

Germany: AfD Populists Dominate on Facebook | SPIEGEL ONLINE

By Jörg Diehl, Roman Lehberger, Ann-Katrin Müller & Philipp Seibt

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When Trevor Davis looks at his screen, he is unsettled. An American political activist who is also a research professor at George Washington University, Davis has been analyzing political campaigns on social networks for years. But he has never seen a phenomenon like the right-wing populist party Alternative for Germany (AfD). “This is huge and really quite concerning,” Davis says.

The analyst has conducted an extensive study focusing on how active German political parties are on Facebook. And the AfD dominates in a way that Davis finds rather surprising. While political surveys indicate that support for the party is currently between 11 and 15 percent, fully 85 percent of all shared posts originating from German political parties stem from the AfD. The remaining 15 percent of these “shares” are split among the center-left Social Democrats (SPD), the pro-environment Greens, the Left Party, the pro-business FDP and the conservatives. The countries big-tent parties — the SPD and the conservative combination of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU) — were only responsible for 2 to 3 percent of shares each.

[...]

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