



This essay explains that the success of Germany's far right is not just an anomaly as [The Guardian](#) argues, but the result of a postmodernist democratic system which increasingly excludes large parts of the population instead of representing them. I do also look into civil society and social entrepreneurship as the most likely forces for transformation and emphasize the paramount importance of self transformation to catalyze social change; and I do eventually call for an constitutional overhaul of postmodern to an integral democracy.

Late August in Berlin. Political campaign posters at every corner and on every electricity pole. Top candidates stare at and propaganda slogans speak to me. Even though I am not entitled to vote I am intrigued by how political parties market themselves to their customers in one of the Western world's largest and richest democracies. Strolling through the districts of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, Berlin-Mitte and Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf I can't help but questioning the purpose of contemporary democracy. Erich Fromm's [The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness](#) crosses my mind and I wonder if I should write on *The Anatomy of Democratic Destructiveness*.

It was Sir [Karl Popper](#) who famously wrote in 1947, *You can choose whatever name you like for the two types of government. I personally call the type of government which can be removed without violence "democracy", and the other "tyranny"*. He would as of today most likely conclude that we live in a tyranny, which cannot be removed anymore without violence, if he would take a serious look at violence directed in contemporary democratic societies at the self instead of the other. He would as of today most likely conclude that we

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live in a tyranny, because it is not the form of government, but the system which has rendered itself, and as such all forms of government which it entails, tyrannical.

Historian Harari wrote in 2015 in the New York Times bestseller [Homo Deus – A History of Tomorrow](#) that “In 2012 about 56 million people died throughout the world; 620,000 of them died due to human violence (war killed 120,000 people, and crime killed another 500,000). In contrast, 800,000 committed suicide, and 1.5 million died of diabetes. Sugar is now more dangerous than gunpowder.” Nuclear proliferation has created democratic systems which have reduced open violence for over 70 years to the lowest levels ever recorded in human history as psychologist [Stephen Pinker](#) shows, but they have brought upon humanity violence directed at the self in scope and scale never seen before. Suicide and eating or more broadly speaking *consumption disorders* are only being the tip of an iceberg with poverty, burnout syndrome, domestic violence, environmental degradation, ADHD and many more mental as well physical suffering below sea-level. Yes, indeed, its all related, and although some might believe that our livelihoods improve generally, we experience civilization and its discontents more than ever before.

Public Sector Management

Management guru Peter Drucker said, “*To be sure, the fundamental task of management remains the same: to make people capable of joint performance through common goals, common values, the right structures, and the training and development they need to perform and to respond to change. [...] Until quite recently [before WWII], no one knew how to put people with different skills and knowledge together to achieve common goals. [because there were no knowledgeable people, but only either farmers or soldiers].*” Now, Drucker seems to say, we know how to put people with different skills and knowledge at work, but we have lost our common goals.

If we look at the history of modern management and compare it with the history of modern philosophy, we notice, that management is a child of modernism, a period of human thought which came to an end in the 1960ies. Modernism appeared with the Renaissance in 14th century Italy and is described with attributes like excellence, performance, scientific, reason, rational, formal operational, achievement, accomplishment, profit and market economy. Human behavior increasingly focused on modernism and peaked with the operational concepts of productivity and efficiency in the two world wars, which led to total destruction.

The spirit of Hitlerism won its greatest victory over us when, after its defeat, we used the weapons which the threat of Nazism had induced us to develop. [Karl Popper]

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Applying excessive modernist thinking on warfare resulted in millions dying in the drenches of WWI and the concentration camps of WWII; experiencing these events and the first nuclear bomb eradicating two cities triggered philosophers who grew up in the first half of the 20th century to develop a new school of thought: post-modernism. Horrified by what man was capable of they declared the beginning of nihilism. Integral philosopher Ken Wilber elaborates postmodernism as such: *If there was one line that summarized the gist of virtually all postmodern writers (Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Bourdieu, Lacan, de Man, Fish, etc.) is that "there is no truth." Truth, rather, was a cultural construction, and what anybody actually called "truth" was simply what some culture somewhere had managed to convince its members was truth ... Postmodernists most definitely and strongly believe that it is universally true that there is no universal truth.*

We must appreciate that postmodernism was the driving force of social pluralism, which gave rise to minority rights, feminism, gender equality and LGBT rights, but we also have to acknowledge that postmodernism infected societies and its members with a moral epidemic: narcissism. In accepting neither cultural nor universal truths, the postmodern intellectual elite gave modern individuals a green card to put themselves always first. Again Ken Wilber: *And when all truth is a cultural fiction, then there simply is no truth at all – epistemic and ontic nihilism. And when there are no binding norms anywhere, there is only normative nihilism. And finally, when there are no binding guidelines for individual behavior, the individual has only his or her own selfpromoting wants and desires to answer to – in short, narcissism. [...] The culture of posttruth.*



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This culture of non- or post-truth is reflected in the pluralism of lies with which German political parties market themselves to the electorate. Safe jobs and secure livelihoods (*sicherer Job, planbares Leben*) are promised by the far left, when global automation and cybernation trends indicate that there will be no jobs in the close future; the socialists envision more time for justice (*mehr Zeit für Gerechtigkeit*), despite the pace of life accelerating and the poor wealth gap widening; conservatives support a strong Europe to strengthen Germany (*Europa stärken heißt Deutschland stärken*) and like the far left for a strong economy and safe jobs (*für eine starke Wirtschaft und sichere Arbeit*); the greens promote equal salaries for equal effort (*wenn man gleich viel leistet, sollte Frau auch gleich viel verdienen*). The far right demands: Immigration, yes, but not into our social welfare systems (*Einwanderung Ja! Aber nicht in unsere Sozialsysteme*).

It is though the campaign of the German liberal party which reflects like no other the rampant postmodern narcissism amongst politicians. FDP top candidate Christian Lindner poses on large format billboards like a mid age model and says: impatience is also a virtue (*Ungeduld ist auch ein Tugend*); the small print explains that all good ideas of other parties have been stolen from the liberal party. Its all mine, he tells the electorate, the beautiful, the good and the true, when in reality all party programs are based on the same economic system: export growth orientated and consumption driven capitalism, which means in individual terms: more for me, less for you.



Political Elections as a Reflection of Ego-Development

Whereas all other parties broadcast visual lies, the liberal campaign is at least a mirror to where many Germans stands in terms of ego development. It has been widely elaborated that we cast our ballots by far and large by making gut not brain decisions, which reflect our ego development stage. Applying Ken Wilber’s integral metatheory on the results of yesterday’s German elections, we get an interesting insight into the German psyche. We notice that the new third strongest political force in parliament, the far right [Alternative for Germany](#) represents mainly the mythic development stage; the party’s chairwoman appearing as a 40+ *Volksmutter* with an infant in her arms, asking the electorate *Now, what reason do you have to fight for Germany?* is in the same ethnocentric and xenophobic line as Donald Trump preaching to *Make America Great Again*. The contradiction between a woman who spreads the message of hate and a mother who protects her infant could not be more striking and causes genuine disgust.

Denomination	Time	Synonym	Attributes	organization	Color Code
Integral	since 1990s	Post-postmodern	comprehensive, inclusive, systemic, catalysmic, non-ideological, solution focused	one for all, all for one	Turquoise
Postmodern	since 1960s	Pluralistic	from no truth to nihilistic and narcissistic	from one for all, all for one to solitary	Green
Modern	Appearing with Renaissance (14th ct) and peaking with WWI	Rational	worldcentric, scientific, reason, rational, formal operational, achievement, accomplishment, merit, progress, conscientious, excellence, profit, market economy	megatribes of empire, religion or civilization	Orange
Mythic	10.000 BT - Renaissance	Traditional	ethnocentric, sexist, racist, xenophobic, anti-immigrant, hyperterrorist sensitive, homophobic, patriotic	megatribes of empire, religion or civilization	Amber
Magic	70.000 - 10.000 years BT	Tribal	egocentric, pre-conventional, self-serving, self-promoting, narcissistic	40 up to 150 individuals	Red
Archaic	500.000 - 70.000 years BT	Pre-tribal		solitary	Magenta

Table based on Ken Wilber's Integral Metatheory - 2017 © mingong.org

The far left, greens, liberals and socialists Hoover in the postmodern development stage diverging in their political programs and opinions like a snake pit, but are unified by embracing the same economic system as the conservatives. Chancellor Merkel’s 2015 daredevil integral decision to open the national borders for immigration has cost the modern development stage conservatives 8% of the votes and was fuel to the far right. It thus seems as if German politics has currently no representation for the integral development stage; and I must concede that a truly integral development stage representation, which includes all the previous development stages, can hardly be realized in the current system which is built on antagonism rather than cooperation. We can also confirm that the rise of the far right is not like the [Guardian](#) writes *an anomaly – if a loud, obnoxious one*, but *an analogy – if a loud and obnoxious one* - to the rise of Donald Trump in

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the US and many other nationalist political movements in most of the democratic West. The AfD is the regressive result of a political elite stuck in a postmodern democratic system not being able to find common values and goals which transform it into an integral movement.

The Purpose of Politics

Journalist Wolfgang Uchatius published 2013 shortly before the last German national elections a long essay in the weekly *Die Zeit*, titled [Should I Vote or Shop?](#) He describes therein that the opinions of German political parties on major social, economic and political questions clearly converge with only the far left being a genuine alternative to the moderate social democrats, Christian conservatives, liberals and greens. He concludes that German citizens have lost their democratic rights due to this indiscernibility of political movements and are left with making purchase decisions. I read a similar analysis on political opinions of democrat and republican contenders for the 2016 US presidential elections, which concluded that only Bernie Sanders is a genuine alternative for the US electorate; all others represent roughly the same values and opinions, but diverge in their own motivation and interests, i.e. getting more of their own peers into national, federal and municipal representative bodies at the expense of the taxpayer.

If we assume for a second that Western politics is stuck in pluralist postmodernism giving rise to regressive nationalist dynamics, while business and industry still operate in [6sigma](#) modernism, maximizing profit by increasing efficiency and productivity, then we must conclude that political *narcissism and formal operational business brings evolution to a traffic-jam halt*. If political parties agitate only introspectively instead of finding common ground for purposeful action they have lost their mandate and have ceased to fulfill their social function of facilitating agreement over important decisions for a society's development. Following again Peter Drucker, they have become obsolete and must be removed: *Business enterprises – and public-service institutions as well – are organs of society. They do not exist for their own sake, but to fulfill a specific social purpose and to satisfy a specific need of a society, a community, or individuals. They are not ends in themselves, but means.*

We now may ask how the Western democratic system has lost its legitimacy and will find that, again, Peter Drucker has the answer. *What led to the identification of management with business management was the Great Depression with its hostility to business and its contempt for business executives. In order not to be tarred with the business brush, management in the public sector was rechristened “public administration” and proclaimed a separated discipline – with its own university departments, its own terminology, its own career ladder. [...] Not to be called “management” was, in other words, “political correctness” in the Depression years.*

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[...] It is therefore important to assert – and to do so loudly – that management is not business management – any more than, say medicine is obstetrics.

Having rectified fuzzy terminology, we can continue to define the purpose of politics and governance once again. One might think that only common sense is required therefore, but *Realpolitik* proves us wrong: at least to the majority of politicians the real purpose of politics is obscure and they perceive their social function as means to their own ends; if they don't do so consciously, they are naïve, because any sane human being would reject the suffering in boring parliamentary discussions or endless party sessions without results unless it could explain fat paychecks and welfare perks as, yes, what? Compensation and indemnification for being part of a systemic insanity. The human species sadly tends to confuse profit with value, therefore we quite often waste away our time without having any purpose in what we do, because we get paid well or because we are being recognized for our position. This psychological circuitry proves catastrophic to the postmodern democratic system, which rewards politicians and bureaucrats far above average in terms of financial and esteem credits for doing nothing more than maintaining the status quo; which effectively only serves them.

Drucker writes that *the single most important thing to remember about any enterprise is that results exist only on the outside. The result of a business is a satisfied customer. The result of a hospital is a healed patient. The result of a school is a student who has learned something and puts it to work ten years later.* If we assume that political bodies are enterprises sui generis, then their result must be a satisfied citizen. The CEOs of these enterprises, our municipalities, cities, states, nations would have to act according to Drucker like catholic nuns or the Japanese: *start with the mission rather than with their own rewards, and with what they have to make happen outside themselves, in the marketplace, to deserve a reward. A clearly defined mission will foster innovative ideas and help others understand why they need to be implemented – however much they fly in the face of tradition.*

From Postmodern to Integral Democracy

We have to understand though that Drucker's analogy does neither work for enterprises in the capitalist market economy nor public entities in postmodern democratic systems. Both have fallen victim to nihilism and excessive profit seeking. Postmodern democracies have been brainwashed by nihilist capitalism, exterminating work's intangible values from our collective conscious. Commerce and industry compensate the lack of value with excessive profit seeking only and thus with a prolongation of modernist thinking. The political system though, including mayors, party delegates, MPs, ministers, head of states and indirect government bodies like state run schools, hospital and agencies, has turned into a new aristocracy, which is being rewarded with both financial gain and social status.

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Postmodern democracy with its heavy bureaucratic burden can only be maintained due to the increase in productivity over the course of the industrial revolution. Advances in technology and management have effectively made it possible to increase the number of aristocrats who have like in modernist monarchies teamed up with the financial and industrial elites to live at the expense of the mob in national terms and at the expense of undeveloped and developing nations in global terms. [Barry Schwartz](#) concludes, that *technology disappears when inefficient or obsolete, but idea technology, i.e. human software which builds institutions and cultures, keeps wrong, inefficient and overcome ideas in place, hampering development.*

Ted chief curator Chris Anderson and historian Yuval Harari discussed earlier this year how [globalism and nationalism](#) have created a new political divide; and one must consequently ask if spending tax money on local or national election campaigns does make any sense. We can go though even a step further and must question the postmodern democratic system as an institution, if it is nothing more than the political reflection of postmodern pluralism, and as such a dysfunctional system which sabotages the establishment of common values and common goals. Postmodernism has turned the democratic system into a political purgatory; a constitutional overhaul is required to establish global meritocratic participation.



Ferguson's Six Killer Apps



The organizational structure of political modernism was absolutism, whether enlightened or pitch dark. Most Western minds can't sympathize with a revival of absolutism despite an impressive track record. Germany rose under Friedrich II., one of the most accomplished enlightened monarchs, from a provincial kingdom to one of the most powerful empires in imperialist Europe. His credo was straightforward: I am the first servant of the state; and it seems as if Peter Drucker carbon copied from him: *The manager is a servant. His or her master is the institution being managed and the first responsibility must therefore be to it.*

The manager's first task is to make the institution, whether business, hospital, school, or university, perform the function and make the contribution for the sake of which it exists.

Democracy as it is lived in our Western political systems is in a globalized world with many transnational challenges like climate change and industrial automation a wasteful luxury; but it is above all a system which needs a massive overhaul. The rise of China, which operates a modernist governance based on absolutism should trigger the minds and hearts of Western decision makers to think about alternatives to the status quo. Since regressive measures in Anglo-Saxon electorates – which are mainly based on what Republican historian Niall Ferguson described as Six Killer Apps for Civilization development - have failed to far and will continue to do so, it might make sense to listen once to evolutionary psychologists like Ken Wilber, who explain a fast forward leap into a better – integral – future simply by sharing wealth and facilitating an inclusive transnational society. Things might not come so easy after all, but thinking of some life apps instead of killer apps for the progress of civilization might be a good start.



Seven Life Apps



Selfdesign and Selfempowerment

Architect and design theorist [Friedrich von Borries](#) proposes in [Weltentwerfen](#), a political design theory which lays out the framework for peaceful and subversive individual resistance to a tyranny and thus a permanent reform of the system at large. Borries applies psychologist's [Abraham Maslow](#) pyramid of human needs to design theory and explains with abundant references to current social and technological developments that design is always subject to a dichotomy between increasing (German: *entwerfen*) and decreasing (German: *unterwerfen*) freedom, whether in regard to survival, security, society or self. The objective of good design is not the radical design of a different society, but the constant search for cracks in the system and the peaceful application of design to widen these. In as such Borries makes a powerful argument in the line with Karl Popper against violent social

change, confirmed by history through examples like the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) which was meant to liberate, but oppressed its subjects with yet another form of social design.

What both Borries and Popper elapsd though is that only self design and self leadership will catalyze lasting reform, not social design and yet another external leadership. Integral leadership does not lead but facilitates self leadership; in as such the fundamental task of management is enabling self-management; a concept which is alien and antagonist to modern politics and most public sector activity. Much needed social innovation will therefore not come from political parties but from the civil society and social entrepreneurship. It is there that we will see management at its best, making *people capable of joint performance through common goals, common values, the right structures, and the training and development they need to perform and to respond to change*. We respond to change and we catalyze transformation once we change ourselves. The longer we wait for political systems to bring about the changes that we dream of the less they will become reality.



Change starts with myself



Source: Friedrich von Borries - Weltentwerfen

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Further Reading:

- Erich Fromm: The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness
- Sir Karl Popper: Utopia and Violence
- Ken Wilber: [Trump and a Posttruth World](#)
- Niall Ferguson: Civilization – The West and the Rest
- Friedrich von Borries: Weltentwerfen
- Peter F. Drucker: The Essential Drucker
- Abraham Maslow: Motivation and Personality
- Yuval N. Harari: Homo Deus – A History of Tomorrow