein Nazi – Event in Dresden 2011! 20/12/2010. Antifa.

Antifa Pinneberg. Nazis wollen noch mal in Leipzig scheitern. 13/09/2010. Antifa.

Antifa Prenzlauer Berg. 16. Oktober: Naziaufmärsche in Leipzig verhindern! 19/09/2010. Antifa.

Antifa rgb. Aufruf | Protestaktionen | Leipzig | 16.10.2010. 26/09/2010. Antifa.

———. Grandioses scheitern – Nazidemonstration in Leipzig. 17/10/2010. Antifa.

Antifa Spremberg. Leipzig / 16. Oktober / Call For Action > Aufruf zu antifaschistischen Protestaktionen. 25/09/2010. Antifa.

Antifa Suedthueringen. Licht aus! Destroy the spirit of Dresden! 28/01/2011. Antifa.

Antifa Westhavelland. Keine Zukunft für Nazis in Leipzig. n.a. Antifa.

Antifa.de. Dresden, Deutschland - alles Opfer? 21/01/2011. Antifa.

———. 22.01.: Dresden-Konferenz in Berlin. 06/01/2011. Antifa.

———. No Pasarán am 19.02. in Dresden. 11/02/2011. Antifa.

Antifa.dk. BLOKER NAZI-MARCHEN! FOR SOLIDARITET, MANGFOLDIGHED OG ANTI-FASCISME! 31/01/2011. Antifa.

antifa.sfa. "Kreative Protestformen gegen Nazis Andere Städte, andere Sitten" 17/01/2011. Antifa.

antifanten. 16.10.2010 Leipzig. n.a. Antifa.

Antifaschista Blog. Antifaschisten rufen trotz Verbots von Neonaziaufmärschen zum Widerstand auf. 14/10/2010. Antifa.

Antifaschistische Aktion Chemnitz. 14.10|Rothaus|Mobilisierungsveranstaltung für den Roten Oktober 16.10. Leipzig. n.a. Antifa.

Antifaschistische Aktion Karl-Marx-Stadt. 16.10. Leipzig. Roter Oktober – Naziaufmärsche verhindern. 24/09/2010. Antifa.

Antifaschistische Aktion Passau. Leipzig / 16. Oktober / Call For Action > Aufruf zu antifaschistischen Protestaktionen. 2/9/2010. Antifa.

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