

ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN FASCISM AND THE  
FAR RIGHT

## Right-Wing Terrorism in the 21st Century

The 'National Socialist Underground'  
and the history of terror from the Far-  
Right in Germany

Daniel Koehler



One would have thought that German academics after 1945 would make right-wing political violence a major object of study – if only for the reason of history not repeating itself. However, avoidance of, rather than a focus on, terrorism from the far right has been the reality. Now, seventy years after the defeat of National Socialism, there is finally a longitudinal empirical analysis of political violence from the right. Based on a comprehensive database and a solid conceptual framework, Daniel Koehler has tested – and found wanting – the two most widely used theories on the phenomenon and thereby cleared the ground for a new understanding of what unfortunately is likely to be a rising phenomenon. A remarkable achievement – and long overdue.

Prof. em. Alex P. Schmid, *Director, Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI); Editor-in-Chief, Perspectives on Terrorism (PT); Research Fellow, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague*

Daniel Koehler has written an important and timely book on a critical dimension of terrorism studies that lamentably has received insufficient attention: extreme right-wing violence in Europe. His focus on Germany sheds light on the motives, networks, aspirations and the threat posed by this small, but ambitiously lethal and stubbornly persistent entity. This excellent work is noteworthy for the thoroughness of the author's research, the compelling analysis he presents and unsettling conclusions he reaches.

Professor Bruce Hoffman, *Director, Center for Security Studies, Georgetown University, USA*

Daniel Koehler's new book is the most comprehensive study available on right-wing terrorism in Germany and also an important contribution to research on right-wing terrorism in general. His conceptual clarity and comprehensive collection of data makes for an admirable work of scholarship.

Prof. Dr. Tore Bjørgo, *Director of Center for Research on Extremism: The Extreme Right, Hate Crime and Political Violence (C-REX), University of Oslo, Norway*

Daniel Koehler has written the most comprehensive account to date of right-wing terrorism in post-WWII Germany. The German case is critically important, not only because of its historical legacies, but also because Germany remains Western Europe's definitive hotbed when it comes to contemporary right-wing militancy and violence. Koehler effectively sheds light on key actors and events from the past, while at the same time demonstrating that right-wing terrorism has become a continuous yet conceptually and legally elusive type of threat in Germany and beyond – a threat that will require more attention in the future.

Jacob Assland Ravndal, *Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX), University of Oslo, Norway*

# Right-Wing Terrorism in the 21st Century

This book is the first comprehensive academic study of German right-wing terrorism since the early 1960s available in the English language. It offers a unique in-depth analysis of German violent, extremist right-wing movements, terrorist events, groups, networks and individuals. In addition, the book discusses the so-called 'National Socialist Underground' (NSU) terror cell, which was uncovered in late 2011 by the authorities. The NSU had been active for over a decade and had killed at least ten people, as well as executing numerous bombings and bank robberies. With an examination of the group's support network and the reasons behind the failure of the German authorities, this book sheds light on right-wing terrorist group structures, tactics and target groups in Germany. The book also contains a complete list of all the German right-wing terrorist groups and incidents since the Second World War. Based on the most detailed dataset of right-wing terrorism in Germany, this book offers highly valuable insights into this specific form of political violence and terrorism, which has been widely neglected in international terrorism research.

**Daniel Koehler** is the Director of the German Institute on Radicalization and De-Radicalization Studies (GIRDS) and Fellow at George Washington University's Program on Extremism.

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**Right-Wing Terrorism in the 21st Century**

The 'National Socialist Underground' and the history of terror from the Far-Right in Germany

*Daniel Koehler*

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# Foreword

If a bomb detonates in a business district and no one is around to claim justification and no one is capable of tying the act to an ideological cause, does it make an act of terrorism? Before reading this book, my answer would have been “no.” Traditionally we perceive terrorism as a form of political communication. The violence targets both those directly victimised in the incident and also the wider on-looking and unvictimised public. Many think that the latter group is more important for terrorism to be successful. By understanding the ideological motive, the media helps feed perceptions of the likelihood of subsequent violence and therefore society’s vulnerability. Accessing the mass media with a political message is therefore usually seen as the crucial mechanism to guarantee that ‘terror’ takes hold within the wider public. Without motive, the violent act is messageless and therefore not terrorism.

However, this book has changed my mind. The largely unreported (until now) history of the National Socialist Underground bucks many of the assumptions outlined above. A ten-year spree of murders and bombings against immigrant community members went largely undetected, unreported and unconnected to each other and to a wider ideological cause. Wider society was unaware of a terrorist campaign within their modern developed state. Media, both traditional and social, communicated no political message. The offenders themselves did not proactively seek the renown, infamy and credit that often lead to the downfall of other terrorist cells. By not communicating, it almost certainly helped contribute to their operational security and ability to act for so long.

The National Socialist Underground epitomised Louis Beam’s “leaderless resistance” idea: a small cell of self-directed actors engaging in unpublicised acts of targeted violence against a discrete set of targets. Louis Beam would call this lack of publicity an “effective countermeasure” against the State’s pervasive spying capabilities. Their behaviour also epitomised the principles laid down in Tom Metzger’s “Laws for the Lone Wolf.”

Always start off small. Many small victories are better than one huge blunder. Every little bit counts in a resistance [...]. Remember, even the smallest things make a difference. You will see that what you are doing is making an impact. If you never get caught, you are better than any army. Others will notice your activities, but never try to take any credit for them, your success should be all the recognition you need.

This book expertly shows that adherents to the cause were aware of the National Socialist Underground and it is also likely that the ‘terror’ of future attacks was likely felt within

Germany's immigrant communities. Who needs mass political communication when the violence has helped boost internal morale (both within the cell and within the wider movement) and spread fear in the targeted immigrant communities?

Daniel Koehler's granular level analysis of right-wing terrorism in 21st century Germany is a must-read for a number of other reasons. In an age when jihadi terrorism dominates the research literature, the threat of right-wing terrorism has not received the same attention despite producing equally, if not more, consistency in terms of terrorist plots in the developed world. Given Germany's unique history, it is also surprising that it has taken this long for such a comprehensive treatment of right-wing terrorism in Germany to be produced. The lack of data in the study of terrorism is a long-standing lament. The book is empirically driven, blending a unique dataset of attacks and actors drawn from a range of detail-rich court and intelligence documents and supplemented with open sources. The case studies are in-depth, absorbing and full of information. The book disaggregates across violent attacks and also across the different roles found within terrorist cells and neatly outlines that the means to detect, prevent or disrupt these attacks/attackers varies depending on their behaviour. The sheer scale of plotters (both group and lone) and successfully conducted attacks within Germany's borders over the past few decades will surprise most readers. I believe this book provides a blueprint for future research on right-wing terrorism in general but also country-specific analyses. This is important because, as the case of the National Socialist Underground demonstrates, some of these groups may completely confound our expectations of how terrorist groups operate.

Paul Gill, London, December, 2015

# Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the support of a number of people who helped to shape the first ideas, encouraged their implementation, provided advice, and assisted in regaining motivation from time to time.

I owe special thanks to the challenging and always helpful input of my friend and colleague Jacob Ravndal, who shared not just the enthusiasm for studying right-wing terrorism but is also one of the few experts in that field. I have come to admire and highly respect his work, commitment and energy. It was an exceptionally fulfilling time exchanging thoughts with him on this topic, which provided clarity and focus.

I am very grateful for having received the endorsement and support for this book from basically the entire 'who is who' of (right-wing) terrorism research, such as the 'founding fathers' in this field Alex Schmid, Tore Bjørgo and Bruce Hoffman, who inspired my work throughout its creation. This is also true for Paul Gill, who provided the Foreword for this book and had a truly seminal impact on the way I came to understand right-wing terrorism. It is an honor to see this work being accepted by this very special group of renowned scholars as a valuable contribution to the studies of political violence, terrorism, fascism and the Far-Right.

Of course this book would also have not been possible without the extraordinary support from Graham Macklin, who assured me time and time again of this project's value for international readers and was the person who – out of an 'over the table' conversation during a conference in Manchester – revived the whole idea of writing a book on right-wing terrorism. Having introduced it to the publisher and – I am sure – talked Nigel Copsey into it, he was essential to bringing me in touch with the most helpful and always positive Emma Chappell from Routledge, who answered every question quickly and offered nothing but encouragement through impressive professionalism. Publishing with Routledge is indeed a dream come true.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends, who encouraged me to keep on going and supported me whenever necessary. My parents and brother as well as my dear friends Albrecht Philipp, Daniel Adolf and Andreas Milde made sure that I did not become a victim of academic isolation and research radicalization. My deep thanks to you all.



# Abbreviations

AFD	Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany)
AFN	Allied Forces Network
ANS/NA	Aktionsfront Nationaler Sozialisten/Nationale Aktivisten (Action Front of National Socialists/National Activists)
ATS	American Terrorism Study
AW	Aktion Widerstand (Action Resistance)
B&H	Blood and Honour
BBET	Bloed, Bodem, Eer en Trouw (Blood, Soil, Honour, and Loyalty)
BfV	Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution)
BKA	Bundeskriminalamt (Federal Criminal Police Office)
BND	Bundesnachrichtendienst (Federal Intelligence Service)
BVerWG	Bundesverwaltungsgericht (Federal Administration Court)
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (Union of Christian Democrats in Germany)
DA	Deutsche Aktionsgruppen (German Action Groups)
DIP	Dokumentations und Informationssystem des Parlaments (Document and Information System of the Parliament)
DNVO	Deutsch-Nationale Verteidigungsorganisation (German National Defence Organization)
DRP	Deutsche Reichspartei (German Reichs Party)
DTG	Database on Terrorism in Germany
DWB	Deutsche Widerstandsbewegung (German Resistance Movement)
EBF	Europäische Befreiungsfront (European Liberation Front)
ECDB	United States Extremist Crime Database
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Country and Freedom)
EUFRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
EUMC	European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia
EWKKK	European White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

FANE	French Fédération d'Action Nationale et Européenne (Federation for National European Action)
FAP	Freiheitliche Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (Free German Workers Party)
FDJ	Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youth)
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party)
FH	Freikorps Havelland (Free Corps Havelland)
GdNF	Gesinnungsgemeinschaft der Neuen Front (Ethos-Community of the New Front)
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GIRDS	German Institute on Radicalization and De-Radicalization Studies
GTD	Global Terrorism Database
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IRA	Irish Republican Army
JN	Junge Nationaldemokraten (Young National Democrats)
KKK	Ku Klux Klan
KS	Kameradschaft Süd (Comradeship South)
KSK	Kommando Spezialkräfte (Commando Special Forces)
LfV	Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz (State Office for the Protection of the Constitution)
LKA	Landeskriminalamt (State Criminal Police Office)
MAD	Militärischer Abschirmdienst (Military Intelligence)
MAF	Kameradschaft Mecklenburgische Aktionsfront (Mecklenburg Action Front)
NA	Nationale Alternative (National Alternative)
NDBB	Nationale Deutsche Befreiungsbewegung (National German Liberation Movement)
NF	Nationalistische Front (Nationalist Front)
NHW	Nordisches Hilfswerk (Nordic Assistance Organization)
NPD	Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (National Democratic Party of Germany)
NO	Neue Ordnung (New Order)
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei (National Socialist German Workers Party)
NSDAP/AO	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei/Aufbau und Auslandsorganisation (National Socialist German Workers Party Development and Foreign Organization)
NSKG	Nationalsozialistische Kampfgruppe Großdeutschland (National Socialist Combat Group Greater Germany)
NSU	Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund (National Socialist Underground)

OAS	Organisation Armée Secrete (Organization of the Secret Army)
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSS	Oldschool Society
PEGIDA	Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident
PKS	Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik (Police Crime Statistics)
PLF	Palestinian Liberation Front
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PMK-R	Politisch Motivierte Kriminalität – Rechts (Politically Motivated Crime – Right)
PPT-US	Profiles of Perpetrators of Terrorism in the United States
RAF	Rote Armee Fraktion (Red Army Faction)
SA	Sturmabteilung (Assault Division)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
SPLC	Southern Poverty Law Center
SRP	Sozialistische Reichspartei (Socialist Reichs Party)
SSS	Skinheads Sächsische Schweiz (Skinheads Sächsische Schweiz)
START	National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and the Responses to Terrorism
Stasi	Staatssicherheit (State-Security)
TE-SAT	Terrorism and Situation Trend Report
TEVUS	Terrorism and Extremist Violence in the United States
THS	Thüringischer Heimatschutz (Thuringia Home Protection)
TWEED	Terrorism in Western Europe: Events Data
VAM	Swedish White Aryan Resistance Movement
VFD	Volksbefreiungs-Front Deutschland (People’s Liberation Front Germany)
VSBD/PdA	Volkssozialistische Bewegung Deutschlands/Partei der Arbeit (The People’s Socialist Movement of Germany/Workers Party)
WBE	Weißer Bruderschaft Erzgebirge (White Brotherhood Erzgebirge)
WSG	Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann (Military Sports Group Hoffmann)
WST	White Supremacist Terror
ZOG	Zionist Occupied Government

# 1

## Introduction

In November 2011, in the small town of Eisenach (Thuringia) a coincidence and failed bank robbery led the German police to a caravan in which they hoped to find the suspected robbers. The subsequent events would change the nationwide security infrastructure, shatter the public trust in the authorities and lead to the retirement of numerous high-ranking government officials. Shortly before their apprehension, the two suspects committed suicide after a short shoot-out with the police. Quickly afterwards the vehicle burned down. When police and firefighters searched the debris, they found large amounts of money and – more interestingly – an extensive armory including two guns belonging to a police officer assassinated in 2007 and her severely wounded colleague. About three hours later, another event in the town of Zwickau (Saxony) – 180 kilometers away – caused the following national crisis. After an explosion had occurred in an apartment building and the police searched the site, additional weapons and money were found, including the murder weapon of a so-far unsolved killing spree which had cost nine victims their lives between 2000 and 2006. While searching for the woman officially registered in the apartment, numerous DVD videos from a group calling itself the National Socialist Underground (NSU) were received via mail by political, religious, cultural and press institutions. The video contained graphic images of the killings and additional explosive attacks blended in with a *Pink Panther* cartoon. Four days after the explosion, the missing woman – later revealed as Beate Zschäpe – turned herself in. As the German authorities started to put the pieces together, they recognized that they had discovered the underground cell of at least three wanted neo-Nazis that had gone clandestine in the late 1990s. In the following investigations, the public shock quickly turned into massive critique against the security agencies – most notably the criminal police and intelligence – for having failed to detect this terrorist cell for over a decade. In addition, the mishandling of information requests from politicians and journalists – for example, the destruction of files after being requested – created a further loss of trust in the agencies. During the investigations that followed, more and more details about the blatant lack of cooperation, the involvement of paid informants, racism within the police forces and the farreaching incompetence regarding analytical resources in the field of right-wing terrorism were uncovered. In addition, a wide national support network of the NSU cell showed that the cell was not operating in complete isolation but in fact remained in active exchange with the wider ‘movement.’ All in

all the NSU caused the most severe crisis of the German internal security system after the Second World War – a process called by the Federal Prosecutor General Harald Range Germany’s “September 11” in March 2012 (FAZ 2012). By now a total of ten assassinations, three bomb attacks and fourteen bank robberies between 1998 and 2011 were attributed to the NSU and the trial in Munich against the last surviving member – Beate Zschäpe – and the four most important supporters is already the most extensive terror trail in post-Second World War Germany. The failure of authorities on all levels, including the suspicion of a right-wing background behind the murders, still remains a heatedly debated topic and object of numerous parliamentary inquiry commissions.

In the same year as the NSU’s discovery, the mass shooting and explosive attacks carried out by Anders Behring Breivik in Oslo and Utøya left seventy seven people dead and caused a national trauma in Norway. These two events partially reignited academic debates about the nature and risk posed by right-wing terrorism and political violence. Especially the case of Breivik fitted well into the ‘lone wolf’ or ‘lone actor’ theories in terrorism research and consequently the NSU did not receive similar attention by the international academia, which seems striking since the group was one of the most successful terrorist groups in history with regard to the time-span that it was active without being detected. Also, the large amount of information available about the group’s radicalization process, their tactics and support structures is unparalleled. Even more important, it seems, is the fact that the NSU case gives terrorism researchers and policy makers a rare and detailed account of how a modern Western internal security architecture could be bypassed by untrained extremists.

However tragic and shocking, the NSU was neither the first right-wing terrorist organization in post-Second World War Germany nor the last one. Since the late 1960s, groups of different size but always with a strong neo-Nazi background committed numerous acts of terrorism; the most severe was in 1980 with the bombing of the Munich Oktoberfest, killing thirteen people. International research and German authorities have for the most part not focused on the terrorist threat from the Far-Right and – especially after the 9/11 attacks – but instead concentrated on al-Qaeda inspired or jihadi terrorism. Subsequent attacks, such as the 2004 bombing in Madrid, the 7/7 bombings 2005 in London, the 2010 attack in Stockholm and of course the Paris Charlie Hebdo attack in 2015, have reinforced the perception that much greater threat to Western security comes from these jihadi groups amongst researchers, the general public and policy makers. Only sporadically have researchers warned against the risks of this misconception. In June 2015, for example, Professor of Sociology Charles Kurzman from the University of North Carolina, writing in the *New York Times*, attempted to show a bigger domestic terrorist threat from the Extreme Right in the United States compared with all other forms of extremist violence (Kurzman & Schanzer 2015). Only one day later, a right-wing terrorist attack was carried out in Charleston (South Carolina) by a twenty-one-year-old lone actor killing nine victims in a racially motivated mass shooting (Robles, Horowitz &

Dewan 2015).

Similar underestimations of the threat from the Far-Right have been made in other countries too, even well before the 9/11 attacks. In Germany, for example, the majority of research and public awareness regarding terrorism before the 1990s was focused on left-wing terrorism with the Red Army Faction paralyzing the German public and authorities with their attacks over decades. However, the former judge and Chief of Staff of Chancellor's Willy Brandt, Klaus-Hennig Rosen, who counted 160 acts of terrorism from the Extreme Right between 1968 and 1988 (27 killings, 97 acts of arson and 33 bombing attacks), concluded in the late 1980s that: "with the present background a drop in right-wing terrorism cannot be expected in the near future"<sup>1</sup> (Rosen 1989: 76). Another researcher at that time, estimated the number of potential right-wing terrorists in the 1980s at about 150 (Horchem 1982: 30). These voices however remained isolated and did not lead to a coherent and coordinated attempt to study, understand and assess the terrorist threat by the Far-Right in Germany.

After the German reunification, a major surge in right-wing violence across the country initiated a wide debate about the nature and threats from the Far-Right, but these were mostly attributed to the disintegration and societal change processes after the German Democratic Republic's (GDR) collapse and the end of the Cold War. Some professionals continued to point out a more substantial terrorist threat stemming from a dangerous mixture of an organizational radicalization process, fostered by individuals technically and mentally capable of terrorism, a sufficient supply of weapons and explosives, a critical mass of followers, an ideology highly in favor of violence and activism, as well as the sense of opportunity within the movement. However, the emerging academic and public interest in right-wing terrorism in the late 1990s was halted by the September 11 events in 2001, after which the public, academic and official interest in the topic was largely deflected to 'Islamist terrorism' and not picked up again before late 2011. Consequently, German terrorism research can be considered lacking a concise theoretical concept about right-wing terrorism compared to other phenomena, for example, Islamist terrorism. In addition, international research has not picked up the numerous German examples of groups and events for that purpose, arguably due to the missing German interest and thereby lack of international accessible publications.

Even the NSU has not received a substantial amount of international interest in contrast to the recent case of Anders Breivik in Oslo or the Toulouse attacks. International press coverage has been sporadic and so far only few academic studies about the NSU have been published in English (Koehler 2014a; McGowan 2014). Most of the publications on the NSU were of journalistic nature and sporadic when compared with the Breivik case for example (e.g., Diehl, Korge, Menke & Witte 2011; Peel 2012; Pidd 2011a, 2011b; Spiegel 2011). This study consequently is the first comprehensive in-depth analysis of German right-wing terrorism, the NSU case, its support network and the nature of right-wing terrorism in general – taking into account the most relevant groups, individuals and events of the last fifty years – and thereby

starts to fill an important gap in the international terrorism research literature.

There are obvious distinctions of right-wing terrorism compared, for example, to left-wing or Islamist terrorism, which might have contributed to the academic silence regarding these groups over the last decades. These distinctions will be discussed in this study, trying to answer the following questions: What are the genuine characteristics of (German) right-wing terrorism? Is it 'terrorism' at all? Is there a 'new' right-wing terrorism compared to an old one? (Pfahl-Traugher 2012; Spiegel 2011). What strategies and tactics are used by right-wing terrorists? Are there distinct features of support networks, target groups and modes of operation? What are the lessons for authorities and policy makers?

Based on the largest data collection of right-wing terrorism in post-Second World War Germany, this study adds a large amount of primary data to the academic exploration of right-wing terrorism with the ultimate goal of showing the importance of comparative terrorism research and a much more detailed as well as focused analysis of right-wing violence, which continues to pose a severe threat to Western countries' internal security.

In order to provide the reader with a concise and analytically well-structured study of German right-wing terrorism, this monograph will first discuss the methods and sources used for this study and explain the availability of open source material in regard to right-wing terrorism in Germany in [Chapter 2](#). Existing research about the militant Far-Right in different countries is also reviewed, revealing that the most extensive work has been done about the North American violent extreme right. However, rarely have these studies exceeded the mere descriptive stage and advanced onto an examination of the specific characteristics of right-wing terrorism.

In [Chapter 3](#), the focus lies on the problem of defining right-wing terrorism compared with other concepts such as 'hate crime.' On the one hand, right-wing terrorists typically do not use widely visible forms of communication attached to their attacks ('claiming and explaining'), which has caused a debate on whether the term 'terrorism' can be applied to this form of political violence as it is unclear in many cases of right-wing terrorism how (if at all) a specific political message was intended to be transported by the perpetrators. In North America most experts use the concept of 'hate crimes' to describe any form of right-wing motivated violence – including terrorism. In fact, the hate crime concept does include the element of causing fear and terror in a group beyond the victim but lacks political strategies and aims. This chapter argues that right-wing terrorism is a unique form of political violence and needs to be understood before certain core elements of the extreme right-wing ideology. To differentiate 'hate violence' from 'terrorism,' it is suggested to include the specific tactics and weapons used as indicators for the perpetrators intents.

[Chapter 4](#) then proceeds with an in-depth account of the post-Second World War development of the militant Far-Right in Germany, explaining the most important groups, lone actors, events and mutual influences. For the first time in international research about the



militant extreme right, this account describes the essential evolution of right-wing violence and terrorism in Germany and analyzes the characteristics of its four waves between 1960 and 2015. The chapter also includes statistical material about right-wing violence in Germany, for example, explosive attacks, arson and murder.

[Chapter 5](#) focuses on the right-wing terrorist group National Socialist Underground (NSU) as an extraordinary case of right Far-Right militancy in Germany. The chapter portrays the three core members, their close support network, relationships with other right-wing groups and the international network. With over fourteen years of clandestine activity, the NSU is one of the few terrorist groups in history who have managed to evade the authorities, keep on conducting attacks and manage to finance their own operations. Taking into account that the NSU was operating in a Western country with all modern policing and intelligence capabilities, the NSU's success provides most important lessons in small unit terrorism tactics and the potential weaknesses of modern security infrastructures.

In order to understand the full importance of the NSU and the reactions of the German authorities, [Chapter 6](#) provides a basic account of the German police's and intelligence's roles in the failed attempt to locate the group. A lack of communication between the different agencies, competition, a partial lack of competency in regard to assessing the threat from the Far-Right and most importantly a misconception of the extreme right's capabilities and terrorist potential has caused an underestimation amongst German police and intelligence officials regarding the possibility of right-wing terrorism.

[Chapter 7](#) analyzes the metrics of German right-wing terrorism, especially the development of group sizes, weapon types, target group specifications and the lifespan of right-wing terrorist actors. This chapter shows that small unit tactics (lone actors, cells and small groups with a maximum of ten members) have always been highly popular among German right-wing extremists since the end of the Second World War. As well, right-wing terrorist have frequently targeted the government (police, government buildings, judges, politicians, military) to an equal or sometimes higher degree than they have attacked ethnic minorities or immigrants. Compared with militant groups and terrorist events perpetrated by Far-Right activists in other countries, most importantly in the European Union and North America, right-wing movements differ enormously regarding their ideological foundation, political goals, cultural contexts and the importance of violence in their agenda. But militant right-wing extremists display similarities in tactics, targets and ideological references. This evidence provides support for the analysis of right-wing terrorism as a special and unique form of political violence, which needs to be studied in more depth to better understand its characteristics.

[Chapter 8](#) provides an encyclopedic account of German militant and terrorist right-wing actors since the end of the Second World War. In including short descriptions of the actor's background, the quality of information and the main characteristics (e.g., size, tactics, targets),



this collection offers the most comprehensive and detailed regarding German right-wing terrorism in international research so far.

The final [Chapter 9](#) contains the conclusion and summary of lessons learned regarding right-wing terrorism.

## Note

- <sup>1</sup> “Vor diesem Hintergrund ist ein Rückgang des Rechtsterrorismus auf absehbare Zeit nicht zu erwarten.”

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## Methods and sources – the Database on Terrorism in Germany (DTG)

Collecting accessible and academically valuable information regarding terrorism in general and right-wing terrorism specifically is no easy task. Most sources are of questionable value, circumstantial, or highly subjective and are – as it lies within the nature of terrorism – largely shrouded by secrecy, illegality and invisibility. To obtain reliable data for the unique Database on Terrorism in Germany (DTG) of the German Institute on Radicalization and De-Radicalization Studies (GIRDS), which is the empirical foundation for this book, required therefore a major effort to collect everything with a possible explanatory or informational value and to combine each source with relevant counterparts. In order to achieve the most accurate end result for every dataset (e.g., a specific right-wing terrorist actor) sources from three major categories have been triangulated and cross-checked: governmental sources, press reports and academic sources. Two additional sources of information have been included to augment the datasets where possible: autobiographies (and similar accounts such as interviews etc.) of former terrorists; and internal publications of the Far-Right movement (e.g., strategic manuals, articles written by active terrorists, reflections about events). Both additional sets of information were included with a maximum of caution as they are both not scientifically accessible and verifiable on the one hand and obviously very biased on the other.

Legal frameworks for releasing information in Germany vary depending on the scope, institution and content of the information. In general, all published information is subject to privacy and data protection regulation of the states and the federal government (Bundesdatenschutzgesetz). Data protection laws regulate the exchange of personal information (e.g., names, addresses, dates of birth) between governmental institutions and for external release. As a general rule, no personal information can be exchanged or made public without proven “considerable public interest.” What is more, the protection of personal privacy is a very high legal standard in Germany with its foundation in §1 of the German Constitution (Grundgesetz – Basic Law). This means that the protection of personal freedoms and privacy most commonly outweighs the value of releasing personal data of any kind for research, press or other interests. Exceptions are made only for people in “public life,” such as politicians. This privacy protection remains intact for at least thirty years after the death of the

person in question. Consequently, it is highly difficult, if not impossible, to obtain personal information from governmental sources about individual right-wing terrorists or extremists. Data protection, privacy and archive legislation do grant limited access to personal information for research on a specific condition, on the basis that no personal information is published as part of the research project, or that copies of documents are not shared with third parties. Furthermore, the outcome of the research conducted must be regarded as considerably important for the interests of the German public.

Another legislative aspect concerns the right to access governmental documents and sources related to general procedures of bureaucracy and governance. German legislation shifted its main policy regarding public access to governmental documentation in 2005. Previously, all governmental information was considered to be non-public. In January 2006, the new Federal Freedom of Information Act (*Informationsfreiheitsgesetz des Bundes*) came into effect granting general access to federal documents – albeit with an extensive list of exceptions (e.g., personal information, ongoing procedures, classified information). Since then all but four German states have followed suit and created similar freedom of information acts.

Summing up, these basic legal principles and regulations govern access and utilization of personal and non-personal information for research in Germany. Different legal regulations can apply for specific types of information and regarding specific contexts. However, if people are already publicly known because of their involvement in terrorist activities, through press reports for example, it is possible to use and publish this information in academic publications.

## ***Governmental sources***

Regarding governmental sources of information for right-wing terrorism, four large bodies of documents have been included: court verdicts, intelligence reports, parliamentary inquiries, and crime statistics/databases.

Court verdicts are the most valuable sources of information for terrorism research in Germany. Each verdict must include a thorough explanation for the given sentence, including (anonymized) biographical information about the perpetrator's radicalization process, each step leading to the criminal act and the main evidence used for the conviction. As the verdict includes only information deemed reliably proven in court using all available information, these documents can be seen as credible and trustworthy, although of course incomplete, as the judges had to focus on specific aspects relevant to the charges. In contrast to other potential governmental sources of information – like investigation files by the police and prosecutor's office, which are generally not accessible because they contain highly personal information and details about the investigative process – court verdicts do not include speculative opinions but are rather the condensed outcome of the whole judicial process

checking every piece of evidence for its reliability. Court verdicts also offer benefit over investigation files, because they are generally accessible for research purposes, although most verdicts have not been published. In 1997, the Federal Administrative Court ruled that it is a general and public responsibility of every court to make their decisions accessible (BVerwG 1997). As a direct consequence of that rule of law principle, all courts have established special regulations for accessing their decisions based on the §476 of the German Code of Criminal Procedure, which establishes a general right to attain insight into court-related documentation for research purposes. However, there is no nationwide and coherent regulation or practice regarding the storage and use of these verdicts, except that access is almost exclusively granted on a basis of anonymity regarding any personal information (e.g., names, addresses) contained in the verdict. Although a number of electronic databases of court verdicts exist, all of them are only selective and sometimes focus on certain legal issues. The largest databases (Juris, OpenJur, Jurion) have been searched with an extensive list of selectors (including all known group and actor names). However, finding the storage place for each verdict is highly difficult. Typically three places come into question: the court, the responsible state archive or the responsible prosecutor's office. All government offices require that the correct file and process number as well as a comprehensive explanation regarding the academic use and value of the information is stored. If approved by these offices however, court verdicts are usually anonymized and made accessible with a very high quality of information.

Intelligence reports, on the other hand, are of a very different nature. All German intelligence departments on the federal (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution – Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz BfV) and state (State Office for the Protection of the Constitution – Landesämter für Verfassungsschutz LfV) level publish annual reports about developments within the right-wing extremist, left-wing extremist, Islamic extremist movements and other relevant threats to the German society. These reports, dating back to 1969, include a large amount of information about detected terrorist groups, foiled and successful attacks, extremist networks and related crimes (e.g., explosives and arson attacks) and were reviewed and coded for every piece of information regarding right-wing terrorist activities. Intelligence reports, however, are not scientific in their nature and state a specific opinion and the perception of the authorities behind them using non-verifiable sources and are not free of political influence. As the case of the National Socialist Underground shows, these reports are not exhaustive: during the fourteen years of the NSU's active time the federal intelligence reports gave no indication of right-wing terrorism in Germany.

In addition to court verdicts and intelligence reports, the third category of governmental sources – parliamentary inquiries – also has a very specific characteristic and value. As an essential part of the German parliamentary system, every opposition faction can hand in so-called “small” and “big” inquiries to the government (only “big” inquiries will be debated in parliament). Typically the government has to answer those inquiries within a specific time-

frame and truthfully to the best of their knowledge. All replies from the government are published and fully accessible either via the central digital database of the parliament (Dokumentations und Informationssystem, DIP) or on the webpages of the department responsible for the inquiry. The left-wing parties especially (e.g., Die Linke) have used this tool traditionally to inquire about hate crimes, right-wing terrorism, counter-terrorism methods and other related aspects of the Far-Right in Germany. The government replies, although not scientific in nature, can be a valuable source of information, as they reflect and document the specific and detailed level of knowledge of the German government regarding certain key aspects (e.g., the number of right-wing individuals identified using explosives, the number of right-wing individuals seen as potential terrorists by the authorities). Because these replies do not state their sources of information, the content can again only be used with caution but is important for the earlier decades of the dataset, as they represent the few available publications on the matter with a consistent standard and accessibility. The parliament database has been searched with a broad list of selectors regarding right-wing terrorism and all relevant entries have been reviewed. Another subset of these parliamentary sources are the reports published by the eight inquiry commissions (two on the federal level and six on a state level), which were initiated to investigate the failure of the security agencies on all levels. These inquiry commissions are staffed with selected members of the parliament from all parties with seats. Although the legal responsibilities and therefore the right to access information remains limited, the reports of these commissions are based on extensive witness hearings and document analysis. The first inquiry commission on the federal level in the Bundestag, for example, worked from January 2012 until September 2013; it heard from 107 witnesses as well as reviewed 12,000 government files, which informed its 1,300-page report (Högl & Weßnigk 2016). In Thuringia, the inquiry commission worked from February 2012 until August 2014 (after the election in Thuringia in September 2014, it was decided that the commission would keep on working beyond its original mandate). Its four reports (among them one written by a former federal judge on the failures of the authorities – the so-called Schäfer report – and the 1,898-page final report) are based on 123 witness hearings and the review of 11,681 government files. In a similar vain, but with partially different results in regard to the scope and content of their reports, commissions have been run or are still running at the time of writing in Saxony, Bavaria, North Rhine-Westphalia, Baden-Württemberg and Hesse, which indicates the unparalleled impact of the NSU case on the German political and security landscape.

German and international governmental crime statistics and databases have been used to compare with the author's own dataset as well. Starting with the German federal crime statistic (polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik, PKS) numbers on politically motivated crimes (Staatsschutzdelikte) were included until 2001 (having started in 1953) and since then have only been published as part of the annual intelligence reports and the sporadic "periodic

security reports” (Periodischer Sicherheitsbericht). Especially relevant for this study is the Europol Terrorism and Situation Trend Report (TE-SAT), which has been produced by analysts and experts from Europol and EU Member States, and offers some insight into right-wing terrorism in Europe. The TE-SAT has been published since 2004. Two other governmental sources for hate crime and racist violence were used as well: the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) hate crime reports and the occasional reports on xenophobic crimes by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (EUFRA, formerly the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, EUMC). These statistics could only be used to roughly indicate a right-wing terrorist threat and to validate findings from other sources as the fundamental definitions between the organizations responsible for these reports differ greatly.

What has to be taken into account regarding governmental sources in general is not only their potential bias and incompleteness but also the fact that German legislation and regulation regarding the definition of right-wing crimes and terrorism as such has changed over time. As a consequence, governmental sources might vary in terms of scope and accuracy.

### ***Press and journalistic sources***

In addition to governmental sources, press reports about right-wing terrorist incidents, actors and court proceedings have been analyzed and coded. For that purpose, two leading press databases (LexisNexis and Factiva) on the German press have been searched for a large set of selectors (including all the known group and actor names, locales and general terms such as right-wing terrorism) which also accounts for a change in terminology regarding the phenomenon over time. The results were categorized according to quality of the newspaper and relevant information regarding the specific dataset and redundancy was eliminated. Sometimes smaller local newspapers could provide more detailed information regarding a right-wing terrorist group that originated in the area rather than larger nationwide outlets. Although useful, both databases include very little press information before 1980. For that time period, the archives of several leading high-quality newspapers and magazines (e.g., *Der Spiegel*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Die Zeit*) have been valuable resources – the online database on the casualties of right-wing violence since 1990 established by *Die Zeit* newspaper<sup>1</sup> has been essential for this research.

As well as the traditional press reports, a large body of books and articles of a journalistic nature regarding right-wing terrorism (e.g., Fuchs & Goetz 2012; Gensing 2012; Röpke & Speit 2013) has been collected and reviewed. These books and articles do contain valuable information but are generally not transparent about their own sources and methods.

Another related pool of resources comes from investigative magazines, information centers and non-governmental ‘watchdog’ organizations (with a mostly left-wing or anti-fascist background) such as *Searchlight* and ‘Hope not Hate’ in the United Kingdom, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in the United States or the various German organizations such as the Amadeu Antonio Stiftung (AAS), the Antifaschistische Pressearchive und Bildungszentrum in Berlin (APABIZ) or the *Antifa Infoblatt* (AIB). These organizations with their publications have established themselves as resources regarding the Far-Right and have issued reports about right-wing terrorism in the past (e.g., Gable & Jackson 2011; SPLC 2012; SPLC 2015). Despite being produced sometimes in close cooperation with academic staff and universities, these reports are however not scientific in nature, do not make their own sources transparent and are based on the motivation to identify and name individual perpetrators.

### ***Academic literature and sources***

Next to government and press information, every available academic publication regarding right-wing terrorism in general and for Germany specifically was collected and reviewed. All the major peer reviewed journals (e.g., *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *Perspectives on Terrorism*, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*) have been searched for content regarding Right-Wing Extremism and terrorism. In addition to this, the grey literature concerned with the topic was searched through major scientific search engines (e.g., Google Scholar). All results were classified into scope (i.e., relevant to German right-wing terrorism or not), empirical foundation (i.e., primary or secondary data) and value for each dataset.

As well as the traditional academic literature (e.g., peer reviewed articles and monographs), scientific terrorism databases have been used to collect more information about incidents and right-wing terrorist actors and to compare this material with the DTG dataset. Most useful were those database that allowed for isolating the incident or actor by ideology, such as the Terrorism in Western Europe: Events Data (TWEED – with data from 1950–2004). Other databases (e.g., the Global Terrorism Database, GTD) do not allow this isolation of right-wing oriented perpetrators but could partially be used by isolating the country and reviewing every single listed incident regarding a known perpetrator’s background. Used this way, the GTD, for example, lists 103 terrorist incidents perpetrated by right-wing extremists or neo-Nazis between 1992 and 2008 in Germany, causing six casualties and injuring ninety-eight people.

All sources were cross-referenced and revisited once additional information about a certain group or incident became evident. Especially regarding the early decades of the DTG dataset (1960–1980), mostly fragmented and unscientific information had to be cross-checked with every available sources from various forms of information. Only if there were at least three



different sources of information containing the same incident and actor, was it included in the database. Together with all the sources cited above, the DTG currently includes qualitative data regarding ninety-one identified right-wing terrorist actors (groups and individuals). Included are those actors who have carried out both successful and foiled attacks and plots. Reports and datasets beyond the DTG have accounted for quantitative data on 123 right-wing terrorist incidents using explosives, 2,173 right-wing arson attacks, 229 cases of murder with a right-wing motive, twelve kidnappings, fifty-six cases of extortion, and 174 armed robberies perpetrated by right-wing offenders since 1971. For most of these incidents there was no qualitative data available and therefore they were not included in the DTG dataset. Nevertheless this material was used to supplement the DTG material and sketch a more complete picture of the militant Far-Right in Germany.

Although this study does not aim to discuss the heterogeneous and partially contested terminology regarding different forms of Right-Wing Extremism, some words are nevertheless necessary here. A number of different definitions and concepts are used within research to describe either similar forms or different aspects of the Extreme Right (e.g., the Far-Right, the Radical Right, Right-Wing Extremism, the Extreme Right, and so on). These terms and concepts also change according to their political and cultural context. 'Radical Right' for example is used to describe violent extreme right-wing or neo-Nazi type groups in Germany (in addition to right-wing populist parties), while in the United States the term covers groups and movements such as the Tea Party or even the Republican Party. As the present study focuses on those violent and extreme extra-parliamentary parts of the right-wing political spectrum the terms 'Extreme Right,' Right-Wing Extremism,' 'neo-Nazi' or the 'Far-Right' are used synonymously. When concerned with political parties this work refers to them as 'Radical Right,' 'right-wing populist' or 'extreme right-wing parties.' It is no goal of this present work to analyze and distinguish the different forms of Right-Wing Extremism (for a detailed discussion of the definitions used, see [Chapter 3](#)) and related ideologies in depth. Right-wing terrorist actors display a great deal of flexibility and multiple group affiliations. It would be futile to try to assign a specific label to those actors as they usually have taken part in many forms of the right-wing movement, either simultaneously or subsequently. As this study will show, on the practical level the borders between internal ideological differences almost completely vanish and do not seem to play a significant role for the analysis of right-wing terrorism.

## [2.1 Review of existing research](#)

Right-wing violence, terrorism and the dynamics between groups, movements, ideologies,

individual backgrounds and the escalation of radicalization have so far received only marginal attention in international and German research, especially if compared with research into jihadi, left-wing and ethno-separatist terrorism. In his account of recent topics in terrorism research, Alex Schmid (2011: 461) noted, for example, that only 0.6 percent of the 4,458 peer reviewed publications focused on domestic terrorism, which includes right-wing terrorism. This lack of interest was noted by some leading experts in the field (e.g., Blee 2005b; Koehler 2014b; Simi 2010) with potentially dangerous effects on the public and political perception of the threat posed by the Far-Right. Pete Simi (2010: 252) noted that this “consensus of irrelevance” would impede any comprehensive understanding of terrorism in general, deflect the threat perception towards “foreign” terrorism and reinforce popular knowledge about the unperilous nature of right-wing violence.

The largest body of academic research comes from political science and deals with Extreme Right parties and political processes such as elections and campaigns (e.g., see Brauthal 2009; Golder 2003a, 2003b; Ignazi 1992, 1995; Ignazi & Ysmal 1992; Jackman & Volpert 1996; Kitschelt & McGann 1996; Mammone, Godin & Jenkins 2012a, 2012b; Merkl & Weinberg 2003; Minkenberg 2008). With a much higher relevance for the study of right-wing political violence, another large body of literature from sociology, criminology and cultural studies has looked at the subcultural side of Right-Wing Extremism and related aspects such as group dynamics, aesthetics (e.g., music, websites and clothing) or individual pathways into these milieus, especially skinheads, the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist groups (e.g., see Blee 1996, 2002; Borgeson 2003; Borgeson & Valeri 2005; Brown 2004; Burris, Smith & Strahm 2000; Cotter 1999; McVeigh 2009; McVeigh, Myers & Sikkink 2004; Moss & Johnson 1993; Shaffer 2013; Virchow 2004). Although violence is a regular and important part of these right-wing subcultures, most of this literature does not focus on organized violence or terrorism within the Far-Right but rather aims to understand the methods of mobilization, attraction and recruitment. As noted above, other fields such as terrorism studies or special subdisciplines in political science have only marginally looked at Right-Wing Extremism and terrorism so far.

For the most part, these studies have looked exclusively either at a specific geographical context or a specific type of group (e.g., skinheads). Only few works have attempted to compare right-wing violence and terrorism across these boundaries. Therefore, it makes sense to look at the comparative studies first and to proceed to those geographically focused works offering insights into right-wing terrorism followed by two additional bodies of literature relevant to understand the phenomenon: lone-actor studies and social movement theory approaches.

### *Comparative and general studies*

Looking at a wider context, *Terror from the Extreme Right* by Bjørgo, was one of the first and still influential studies on right-wing terrorism brought together a thematic essay about right-wing violence and terrorism in eight countries and regions (North America, Europe, Germany, Sweden, South Africa, Scandinavia, Japan, Italy) and also included theoretical chapters about the nature of right-wing terrorism (Bjørgo 1995b). Although containing a difference regarding topic and empirical depths amongst the essays, this volume belongs to a fundamental body of research for right-wing terrorism.

In this volume, Ehud Sprinzak (1995) established his theory of “split-delegitimization” and built the only theory and typology of right-wing terrorism up until 2015, although his model was challenged already in this edited volume as being “too simplistic” (Bjørgo 1995a: 7). Sprinzak differentiates between five types of right-wing terrorism (revolutionary, reactionary/reactive, vigilante, racist, millenarian, and youth counter-culture right-wing terrorism) and claims that for right-wing terrorist groups the conflict with government would be “secondary” to “private wars against hostile ethnic communities” (Sprinzak 1995: 17), which was seen inaccurate in many cases, for example in Sweden (e.g., see Bjørgo 1997: 190). According to Sprinzak, the evolution of right-wing terrorism is driven by this tension between targeting the outsider (e.g., foreigners) and the state itself, which gradually is identified as the true cause for the outsider threat (Sprinzak 1995: 20–22). Trying to empirically validate Sprinzak’s model, Wilkinson (1995) found that although persuasive, it could not account for the emergence and long-term survival of mass Extreme Right parties and movements. Nevertheless, other scholars did find parts of Sprinzak’s theory (i.e., the strategic targeting of government representatives as a secondary development) validated by empirical evidence from the North American Extreme Right (Michael 2003: 95). It took twenty years to revise the split-delegitimization model and incorporate empirical evidence to construct a new typology of right-wing terrorism. Ravndal’s (2015) model is based on attack frequencies and differences in perpetrators’ strategy and organization and identifies six types of right-wing terrorist actors: elite-sponsored groups, racist mobs/gangs, autonomous groups or cells, lone actors, violent loners and right-wing crime syndicates (Ravndal 2015: 49–50).

Similar edited volumes, like the one from Bjørgo (1995b), have also lacked a coherent theory of right-wing terrorism and therefore covered arbitrary selections of topics and geographical backgrounds without establishing a unified approach towards the phenomenon. One of the most recent collections by Max Taylor, Donald Holbrook and Mark Currie (2013) aims to “highlight and explore different strands of violent political activity, attitudes and related discourses and contexts that have been grouped under ‘extreme right-wing’ banner” (Taylor et al. 2013: 5). In consequence, the ten thematic chapters descriptively focus on different aspects widely related to Far-Right violence from six regions (Great Britain, North America, the Netherlands, Germany, Norway and France) giving insightful accounts of detailed topics (e.g., a comparison of the German response to Far-Right and Far-Left

terrorism) but they are not able to describe the nature of right-wing terrorism with its specific characteristics.

Next to Sprinzak's theoretical work on right-wing terrorism, the German sociologist Wilhelm Heitmeyer (2005) offered a theoretical foundation regarding the nature of right-wing terrorism. He proposed including the victims' group subjective side in order to understand the phenomenon (see also Blee 2005a) and to categorize spontaneous acts of right-wing violence from youths gangs as terrorism: "If a central criterion of terror consists in placing people in a permanent state of fear so that they must expect an attack at any time, then the attacks by groups of right-wing youths should be included" (Heitmeyer 2005: 144). He also pointed out that these right-wing youth gangs – aiming to create 'zones of fear' – would not act covertly and therefore rarely use firearms and explosives. For Heitmeyer, the essential component within the escalation dynamic of right-wing violence to terrorism are conspiracy theories (see also Hamm 1993: 125), because they allow the perpetrators to construct enemies everywhere and to portray themselves as the "executor of the silent majority" (Heitmeyer 2005: 144). In his analysis, Heitmeyer claims that right-wing terrorism is typically "carried out by representatives of the ethnic majority population against weaker minorities" (Heitmeyer 2005: 145), those considered unequal, political opponents and representatives of the state with the main aim to:

challenge those in power by means of "bombing" but without actually presenting any concrete ambitions for power. As a rule, these are weak groups making a strong impact through a centrally placed shock effect: a communication strategy to take hold of, and occupy, people's minds.

(Heitmeyer 2005: 146)

Regarding the factors influencing the likelihood of right-wing terrorism, Heitmeyer (2005: 146) proposed four ideas: that it would most likely occur where no or only limited political representation of the Far-Right exists; that it needs xenophobic and right-wing attitudes in the population to survive; that political weight shrinks with increasing violence; and that political marginalization has mixed results. Heitmeyer also stated some specific characteristics of right-wing terrorism (2005: 148–149). In his approach, this form of political violence would be based on "the sense of unequal worth of groups of aliens whose protection by the state is an assumed threat to one's own group, has become central" (Heitmeyer 2005: 149) and essentially driven by:

fantasies of superiority vis-à-vis aliens and, at the same time, feelings of inferiority vis-à-vis "relevant others," that is, towards the groups similar to one's own ethnic group or toward other social groups. These feelings are marked by self-elevation on the one hand and devaluation, or even dehumanization, of enemy groups, mostly of different ethnic origin, on the other, and are frequently accompanied by militaristic vocabulary.

(Heitmeyer 2005: 149)

This tension between superiority towards other ethnic groups and perceived inferiority

towards their own ethnic group would – according to Heitmeyer – push the escalation dynamic towards the use of terrorism. He also assumed that right-wing terrorism would be likely in the future in those societies that:

are undergoing “transition,” such as South Africa, which is changing from an apartheid regime to a democratic society, or societies possessing a “basic stock of equipment” in the form of conspiracy theories, a weapons scene, religious groups plying their views, and social deprivation. The USA must be counted among these societies.

(Heitmeyer 2005: 151)

## *Germany*

Looking at country specific studies, the first section of literature dealing with German right-wing terrorism has – similar to research in other countries – mostly evolved around describing and analyzing right-wing parties and their electoral successes (e.g., see Behrend 1996; Fascher 1994; Fetscher 1967; Hafeneger, Brake & Seeg 1997; Klingemann & Pappi 1971; Kühnl, Rilling & Sager 1969; Liepelt 1967; Maier & Bott 1968; Neubacher 1996; Niethammer 1969; Riehl-Heyse 1980; Scheuch 1970; Virchow & Dornbusch 2008), descriptions of right-wing youth subcultures, such as skinheads (e.g., see Brück 1992; Clarke 1976; Deutsches Jugendinstitut 1995; Farin & Seidel-Pielen 2002; Möller & Schuhmacher 2007; Schröder & Gust 1992; Wahl 2003; Wirth 1989), ‘Autonomous Nationalists’ (e.g., see Schedler & Häusler 2011) or ‘folkish’ racists (e.g., see Heller & Maegerle 2001). Likewise, many additional studies have looked at specific subcultural products and issues, such as music (e.g., see Dornbusch & Raabe 2002; Funk-Hennigs 1995; Schuppener 2008), publications (e.g., see Schuppener 2008), the role of women (e.g., see Döhring & Feldmann 1999; Köttig 2004, 2006; Köttig, Bukow, Ottersbach, Tuidier & Yildiz 2006; Meinhardt 2010; Möller 1991; Plodeck 2008; Priester 2009; Schmitz 2008; Siller 1997; Werner 2009; Wlecklik & Anti-Rassismus-Informations-Centrum Nordrhein-Westfalen 1995) or the Internet (e.g., see Busch 2007, 2010; Dietzsch & Maegerle 1997; Frindte, Jacob & Neumann 2002; Fromm & Kernbach 2001; Hardinghaus 2012; Hooffacker & Lökk 1997; Müller & Seiler 2010; Nickolay 2000; Pfeiffer 2002; Pfeiffer, Greven & Grumke 2006; Steinmetz 1996). Rightwing violence has mostly been treated in the realm of juvenile subcultural contention and deviance, for example, looking at biographies of adolescents incarcerated because of right-wing motivated crimes (e.g., see Kubink 1997; Mentzel 1998; Neubacher 1998; Neumann & Frindte 2002; Wahl 2003; Willems, Eckert, Würtz & Steinmetz 1993). Most of these ‘offender studies’ have drawn a picture of troubled youths living on the margins of societies, committing violent racist or xenophobic crimes out of group pressure, alcohol intoxication and thrill seeking without much of an ideological motivation. However, they have also shown different types of members in these right-wing groups characterized by different degrees of ideological motivation. Willems (1995: 169), for example, distinguishes

between the right-wing activists, ethnocentric youths, criminal youths, and fellow travellers, however, he is only looking at incarcerated adolescents, who are mostly coming from skinhead type groups and he has not differentiated them according to the types of crimes they have committed.

German right-wing terrorism is almost absent from international and German research, although the country has had one of the longest histories of right-wing political violence, dating back to the aftermath of the First World War with the violent right-wing extremist, national socialist, anti-Semitic and ultra-nationalistic associations of former soldiers (the so-called Freikorps – Free Corps) attacking and even assassinating left-wing activists and politicians (e.g., the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Walther Rathenau, was assassinated on June 24, 1922; the prime minister of Bavaria Kurt Eisner was assassinated on February 21, 1919; and the Minister of Finance, Matthias Erzberger, was assassinated on August 26, 1921). One of the most violent and sophisticated right-wing terrorist organizations at that time was the so-called Organisation Consul (OC), which was active between 1920 and 1922. Founded by former officers and members of the Free Corps ‘Marine-Brigade Ehrhardt’ (Navy Division Ehrhardt), the OC had an estimated 5,000 members and was a very hierarchical, para-military and clandestine organization. OC members were responsible for a number of violent attacks and assassinations, such as the killing of Walther Rathenau or Matthias Erzberger, and the OC was involved in creating the SA (Sturmabteilung, Assault Division) of the NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers Party) (Stern 1963).

Even after the Second World War, right-wing terrorism remained a substantial threat to German internal security. To this date, for example, the most lethal terrorist attack on German soil after 1945 was in September 1980, with the bombing of the Munich Oktoberfest carried out by at least one right-wing extremist (the number of perpetrators is debated), which caused thirteen fatalities and injured 211. Although as noted above, right-wing terrorism research has been neglected in general, it seems surprising that with such a special historic background in Germany, that neo-Nazi terrorism has not gained more interest from academics worldwide. Partially this can be explained by the lack of English sources and the complex group structures behind these attacks. In addition, there was no coherent database on incidents and perpetrators available until the research for this book had been conducted and the DTG database was created. Only a handful of academic publications in English mentioning German right-wing terrorism have appeared and they mostly describe incidents and groups without giving a detailed analysis.

Bruce Hoffman has written three very detailed studies for an international audience, which were commissioned by the RAND corporation (Hoffman 1982, 1984, 1986). They describe some right-wing terrorist events of that time across Europe and West Germany, as Western Europe was experiencing a wave of right-wing terrorist attacks (e.g., the Bologna train station bombing in August and in Munich in September 1980) during these years. Looking only at this

short time-frame, these studies came to some conclusions regarding the methods, aims and prospects of terrorism from the Extreme Right (defined as combination of nationalism, anti-communism and racism) that seem surprising today. From their perspective, right-wing attackers aimed at inflicting mass casualties in order to produce a climate of disorder and despair favoring right-wing parties' agendas (Hoffman 1982: vii). Despite aiming at large numbers of fatalities – according to Hoffman – right-wing terrorism was not indiscriminate, giving the example of synagogue or train stations as targets. Hoffman described their main, long-term goal as “bringing about a form of government similar to the fascist regimes of Italy, Germany, and Japan before and during World War II” (Hoffman 1982: vii). Another difference to left-wing terrorism, in Hoffman's view, is that the origins of right-wing terrorism are based in “militarist, totalitarian sources left over from the post-World War II” (Hoffman 1982: vii). Continuing his study with a descriptive section on right-wing terrorist incidents, Hoffman focused on the most prevalent groups at that time, for example, the Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann and the Deutsche Aktionsgruppen in Germany. In the main conclusion, the report notes that right-wing terrorists would be considerably more psychologically “troubled” (Hoffman 1986: 23) than left-wing terrorists with a simple main strategy to “cleanse their respective countries of Communists, social democrats, and their liberal sympathizers, and to expel the foreign immigrants and refugees whom they regard as interlopers and parasites” (Hoffman 1986: 23). Hoffman issued two updated reports: one from the European perspective (Hoffman 1984) and another as an in-depth study of the West German landscape (Hoffman 1986). This last report added the international networks of German right-wing terrorist groups (e.g., with the PLO in Lebanon and with French neo-Nazi groups), their tactical alignments with the extreme left in terms of targets (e.g., targeting US military personnel) and some new groups and incidents, such as the Hepp-Kexel cell.

Another scholar who has published an academic article in English about terrorism in Germany was the former director of the domestic intelligence service (Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz – Office for the Protection of the Constitution) in the German state of Hamburg, Hans Josef Horchem (1982). Describing the same groups and incidents as Hoffman, he also noted that in 1982 of the sixty-five terrorists in jail, thirteen were right-wing terrorists (Horchem 1982: 30). Pragmatically, Horchem estimated that “the number of potential right-wing terrorists for the near future will probably not exceed 150” (Horchem 1982: 30), which still seems high if one accounts for the absence of right-wing terrorism research and public awareness. Twenty-one years later, Stefan Malthaner and Peter Waldmann (2003) focused on terrorism in Germany and included a brief description of the outbreak of right-wing street assaults, hooliganism and arson attacks against refugee homes occurring in Germany during the early 1990s (next to left-wing and international terrorism). These spontaneous acts of violence were mostly committed by youth gangs identifying themselves as skinheads (Malthaner & Waldmann 2003: 113). Portraying the German government's counter-reactions

(a combination of group bans and broad nationwide youth prevention programs), this study offers little insight into the militant German right-wing scene. Another study (McGowan 2006) suggested that Germany experienced a change of right-wing tactics between 1970 and 1989, shifting from terrorist activities in the early 1980s to attacks on foreigners reflecting “a general desire to stir up animosity as a means of facilitating efforts to create a European SA whose activists will fight on the streets as political soldiers for National Socialism to counter alien views and organisations” (McGowan 2006: 259). McGowan, however, provided little evidence to support that claim. Regarding the case of the National Socialist Underground (NSU), only two academic works have been published in English so far describing the groups and analyzing their networks and modes of operation (Koehler 2014a; McGowan 2014).

Other publications in German on right-wing terrorism have largely remained journalistic in nature (e.g., Baumgärtner & Böttcher 2012; Fuchs & Goetz 2012; Gensing 2012; Röpke & Speit 2013). Most academic studies do not advance beyond historic accounts and descriptions of groups and incidents (e.g., see Jesse 2012; Maegerle 2002; Pfahl-Traugher 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c; Rabert 1995; Rosen 1989). Some scholars have argued for a “new quality” of right-wing terrorism introduced by the NSU (e.g., see Jesse 2012; Pfahl-Traugher 2012a; Pfahl-Traugher 2012b, 2012c) as previous right-wing terrorist groups and plots would not have deliberately attempted to kill their victims (Pfahl-Traugher 2012a: 193), a notion that was taken up by the Director of the German Federal Criminal Police in 2012 as well (Ziercke 2012). In general, these studies agree that terrorism from the Extreme Right was significantly less communicational (in regard to public claims of responsibility), was focused on foreigners and ethnic minorities, and attacked the state indirectly by demonstrating the authorities’ powerlessness, as well as lesser organized and less deadly than left-wing or Islamist terrorism. One study from Borstel and Heitmeyer (2012) is noteworthy as it postulates the theory of “communication-free deflection-terrorism”<sup>2</sup> (Borstel & Heitmeyer 2012: 364). Claiming that the NSU cell would have known or suspected large xenophobic tendencies within the German population, the terrorists – according to the authors – by not claiming responsibility for the attack, tried to deflect the suspicion of the authorities away from themselves towards ethnic minorities; this indeed has happened in some police and intelligence investigations. This argument finds support in at least one historical parallel in the use of ‘strategy of tension’ by Italian right-wing terrorists, who committed their attacks in the name of left-wing groups (e.g., the Bologna train station bombing) in order to cause a repressive crackdown by the government towards those groups. However, so far there has been no indication that the NSU group has reached that level of strategic sophistication. Nevertheless, the study by Borstel and Heitmeyer (2012: 358) did show that usually right-wing terrorists operate in small cells, which are not isolated but emerge within a supportive larger milieu. This is also supported by a study from Backes (2012) who finds that most right-wing terrorist activities across Europe since the late 1990s have been committed by small “leaderless resistance cells.”



One last aspect of German studies into right-wing terrorism is that the internationally widely used and debated concept of ‘lone wolf’ terrorism has only very recently been applied to German right-wing lone actors (Pfahl-Traughber 2016). Discussing a number of cases (e.g., Josef Bachmann, Uwe Behrendt, Kay Diesner or Frank Steffen – all of which are discussed in detail in [Chapter 4](#)), Pfahl-Traughber argues that right-wing lone actors can have different modes of organizational embeddedness, such as “ideological acceptance” (i.e., the perception of acting upon the general xenophobic opinions of the population), “media contacts” (i.e., the consumption of right-wing extremist propaganda material) or socialization and active involvement in extreme right-wing groups. Right-wing lone actors also display – according to Pfahl-Traughber – psychopathological characteristics and have defunctional socio-economic backgrounds. However, the sample used in his study is also very selective and does not aim to advance beyond a very brief account of a few lone actor cases.

Based on the existing German literature regarding right-wing terrorism, a first summary can be made about this form of political violence. According to the few German studies in this field, right-wing terrorism is mostly a sporadic and non-communicative form of violence, driven by a will of destruction of the enemy and mostly lacking any theoretical or strategic foundation. Some scholars have argued that the NSU has started a second generation of right-wing terrorism, with previous actors not actively aiming to kill their victims, which seems to conflict with other accounts of right-wing terrorism. In general, the lack of public claiming responsibility for the act of terrorism has confused German research on the topic and led to a debate about the terrorist nature of these groups and events. However, those groups and lone actors which have become widely known, seem to have operated with strong dedication and conviction for their ideological causes, even if these were rarely communicated to the public.

## ***North America***

Moving beyond Germany in the country specific literature, one of the largest and most data rich bodies of literature – although still very scant especially when compared with other forms of political violence (see Blee 2005b; Piazza 2015: 1; Simi 2010) – comes from North America. Michael (2003: 123) has pointed out that while the impact (i.e., fatalities caused) of right-wing terrorism in the United States relative to the population and other crimes (e.g., gang violence) can be seen as marginal, extreme right-wing violence is still the most relevant political violence in America:

Since 1970, domestic right-wing terrorists have committed more than 500 attacks in the USA. Although this comprises only about a quarter of all terrorist attacks on US soil – and is only half the number committed by domestic left-wing terrorists – right-wing terrorism has resulted in more deaths than any other type of domestic terrorist activity. Over the period 1970–2011, out of 471 people killed in domestic terrorist attacks in the USA, 244 were killed by right-wing terrorists. Right-wing terrorism, on average, yielded 0.67 deaths per attack as opposed to 0.21 deaths for all terrorist events

in the USA, making it a particularly costly type of terrorism in terms of human life.

(Piazza 2015: 1)

[Table 2.1](#) Distribution of domestic terrorism in the USA by type, 1970–2011

	<i>Number of attacks</i>	<i>(%)</i>
Right-wing	578	24.4
Left-wing	1,156	48.9
Unknown	313	13.2
Other	315	13.3
Total	2,362	100.0

Source: Piazza (2015: 10).

Other statistical accounts of right-wing violence – although with a variance in the numbers – seem to validate this claim. Perliger (2012: 86) counted 4,420 violent incidents perpetrated by right-wing extremists between 1990 and 2012 causing 670 fatalities and 3,053 injuries.

[Table 2.2](#) Groups responsible for most terrorist attacks in the United States, 1970–2011

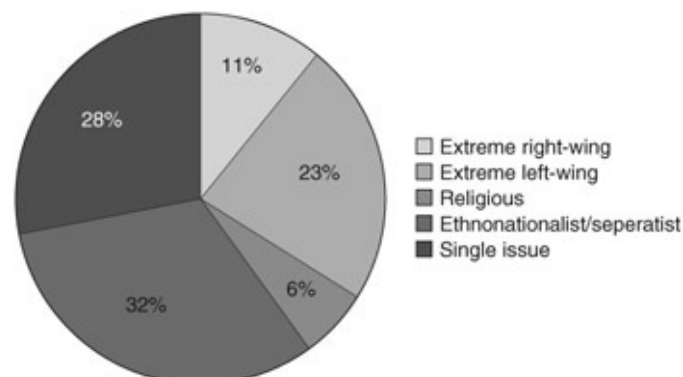
<i>Rank</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Number of attacks</i>	<i>Number of fatalities</i>
1	Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional (FALN)	119	7
2	New World Liberation Front (NWLF)	86	1
3	Animal Liberation Front (ALF)	85	0
4	Earth Liberation Front (ELF)	76	0
5	Jewish Defense League (JDL)	74	4
6	Omega-7	55	4
7	Weather Underground, Weathermen	45	1
8	Macheteros	37	6
9	Black Liberation Army	36	19
10	Armed Revolutionary Independence Movement (MIRA)	31	2
10	Chicano Liberation Front	31	2
11	United Freedom Front (UFF)	29	0
12	Black Panthers	24	6

Organization of Volunteers for the Puerto Rican

12	Revolution	24	1
13	Ku Klux Klan	23	7
14	Army of God	21	3
15	George Jackson Brigade	20	1
15	May 19 Communist Order	20	1
15	Zebra Killers	20	15
16	Independent Armed Revolutionary Commandos (CRIA)	19	0
17	Jewish Armed Resistance	17	0
18	Aryan Republican Army	16	0
19	Revolutionary Commandos of the People (CRP)	15	2
20	The Justice Department	14	0

Source: LaFree et al. (2012: 25).

Christopher Hewitt's (2000, 2003, 2005) valuable studies about terrorism in America also show that "white racist/rightist terrorism accounts for 31.2% of the incidents and 51.6% of the fatalities between 1954 and 2000, ranking as the number one threat clearly before 'revolutionary left-wing' or 'black militant' terrorism" (Hewitt 2003: 15). However, other studies have questioned these proportions as they disappear once they are put into context with other forms of terrorism. In the decade between 1980 and 1990 for example, only six out of 219 acts of terrorism were perpetrated by the Far-Right (Smith 1994: 21) although right-wing perpetrators were highly overrepresented in indictments regarding acts of terrorism (Smith 1994: 32). According to LaFree et al. (2012) who examined 207 terrorist attacks between 2001 and 2011, the most active terrorist groups were the Earth Liberation Front (fifty attacks), the Animal Liberation Front (thirty-four attacks) and al-Qaeda (four attacks), rather than right-wing groups. In a similar study, Miller et al. (2011) looked at terrorist groups attacking the United States (from everywhere) and found that right-wing groups were responsible for 11 percent (ranking fourth behind ethno-nationalist, single-issue and left-wing terror groups).



As a consequence of these conflicting studies on the threat posed by right-wing terrorism in America, some scholars have called this phenomenon a “confusing enigma” (Smith 1994).

Nevertheless, the scholars looking at the United States have produced the widest data collection on domestic extremism and terrorism, which they have brought together in a variety of databases such as the Terrorism and Extremist Violence in the United States (TEVUS) Database project between 2009 and 2015 at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), combining several other unique datasets, such as the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), the United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB), the American Terrorism Study (ATS) and the Profiles of Perpetrators of Terrorism in the United States (PPT-US). Therefore, so far the best analytical basis for research about violence from the Far-Right can be found in North America.

Differentiating the American Far-Right into three types<sup>3</sup> – racist/white supremacist, Christian fundamentalist and anti-government (see Perliger 2012: 3–5) – most studies have focused on one of these accordingly but are rather historical case studies, descriptive accounts of groups and individual terrorists or theoretical works regarding the root causes of involvement in the Extreme Right, for example, about the Ku Klux Klan and white supremacists (e.g., Blee 1996, 2002; Dobratz & Shanks-Meile 2000; Ezekiel 2002; McVeigh 2009; McVeigh et al. 2004; Moore 1991; Moss & Johnson 1993; Tolnay & Beck 1995), neo-Nazi skinhead groups (e.g., Blazak 2001; Borgeson 2003; Borgeson & Valeri 2005; Hamm 1993; Simi & Futrell 2010), anti-government militias (e.g., Abanes 1996; Chermak 2002; Crothers 2003; Freilich 2003; Freilich & Alex Pridemore 2006; Freilich, Pienik & Howard 2001; Freilich & Pridemore 2005; Levitas 2002), or Christian Identity groups (e.g., Barkun 1997; Dobratz 2001; Sharpe 2000; White 2001; Zeskind 2009).

In his studies, Mark Hamm (1998, 1993, 2002, 2004) analyzed what he deemed “domestic terrorism” or “terrorist youth subcultures” perpetrated by North American neo-Nazi skinhead groups. As some scholars have pointed out, Hamm’s research “links hate crime and terrorism by explaining active involvement in right-wing organizations through a theory of domestic terrorism” (Deloughery, King & Asal 2012: 664). Essentially describing American skinhead subcultures as something inherently different than classical youth gangs, Hamm points out that they are:

something else; something with a wider agenda that is potentially more dangerous to society, and certainly more elusive to academic gang scholars. Hence, instead of viewing the skinheads as a street gang, we must define them for what they truly are. Because of their overt racism, political violence, and links to a homologous international subculture of neo-Nazism, the skinheads constitute what can best be described as a terrorist youth subculture.

(Hamm 1993: 65)

For Hamm, “terrorism” equals “violence to promote political change by instilling fear in

innocent people” (Hamm 1993: 80), a characterization he finds fully valid regarding the American right-wing skinhead movement:

Skinheads have used violence for the explicit purpose of instilling fear in innocent people. Inspired by the convoluted heavy metal fantasies of white power bands such as Screwdriver, I contend that the American skinheads have sought to topple a fantasy-inspired Zionist Occupied Government (ZOG) and cast it into a receivership that could be administered by a morally superior Aryan Youth of the First World. They did so primarily by committing a spree of killings, stabbings, clubbings, and beatings of poor black Americans and other disenfranchised people. This form of violence is, therefore, consistent with the formal definition of American terrorism.

(Hamm 1993: 196)

In Hamm’s view, there is no essential differentiation between hate crime and terrorism and his understanding of terrorism is largely focused on “ideology, music, weaponry and white male bonding” (Hamm 2004: 327), a view held by other scholars as well (e.g., Blazak 2001). Basing his analysis on a sample of thirty-six skinheads, Hamm finds that right-wing (skinhead) terrorists largely come from lower-class backgrounds who conformed to the mainstream culture of education and professional goals: “terrorist youth subcultures appear to be largely inhabited by conformists who exhibit almost hyperactive levels of acceptance of the dominant American social order. They are not rebels at all” (Hamm 1993: 114). Interestingly, their family background and early childhood experiences did not seem to have a significant influence on their development into terrorists (Hamm 1993: 114–115). Otherwise, according to Hamm, right-wing terrorist youth subcultures display a high level of sociopathy amongst group leaders, relatively strong and coherent shared political beliefs and execute violence as a “concrete and rational behaviour that stems from a clearly defined ideology” (Hamm 1993: 127). The terrorist skinheads in Hamm’s sample showed no clear signs of alienation (except regarding politics and economics) and made a rational decision to join these groups, rather than being forced in by socio-economic grievances (Hamm 1993: 165–167). Finally, Hamm concludes his theory of terrorist youth subcultures by essentially pointing to the role of white power music, which is responsible for setting off the development of these traditional blue-collar employed youths into violent skinhead terrorists (Hamm 1993: 210–211).

Although Hamm’s position essentially combines hate crimes and terrorism, the relationship between the two has been debated in criminology and terrorism studies. Indeed both do share similarities and differences, which will be discussed in depth in [Chapter 3](#). Nevertheless, it is important to highlight some main aspects of the debate known as ‘close cousins’ vs. ‘distant relatives’ (e.g., see Deloughery, King & Asal 2012). While the aim to ‘terrorize’ a specific target group larger than the victim is one core aspect of hate crimes and terrorism (hence ‘close cousins’), differences in the degree of planning, publicity and strategic goals have caused other scholars to speak of distant relatives instead. In consequence, the label used not only signifies a theoretical differentiation but implies much more significant categorizations as well. While the use of terrorism as label includes the highest levels of security threats and most severe forms

of political violence, hate crime was and is publicly considered to be a less dangerous or serious threat, causing a devaluation of risks and counter-measures associated with this form of violence (Simi 2010). Consequently, the relationship between these two concepts and the implications for research and threat assessment will be taken up again in the following chapter.

Taking a comparative perspective regarding different parts of the violent Far-Right in the United States, George Michael points to the fact that right-wing violence appears to have a “longer history and more enduring quality” (Michael 2003: 93) than other forms of terrorism, such as left-wing or organized labor violence. Drawing on the seminal studies from Christopher Hewitt (2000, 2003) collecting and comparing fatalities of political violence in America and extensive interviews with leading right-wing extremists, such as William Pierce, Michael describes significant episodes of right-wing terrorism in the United States since the 1970s, such as the Greensboro Massacre, the Posse Comitatus, the Order and the Oklahoma bombing. Michael analyzes the theoretical approaches to terrorism within the Far-Right, such as the concept of ‘leaderless resistance’ (e.g., see Kaplan 1997), which mainly focus on small cells or lone actor tactics reflecting the “organizational and financial weaknesses of right-wing terrorists” (Michael 2003: 125). This focus on small unit tactics is indeed a very important characteristic of right-wing terrorism and will later be shown to be an essential element of right-wing terrorism in other countries and in general. In his conclusion, Michael (2003: 123–128) identifies several unique characteristics of right-wing terrorism: first, right-wing terrorism appears to be non-strategic and uses violence as an end in itself, lacking purpose and direction, it mostly targets individuals because of their race, even though the state has become another major target in recent decades; second, right-wing terrorism seems to be more directed at personal targets, rather than impersonal ones (e.g., government and institutions); third, there has been no organized threat from the Far-Right since the Order’s demise, with the movement displaying a primacy of leaderless resistance and lone actor attacks as the main *modus operandi*, although a recent upsurge in more organized militia type groups could be observed; fourth, the main weapons of choice of right-wing terrorists are guns and bombs, which in Michael’s view is very extraordinary. As he counts right-wing terrorists among the “religiously inspired terrorists” (Michael 2003: 127), they should display a willingness to use highly lethal weapons in order to inflict mass casualties. This view can be seen as being specific to North America, as most other extreme right-wing movements, especially in Europe, are not largely based on Christian fundamentalism or other religious ideologies. With these unique characteristics of right-wing terrorism in the North American context, Michael has delivered a concise and relevant account of this phenomenon. Although the work also does not discuss the differences between hate crimes and terrorism and sees every form of right-wing violence as terrorist acts, his work is one of the most important studies regarding this topic.

Another perspective on right-wing terrorism – labeled as ‘racial terrorism’ – was developed by one of the leading experts on women’s involvement in the Extreme Right, Kathleen Blee (2005b), who identifies two types and differentiates between ‘strategic’ and ‘narrative’ versions of racial terrorism:

What distinguishes narrative from strategic racial terrorism is not the character of the acts of violence, but its incorporation into a larger set of plans and tactics. Strategic racial terrorism is intensely focused on disabling, undermining, or exterminating those considered to be the enemies of White supremacy. Narrative racial terrorism is less clearly focused on specific enemies; it targets enemies for violence, but that violence also has an internal purpose: to strengthen, sometime even to create, organized White supremacy, to attract new members, to instill a sense of collective identity among existing members and bind them closer to each other, and to instill the passion and commitment that will sustain their efforts into the future.

(Blee 2005b: 429)

Through her approach, Blee tried to combine the concepts of hate crime and terrorism. Unfortunately by not accounting for the phenomenological differences between the two and the substantial academic debate about these types, the concept of racial terrorism has remained detached from the empirical bases of the violent Far-Right.

Some recent studies from the United States have looked at specific individual factors driving right-wing extremists to the use of (terrorist) violence. Simi et al. (2013), for example, based their research on a sample of 118 Far-Right terrorists from the American Terrorism Study. Focusing on identity theory, the authors highlight the importance of involuntary role exits moving from the military life to civil life which causes identity discrepancies (i.e., a loss of status and recognition), facilitating a behavioral change towards extremism and terrorism.

Using statistical regression analysis, Piazza (2015) looked at larger societal factors, possibly explaining the motivations for domestic right-wing terrorism between 1970 and 2011. The motivational factors which are typically put forward by politicians and the popular media, such as economic deprivation, poverty, decline of manufacturing employment, the ‘Farm Crisis,’ large-scale immigration, and the growth of income tax did not appear to have a significant influence in the results from Piazza’s study. On the other hand, he found that an increase in abortion rates, growing female participation in the labor force and Democratic White House control to be strong predictors of right-wing violence.

Additional insights on the North American Far-Right can be gained by comparing violent and non-violent hate groups (Chermak, Freilich & Suttmoeller 2013). Group size, charismatic leadership and the strong presence of leaderless resistance concepts increase the likelihood of hate groups resorting to violence, while a strong publication activity decreases that risk (Chermak et al. 2013: 210). It is noteworthy that while right-wing terrorism is widely seen as a phenomenon involving lone actors or small cells, this study indicates that a critical mass of group members might be necessary for the escalation into violence.

Another aspect highly relevant for the present subject is the research on so-called

‘sovereign citizens’ and the political impact of these assessments. The sovereign citizen movement is a very diverse and loose network of individuals and groups with a shared rejection of United States laws, taxation, currency and the government’s legitimacy especially regarding firearms control (e.g., ADL 2010; FBI 2011; Fleishman 2004; Macnab 2016). The concept behind the movement is directly rooted in Christian Identity teachings and the right-wing terrorist Posse Comitatus group in the 1980s. Fluent overlapping with more militant and violent militias or white supremacists (e.g., Abanes 1996; Crothers 2003; Freilich 2003; Levitas 2002) have resulted in a number of violent attacks from individuals and groups as well clashes with law enforcement agencies. For example, the accomplice of Timothy McVeigh for his Oklahoma bombing in 1995 was a member of the movement; and a number of violent stand-offs between sovereign citizen groups with Federal law enforcement agencies (e.g., the ‘Bundy stand-offs’ in 2014 and 2016), and numerous individual acts of killings of police officers exemplify the movement’s danger.

One critical effect of government (e.g., intelligence and police) assessments of threats posed by this sovereign citizen movement in the United States is the high risk of political backlash and strong opposition. In April 2009, for example, the Department of Homeland Security’s Extremism and Radicalization branch issued a report looking at the risk of violent radicalization within the right-wing extremist movement including sovereign citizens (DHS 2009). Shortly after the report was published, several quotes were used by mostly conservative politicians and public interest organizations to organize strong nationwide critique (Levin 2011; Thompson 2009). Especially relevant for the subsequent debate, were the report’s arguments regarding the increased risk of right-wing radicalization and recruitment through the first African-American presidency, the prospects of firearms restrictions and the potential of returning veterans becoming recruits for terrorist groups or working as lone actors. Although research for the report had already started under the Bush administration in 2008 (Levin 2011) and some of these claims were founded in much earlier assessments by the FBI, the political climate swiftly changed against the DHS, which retracted the report, cut personnel in the domestic terrorism branch, canceled briefings on the issue and held back about a dozen reports (Smith 2011). Eventually the intelligence unit responsible was dismantled in April 2010. Especially noteworthy is the fact that the FBI had already published a number of reports on the same issues and continued afterwards without a similar public reaction (e.g., FBI 2004, 2006, 2008, 2011). In 2012, the main author responsible for the problematic DHS report, Daryl Johnson, published his own accounts about the sovereign citizen movement and the risk for potential terrorist incidents becoming rooted in this milieu, arguing that the public debate after the report had effectively created a security risk by furthering the already critical devaluation of domestic terrorism within the DHS’ list of priorities (Johnson 2012). In the eyes of Johnson, the resulting lack of specialized analysis capacity, both in regard to experienced personnel and resources, was majorly responsible for



the inadequate threat assessments and counter-measures against terrorism from the Far-Right (Nixon 2016). This capacity seems to have become one field of activity for the FBI since 2011 (Sullivan 2012) and the Department of Justice, which re-established the Domestic Terrorism Executive Committee in 2014. The committee had been created in the aftermath of the Oklahoma bombing in 1995 and disbanded after the 9/11 attacks (DoJ 2013). In addition to the DoJ and the US Attorney community, the committee comprises the FBI and National Security Division. As a consequence of increased lethal violence directed against the US government by sovereign citizens – for example, the killing of a half dozen police officers and three prevented major terrorist attacks involving movement members since 2010 – the FBI has labeled the network as domestic terrorism. A recent study about the sovereign citizens has also highlighted, the role of the movement's specific subculture with approximately 300,000 followers in the United States, which has increasingly become part of the mainstream political culture (Macnab 2016).

If one looks at the German NSU case and the role as well as the reasons for the authorities' failure (see [Chapters 5](#) and [6](#)), it becomes visible that a lack of adequate analysis capacity within the law enforcement and intelligence institutions can have devastating effects, as it provides opportunities for clandestine and organized militant groups to operate, network and prepare for attacks unnoticed. It is also noteworthy that the German Extreme Right has developed an equivalent of the sovereign citizens calling themselves Reichsbürger (Citizens of the Reich), who reject the legal and moral legitimacy of the German Federal Republic. Although so far they represent only a very marginal and non-violent subgroup of the German Far-Right, the events around PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident) and the refugee crisis have resulted in the wide dispersion of their main theories within the German mainstream political culture (Rathje 2014). Hence, although these forms of Right-Wing Extremism have been traditionally absent from the European context, they will most likely become more important in the future (see [Chapter 4](#)).

Studies on North American right-wing violence and terrorism have created a solid base for identifying the main characteristics of this form of political violence. Although with some major differences in culture, context and organizational structure, the North American extreme did have strong impacts on the German movement either in a personal form (e.g., Gary Lauck) or by acting as organizational idols and providing tactical blueprints (e.g., leaderless resistance, Ku Klux Klan, Hammerskin Nation, Aryan Nations). In many cases, German neo-Nazis have tried to mimic US groups and tactics or to personally connect with some of the leading right-wing extremists in the United States. One of the most important outcomes of the US-focused research is the identification of the role of violence for right-wing terrorists and the lack of communication related to terrorist acts, which certainly does apply in the German case as well. However, as will be seen later in this monograph, German right-wing terrorism generally displays a more strategic and organized character than seems to be

the case in the United States – with few noted exemptions.

In addition, many US studies on lone actor terrorism have provided valuable insights into that aspect of right-wing terrorism and will be discussed separately below.

## *Scandinavia*

A number of studies have produced some valuable insights – albeit outdated – about violence and terrorism from the Far-Right in Scandinavia. Most importantly the study by Tore Bjørgo (1997) described the Scandinavian extreme-right movement, groups and violent incidents in the late 1980s and early 1990s and analyzed several socio-biographic aspects related to right-wing radicalization, such as sympathy for the underdog position in relation to radical and violent opponents; protection against enemies and perceived threats; curiosity; excitement; opposition to the previous generation or to parents; a search for alternatives to family or parents; a search for friends or a community; a search for status or identity; and the tendency to be docile in friendships (Bjørgo 1997: 201–207). Although Bjørgo did not use a comprehensive concept or theory of (right-wing) terrorism (using it as an almost equivalent to racist violence), he highlighted 170 “terrorist-type” attacks between 1982 and 1992, including explosives, arson, armed attacks and other “pre-mediated attacks” involving real or potential threat of physical injury but excluding street violence, petty vandalism and threats (Bjørgo 1997: 74–75). Using case studies, such as a Danish Combat 18 group sending out nail bombs, a Norwegian neo-Nazi group plotting attacks against the government in 1997 and a detailed study about the Swedish White Aryan Resistance Movement (VAM) and its transition from a violent network to a media enterprise, Bjørgo drew several important lessons on the characteristics of Scandinavian right-wing militancy, for example, that violence appears to happen in waves influenced by the reaction of the social surroundings, that it is directed against a double (internal and external) set of enemies, and that the majority of perpetrators come from groups with low organizational and ideological outfit (Bjørgo 1997: 312–315). As Bjørgo applied Sprinzak’s theory of split-deligitimization to the Swedish VAM he found that it:

aptly describes VAM’s two main categories of enemies. However, VAM emphasised the “Zionist Occupied Government” as the main enemy, while Sprinzak claims that right-wing and racist terrorist groups normal focus on hated minority groups as their primary enemies and targets.

(Bjørgo 1997: 190)

Other studies have broadened the picture about the role of economic influences for the electoral success of radical right-wing parties in Scandinavia (Bjørklund 2007) or male rites de passage in becoming a right-wing offender (Kimmel 2007). But in general, academic studies about the militant Extreme Right in Scandinavia have almost exclusively been limited to the 1990s (e.g., Fangen 1998, 1999, 2001; Lööw 1995, 1996, 1998).

Of course the Breivik attacks in 2011 sparked a surge in studies and publications about Breivik's background and lone actor terrorism, focusing on for example, the psychiatric and legal aspects (Melle 2013), the tactical characteristics of Breivik's attack and lone actor terrorism (Pantucci 2011), Breivik's fragile masculinity (Richards 2014), and the importance of social movements' radical rhetoric for lone actor terrorists (Berntzen & Sandberg 2014). The most extensive and recent study, Hemmingby and Bjørgo (2015), which used unique material from the court trial and other sources, showed that Breivik was indeed constrained in a dynamic process through his ideology in regard to choosing targets and his modes of operation. As will become clear later in this present study, right-wing terrorists very rarely use indiscriminate force in order to produce mass casualties; this is strongly supported by Hemmingby and Bjørgo's research. What is more, Hemmingby and Bjørgo's work is one of the very few analyses of right-wing terrorism that is based on primary data. The Breivik attacks have had a strong impact on research, inspiring a number of studies and publications, while in Germany (and internationally), the NSU case has not had the same effect. This suggests that the broad academic interest in the Breivik attacks was more focused on the aspect of lone actor terrorism than on right-wing terrorism as such. Another long-term impact on the research landscape by the Breivik attacks was the decision of the Norwegian government to fund a new Center for Research on Extremism: The Extreme Right, Hate Crime and Political Violence (C-REX), which aims to be a cross-disciplinary center for the study of right-wing extremist violence and to become Europe's leading center for research on Right-Wing Extremism in particular and extremism in general. The center will start working in early 2016.

## ***Russia***

There has been considerable research conducted on the post-Soviet Far-Right movement. Most studies however, have looked at the development and electoral successes of right-wing parties after communism's collapse (e.g., Cheles, Ferguson & Vaughan 1995; Laqueur 1993; Pain 2007; Parland 2004; Schneider 1995; Umland 2005). Non-Russian language research has looked at the post-Soviet extreme right-wing movement through different lenses. While some have focused on the transformation process as a cause of radicalism (Beichelt & Minkenberg 2002) and on fascist traditions as such (Laqueur 1993), others have compared the situation in Russia with for example post-First World War Germany (Shenfield 2001). In general, it was observed that Right-Wing Extremism in Russia experienced a thematic shift from anti-Western to white racists and anti-immigration agendas (Laruelle 2010), which could also be seen in the change of Russian extreme right-wing web content (Zuev 2010). Several reasons have been cited as for the cause of this development, for example, post-communist

authoritarianism and global economic development (Laryš & Mareš 2011). It is also widely accepted that the Russian government's weak response towards the rise of more militant right-wing groups in the early 2000s has provided political opportunities for formal organizations to interact and join forces with violent skinhead groups and local community based movements (Varga 2008). As in other countries, the Russian Far-Right is not homogenous and consists of numerous different groups and styles. According to Laryš and Mareš (2011) the most important ones are unorganized individuals, short-term local mass movements evolving around ethnic conflicts, violent youth gangs and uniformed paramilitary structures (including terrorist groups). All these groups seem to be united by their use of Russian nationalism and imperialism as their tradition. However, Laryš and Mareš (2011) also observed an internal ideological clash over the question of Russian inimitability, as well as an organizational split between Russian paganist groups and Orthodox oriented right-wing extremists. Referring to Russian studies, Laryš and Mareš (2011) also point out the two major segments of the Far-Right movement: first, the focus on national patriotic, new right, and skinhead groups in the 1990s; and second, the spread of white racism and Orthodox fundamentalism since 2000. As for the micro-level causes, it was argued that the conflicts in Chechnya, the migration from the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as economic uncertainty, the collapse of the educational system, the lack of government interest, unemployment, the general living situation, alcoholism and poverty might have played a strong role (Laryš & Mareš 2011). This, however, only seems to fit for the first generation of right-wing extremists described by Laryš and Mareš as poor adolescents from the working classes. Today, the authors have observed a much more diversified membership made up of what they call the "former Soviet middle class" (Laryš & Mareš 2011: 7), for example, students between 15–17 involved in violent youth gangs targeting mostly ethnic minorities, left-wing activists, foreigners and homosexuals.

Based on the various violent right-wing incidents in Russia (e.g., c.450 right-wing motivated killings between 2004 and 2010, Laryš & Mareš 2011: 10) research on the Russian Extreme Right has provided valuable insights into different types of right-wing crimes and group structures (Laryš & Mareš 2011), such as ad hoc hate crimes, large-scale mass pogroms organized by right-wing organizations around individual conflicts and organized violence (paramilitary branches of existing extremist organizations, violent street gangs and terrorist groups). Terrorist incidents, such as the bomb attack on the Cherkizovsky Market in Moscow 2006, attempted bomb attacks on a McDonald's restaurant in 2005, as well as attacks on police stations, railways and the live broadcast of executions (Laryš & Mareš 2011: 146–150), show the escalation of violence and radicalization process of the Russian Far-Right, which can be compared with the situation in Germany since 2011. It is noteworthy that the strategic concepts behind these acts of violence have been framed as 'counter-state terror' with the goal "to destabilise the state system and to induce panic in society, which according to theorists of

counter-state terror, will lead to a neo-Nazi revolution” (Laryš & Mareš 2011: 149–150). This approach is similar to what has been called a ‘strategy of tension’ used by Italian, Belgian and German right-wing terrorists (e.g., see Jenkins 1990).

### *Other countries*

Only a small number of articles and chapters have been published about right-wing terrorism in other countries or contexts such as Belgium (Jenkins 1990), South Africa (Welsh 1995), Puerto Rico (Atiles Osoria 2012), Israel (Sprinzak 1986, 1987) and Italy (Ferracuti & Bruno 1981; Porta 1992). Especially the Italian case needs to be highlighted here. Being the country with the oldest neofascist movement in Europe and experiencing numerous highly intense right-wing terrorist attacks (Hoffman 1982: 1–6), the number and quality of academic studies about the topic is limited if we exclude the theoretical and philosophical publications on the nature of fascism in general. Directly after the end of the Second World War, the Movimento Sociale Italiano (Italian Socialist Movement, MSI) was founded in December 1946, aiming to revive a Mussolini style neo-fascism through elections (Hoffman 1982). After its disbandment, the party reorganized as the Alleanza Nazionale in 1995 and became a coalition partner of the first and second Berlusconi governments. Having ideologically inspired and covertly supported numerous more militant right-wing extremist groups, one of the most important neo-fascist terrorist groups, Ordine Nuovo (New Order), was founded in 1953 by an MSI leading member. This group was suspected to be responsible for the 1969 bombing of a bank in Milan (killing 16 and injuring 81 people) and a bomb attack on a Turin–Rome train in April 1973 until it was banned in 1973 (Hoffman 1982: 3). After its prohibition Ordine Nuovo reorganized as Ordine Nero (Black Order) and merged with numerous smaller neofascist groups. Again, a number of attacks were attributed to this successor network, such as the May 1974 bombing of a left-wing rally in Brescia (killing eight and wounding eighty-five people) and a bomb attack of a train in August 1974 (killing twelve and wounding forty-eight people). It is noteworthy that Ordine Nero – in stark contrast to other right-wing terrorist groups – issued a statement after that train attack claiming that they were fighting for the return of National Socialism to Italy (Hoffman 1982: 3). Another smaller right-wing terrorist cell, Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari (Armed Revolutionary Nucleus, NAR) appeared in 1977 and surpassed Ordine Nero as the most active and lethal group in Italy. Twenty-five terrorist acts between 1977 and 1982 are attributed to this group including the Bologna main train station bombing in 1980 (killing eightysix and injuring 270 people).

Historically the parliamentary Extreme Right was paralleled almost since the end of the Second World War by an extra-parliamentary strand focusing on revolutionary and terrorist actions (Ferraresi 2012). Not unlike the German case, militant underground right-wing

terrorist organizations have developed a life of their own, with more or less detached ideologies, an autonomous membership and their own goals. Although personal and strategic overlapping existed, the militant clandestine Extreme Right in both countries have remained deeply skeptical about right-wing parties which actively participated in the democratic system. Italian right-wing terrorism after the Second World War came in three chronological phases according to Ferraresi (2012). Between 1950 and 1960 ‘historical groups’ emerged, which means nothing more than the detachment of the violent Far-Right from the MSI. In the second phase, the ideology of ‘strategy of tension’ was developed between the late 1960s and mid-1970s followed by a wave of so-called “armed spontaneity” between 1975 until the early 1980s when most of the organized militant groups were neutralized by the government. In recent years, Italy has experienced a resurgence of organized neofascism, such as the subcultural movement Casa Pound (Froio & Gattinara 2015) and even more militant underground networks. It seems that like in Italy, right-wing terrorist groups have been successful in creating a strong brand or mythical tradition connected to their activities, which could be seen in December 2012, when the Italian authorities detected a countrywide militant neo-fascist network. Out of an estimated fifty neo-fascists, fourteen suspects were arrested and charged with planning to assassinate a number of politicians simultaneously, attack train stations, government buildings and the revenue service (ANSA 2012; Caporale 2012; Spiegel 2012). Aiming to overthrow the democratic order in Italy, the group called itself Eversione Nera (Black Upheaval) and was active in at least eighteen Italian cities. Another title used by activists from the group in social media was ‘New Order’ (Ordine Nuovo) (Corrierre 2012).

Nevertheless, one aspect worth exploring here in more detail is a specific right-wing terrorist strategy or doctrine coined by Italian neo-fascists and researchers as a ‘strategy of tension’ (Bale 1994; Drake 1992; Ferraresi 2012). With this concept, Italian right-wing terrorists are dedicated to “inciting violence and disorder so as to create the state of anarchy, from which public demand for the restoration of law and order will spring and enable the neo-fascists to assume power and govern Italy as a totalitarian state” (Hoffman 1982: 2). Having been developed in the 1960s, this strategy was a direct reaction to the widespread public support for left-wing political parties at that time. An unofficial coalition between some government representatives, police, intelligence and private business members with militant neo-fascists attempted to create a theoretical basis for staging a *coup d’état* from the Extreme Right. Chaos and panic created by terrorists was supposed to give the government a reason to reduce civil liberties and restore ‘law and order’ (Ferraresi 2012: 116–147).

The similarity to the Russian concept of ‘counter-state terror’ is obvious, which also aims to destabilize the political system and to cause panic in order to achieve a “neo-Nazi revolution” (Laryš & Mareš 2011: 149–150). Similar reasoning has been used partially by German, Belgian (Jenkins 1990) and US right-wing terrorists. However, the strategy of tension requires high intensity attacks with a destabilizing or panic inciting effect. Also the availability of right-wing

parties not connected to the attack and seen as credible political forces must be provided to the public. Low intensity attack such as the NSU's killing series in combination with a politically insignificant NPD party, which in addition never gained the status of a credible political entity, basically nullifies any theoretical effect implemented in the strategy of tension or counter-state terror doctrines. Nevertheless, these strategic concepts remain important inspirations for the militant Extreme Right today and illustrate the level of strategic thinking and goals, even without any strong publicity regarding the actual perpetrator.

Another aspect of the studies in right-wing terrorism is that they traditionally concentrate on 'classical' right-wing terrorism in the form of neo-Nazi, racist or white supremacy groups, although some scholars have argued the basic dynamic could be applied to ideologically different groups, such as the Jewish Defence League, as well (Baumel 1999).

### ***Lone actors and the Far-Right***

It has been noted by several scholars (e.g., Adams & Roscigno 2005; Chermak et al. 2013; Kaplan 1997; Michael 2003) that the Extreme Right has not just developed strategic concepts based on small unit or lone actor tactics (e.g., leaderless resistance) but also – at least in the United States – shown a strong use of these tactics in reality. Whether or not this is due to a lack of organizational skills (e.g., see Michael 2003: 125), many studies have shown that lone actor terrorism is the most important tactic for the American Extreme Right. Perliger's (2012: 121) dataset, for example, shows that 54 percent of all the 4,420 incidents between 1990 and 2012 were committed by single perpetrators and 20 percent by two-person groups. The Southern Poverty Law Center looking at sixty-three incidents between April 2009 and February 2015 found that 74 percent of the attacks were carried out by lone actors (SPLC 2015: 9). Although the true 'aloneness' of those terrorists was also debated in other contexts (e.g., in the United Kingdom, see Gable & Jackson 2011) leading to an extensive academic debate about the definition of a 'lone wolf' (and other related terms for the phenomenon, e.g., see Gill 2015: 11), additional international studies seem to support that notion. Analyzing 198 lone actor attacks, Spaaij (2011) found that right-wing actors constituted the second largest category (17 percent), next to attacks in which the perpetrator's ideological conviction remains unknown. A similar study of 119 lone actors found that 34 percent had an extreme right-wing background (Gill, Horgan & Deckert 2014) and a subsequent, more detailed analysis by Gill (2015) of 111 European and American lone actor terrorists showed that right-wing attackers posed the largest group (39 percent), before al-Qaeda inspired (34 percent). So it seems that – albeit far from exclusively right-wing – lone actor terrorism seems to be a highly preferred tactic of right-wing terrorism. [Chapter 7](#), looking at the metrics of right-wing terrorism bringing in the German perspective, mainly supports that view too. In consequence, a number

of studies have looked at the special characteristics of Far-Right lone actor attacks and homicides either in relation to non-right-wing homicides (Gruenewald 2011; Gruenewald, Chermak & Freilich 2013b) and to organized right-wing extremist groups (Deloughery, King & Asal 2013; Gruenewald, Chermak & Freilich 2013a). In the first case, the major findings reveal that Far-Right lone actor attacks have significantly decreased since the early 2000s (with a total number of ninety-six homicides between 1990 and 2008), have been perpetrated by a group much more likely to display mental health issues (40 percent) and have targeted mostly unknown strangers (Gruenewald et al. 2013b). There has been no identifiable correlation between lone actor attacks in general and violent hate crimes (Deloughery et al. 2013). In relation to homicides perpetrated by organized right-wing groups, lone right-wing actors are in most variables not significantly different. They appear to be less involved in extremism, meaning movement-related activities, and to rely less on material to self-radicalize than expected; they are more likely to display mental health issues, and – not surprisingly – live alone (Gruenewald et al. 2013a: 77). They also seem to target government and military installations more frequently and are older on average (Gruenewald et al. 2013a: 80). Capellan (2015) – comparing ideological driven shooters with non-ideological ones – showed that regarding personal profile, extremists do not differ significantly from non-extremist. However, extremists typically lack a precipitating event or crisis and have higher levels of planning and preparation (training and research about target). Extremists are also more likely to leak information about the attack plans (Capellan 2015: 402). Compared with other lone actor terrorists (jihadi or single issue), right-wing terrorists are significantly more likely to have previous military experience, work in construction, interact face to face with a wider network and are less likely to receive help or be part of any control and command structure (Gill 2015: 124).

These lone actor studies have more or less pictured profiles of right-wing extremists seemingly detached (but not uninfluenced) by right-wing groups maybe because of mental health issues and a tendency to focus on government related targets, both of which would increase the risks of detection and interference by government authorities for organized right-wing groups (see also Gill 2015: 107). This picture does not fit into a conscious strategy of leaderless resistance by the Far-Right, more likely a concept designed to fit a certain type of activist that would act alone anyway and to label the occurring violence as part of a ‘master plan.’ Looking at the phenomenon in a similar way Joosse (2015) describes the concept as a:

rhetorical construct, a meaning-conferring ‘ideology of effervescence’ that lifts the spirits of both movement progenitors who advocate the strategy as well as incipient lone wolves who consider responding to their exhortations.

(Joosse 2015: 1)

Also showing how this rhetoric evolves in the interaction between activists and their opponents, the causal connection between lone actors and leaderless resistance concepts and



the actual reality of lone actor attacks is even more complex.

## ***Social movement theory***

Coming from a very different strand of academic literature, Donatella della Porta (2013) has compared Italian right-wing terrorism with German and Italian left-wing terrorism, Spanish Basque ethnonationalism, and al-Qaeda as part of her studies in clandestine political violence and Social Movement Theory. Looking at specific causal factors and mechanisms in the evolution of clandestine political violence (e.g., escalating policing, competitive escalation, militant networks and ideological encapsulation) this approach has not been applied so far on a wider scale including more empirical data from the Extreme Right. However, this way of analyzing terrorism and violence has yielded some theoretical insights into the tactical behavior of these groups but not touched the Extreme Right. In his approach to “White Supremacist Terror (WST),” Pete Simi (2010) did use some of these insights, especially the ‘cycles of contention’ approach, analyzing societal influences on violent groups’ tactics (including the use of terrorism). In Simi’s view, several of these factors currently present in the United States would make the risk of right-wing terrorism more likely, such as changing demographics (immigration), economic distress, international conflicts and cultural changes (2010: 262–266). One advantage of Social Movement Theory’s approach to ‘contentious politics’ is to get a more accurate perspective on the relational aspects of violence, that is, the constant actions and reactions between opposing groups, sometimes locking in a mechanism of escalation. Right-wing terrorism is especially embedded in its surrounding environments and permanently exchanges with that ‘target society’ manpower, skills, political topics and infrastructure in an attempt to influence and take over the ‘positive’ target society and destroy the negative one. This mechanism of interaction has been described recently and was termed a ‘contrast society’ by Koehler (2015), who also employed elements from Social Movement Theory.

## ***Summary***

Summarizing, the main drawback of the existing research on right-wing political violence and terrorism is the lack of coherent and empirically based studies. Right-wing terrorism has remained a marginally studied phenomenon and is highly under-researched. This imbalance within terrorism (and related) research has created a danger of wrong perceptions, policies and threat assessments (see Simi 2010). Those few studies going beyond historical descriptions of groups and incidents, attempting to analyze the links and dynamics between right-wing groups, ideologies and violence have drawn a very mixed picture, mostly because they focus

on specific groups or subcultures and countries.

Looking at the similarities and differences between the country specific studies, it is striking that right-wing terrorism in general seems to operate in the gray zone between subcultural contention (and rebellion) and strategic long-term oriented violence typically – so most research suggests – deploying (whether conscious or not) small unit tactics (e.g., lone actors, small cells, dynamic networks), which makes it difficult to grasp the phenomenon for observers. Although in recent years a renewed development of larger groups and violent Extreme Right movements based on anti-immigration or anti-government topics is visible, the major mode of operation for right-wing terrorists remains lone actor or small cell tactics. It can be expected that more lone actors and small cells will develop from within these larger movements and a clear escalation of violence towards terrorism is recognizable in Germany, the United States and Russia, albeit on different motives and in varying forms. Explosives, arson and target assassinations directed against minorities, government officials and police are a common trait of right-wing terrorism across the world.

Nevertheless, German right-wing terrorism seems to have been more strategic and organized compared with other countries. Although the United States and Russia have some organized right-wing terrorist groups (e.g., the Order in the USA), they do remain comparatively extraordinary phenomena in their respective movements. In both the USA and Russia, the largest share of violence and threat stems from violent racist youth gangs and lone actors, while in Germany a long history of well-equipped and trained paramilitary and clandestine, highly organized and ideologicalized extreme right-wing groups and cells exist. Although German groups and militant thinkers of the Far-Right have looked towards the USA for strategic inspiration, it seems that they have applied these concepts much more coherently than their role models overseas. Paradoxically in the United States, the legal free space for expression of right-wing or neo-Nazi conviction, which would be illegal in Germany, is paired with a much stricter repression of violence from the side of the authorities compared with Germany.

In addition, a number of scholars have not addressed the difference between hate crimes and terrorism, using the terms equally and in consequence treating every act of right-wing violence as an act of terrorism, although the relationship of these two concepts is much more complicated, as other research into the motives for hate crime offenders suggest (see McDevitt, Levin & Bennett 2002; and the detailed discussion in [Chapter 3](#)). Many European countries (and researchers) have on the other hand opted for separating the two terms, resulting in a major shift, which reports almost all right-wing violence as hate-crimes and not terrorism. As a consequence, some experts warned about a potential bias in Europe as well (see Engene 2011). Also the relationships between hate groups and lone actor right-wing violence remains unclear, as do the dynamics leading to the employment of terrorism by these groups and individuals, who are either portrayed by research as mentally troubled,

disorganized and unstrategic on the one hand or comparatively 'normal' and driven by commitment and ideological goals on the other. Moreover, most of the studies consider strategic organized right-wing violence to be outdated and do not expect a return of it in the future.

To sum up, a lack of empirical basis, comparative research and academic interest has led to a situation of widespread ignorance regarding a dangerous and lethal form of political violence, which Western societies are confronted with on a regular basis.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> [www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/todesopfer-rechter-gewalt](http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/todesopfer-rechter-gewalt).

<sup>2</sup> "Bekenntnisloser Umlenkungsterrorismus."

<sup>3</sup> Another classification by Simi (2010) is more detailed and identifies four types: Ku Klux Klan, Christian Identity sects, neo-Nazis and racist skinheads. Cf. Kaplan (1995: 46) suggesting: Ku Klux Klan groups, Christian Identity believers, Neo-Nazi groups, Reconstructed Traditions, Idiosyncratic sectarians and Single Issue Constituencies.

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## The definition problem

It became clear in the review of existing literature that research on right-wing terrorism and violence has been impeded by a number of factors, such as the geographical or group and type focus. More importantly however, the confusion regarding the nature of right-wing terrorism stemming from a lack of clear definitions has blurred the lines between arguably different phenomena, such as ‘hate crimes,’ ‘terrorism’ or ‘political violence.’ The majority of previous works on the topic have not differentiated between those terms and treated every hate crime or incident of political violence as right-wing terrorism (see Perliger 2012: 85). In addition, most of these studies have not discussed the potentially essential differences regarding intent, effect, prerequisites, legal implications, strategy and the tactics behind those terms. It is safe to say that every act of right-wing terrorism is a form of right-wing violence, but not every act of right-wing violence can be labeled terrorism. To over- or under-conceptualize the nature of right-wing terrorism can have practical consequences leading to the wrong classification and reporting of incidents, over- or underestimation of the threat posed, wrong evaluations of other forms of terrorism, and the use of ineffective counter-measures. Furthermore, this might lead to terrorism threat risks being amplified or underplayed which can result in misallocation of funding, vis-à-vis the increase or decrease of counter-terrorism budgets.

This chapter discusses different aspects regarding the problem of defining ‘right-wing terrorism’ and introduces the working definition of this present study, which understands right-wing terrorism as the *use or threat of specific forms of middle to high distance violence (e.g. arson, explosives, shootings) executed on the ideological premise of inequality between human beings and in order to challenge the political status quo, – that is, the monopoly of force – through the act of violence as a form of psychological and physical warfare. Typical additional motives can be to demonstrate the authorities’ weakness, to cause chaos favoring ‘law and order’ based politics, frame left-wing groups and cause a government crack-down, annihilate key individuals of the ‘enemy,’ destroy infrastructure perceived to be vital to the enemy, prove the movement’s stamina to members, and gain political or social power through a reign of fear.*

### 3.1 Terrorism and right-wing terrorism as concepts

Only few scholars have offered specific definitions and concepts of right-wing terrorism so far. Ehud Sprinzak for example sees right-wing or 'particularistic' terrorism as a form of insurgent terrorism:

The terror organizations involved, usually right wing collectivities, vigilante groups or racist organizations, do not speak in the name of humanity. They are particularistic by their very nature and respond often to perceptions of insecurity and threats. They fight private wars against hostile ethnic communities, 'illegitimate' religious denominations, classes of undesired people or 'inferior races.' The enemies they feel threaten them are, variably, Jews, Arabs, Catholics, Blacks, Communists, homosexuals, foreign workers or other classes of 'inferior' human beings 'who want to get more than they deserve.'

(Sprinzak 1995: 17)

Kathleen Blee defined what she called "racial terrorism" as "terrorism undertaken by members of an organized White supremacist or pro-Aryan group against racial minorities to advance racial agendas" (Blee 2005b: 422). Pete Simi defined "White Supremacist Terrorism (WST)" as "the violent expression of a complex set of doctrines produced and communicated by white supremacist groups" (Simi 2010: 253). Heitmeyer offers a more complex concept of right-wing terrorism as:

a product of political interaction and the radicalization of other forms of threat-based right-wing attitudes and behaviour, such as opportunity-dependent violence by (youth) gangs, subcultural violence (such as that of skinhead groups), organized party-political Right extremist violence, and religiously oriented right-wing extremist group violence.

(Heitmeyer 2005: 142)

Finally, Ravndal defines right-wing terrorists as "non-state actors who strategically use or threaten violence to affect an audience beyond the immediate target to promote social inequality" (Ravndal 2015: 15). In this sense, most definitions have opted to rely on the fact that 'terrorist acts' perpetrated by 'right-wing extremists' would be sufficient to identify right-wing terrorism. Unfortunately, neither 'terrorism' nor 'Right-Wing Extremism' are unproblematic terms, which is one reason some scholars have chosen to use the concept of 'clandestine political violence' defined as "political violence in one of its most extreme forms: the perpetration of killings by small, underground groups (or even single individuals) oriented to (more or less clearly stated) political aims" (della Porta 2013: 2) instead and completely avoided the term terrorism. Arguing that terrorism would be "plagued by conceptual stretching" and variously addressing "means, aims and effects" the concept would be insufficient to "delimit a useful sociological concept" (della Porta 2013: 7). Pointing to the motivations to 'go underground' on the other hand, leaves aside various contextual aspects, such as the victim's perspective, political statements, effects on the target groups and the strategy of communication. Although 'clandestine political violence' tells us a lot about the

individual and group's decisions to engage in this form of violence, it does not provide enough insights into the effects and goals to understand and compare different types of terrorism. Nevertheless, it still remains valid that no unanimously accepted definition of terrorism exists and consequently a substantial amount of research and literature has focused on the nature, types and elements of terrorist structures and acts compared to other forms of political and non-political crime and violence. In his seminal study about definitions of terrorism, Alex Schmid (Schmid 2011: 74–76) collected and analyzed 109 definitions of terrorism, showing that the elements of violence, politics, fear and psychological effects are most commonly associated with terrorism. Resulting in the third revised, academic consensus definition Schmid defines terrorism as:

a doctrine about the presumed effectiveness of a special form or tactic of fear-generating, coercive political violence and, on the other hand, to a conspiratorial practice of calculated, demonstrative, direct violent action without legal or moral restraints, targeting mainly civilians and non-combatants, performed for its propagandistic and psychological effects on various audiences and conflict parties.

(Schmid 2011: 86)

Additional decisive elements of terrorism according to Schmid are: “a public threat based communication process”; “instilled fear, dread, panic or mere anxiety spread among those identifying, or sharing similarities, with the direct victims, generated by the terrorist act”; “victim-target differentiation”; “political motivation”; “the intent to terrorize a target population and achieving a favourable outcome” (Schmid 2011: 86). Applying Schmid's academic consensus definition of terrorism directly causes a number of essential problems when looking at right-wing terrorism. Right-wing extremists frequently target non-civilians such as police officers and military personnel, often do not seem to differentiate between victim and target, and (often) do not display a clear communication strategy. In addition – as has been noted previously – the political goals and intended outcome of the ‘coercion’ is unclear with most acts of right-wing violence leading to the widespread public assumption that for right-wing extremists the blunt use of force to annihilate a sometimes arbitrary opponent out of pure hate and aggression would be the main motivation. Indeed, that lack of political communication accompanying the violent act is common with right-wing violence (Breivik and Roof were clearly rare exceptions with their manifestos), which raises the question of how, if at all, right-wing extremists plan to communicate a political goal or even to generate fear in a group beyond the victim. For this reason some scholars have argued that the NSU could not be labeled as terrorist (e.g., Busch 2012) as the group did nothing to claim responsibility for their actions or state political goals. However, the group did produce a 15-minute DVD which used pictures of the crime scenes and intimate information about the killings to prove the NSU's responsibility and sarcastically mock the authorities and victims through its *Pink Panther* animation, including well-known music and rhymes (Pidd 2011; Spiegel 2011). Apart from a short line at the beginning, stating that “The NSU is a network of

comrades with the principle: deeds instead of words” (Pidd 2011; Welt 2011), there was no political statement or self-description in this video. This video was held back by the group for an unknown reason and mailed to several political and journalistic recipients after the group’s detection by the last surviving member – Beate Zschäpe – before turning herself in to the police. Similarly, most right-wing violent actors have not produced elaborate manifestos, notes claiming responsibility, or political explanations. Several key aspects need to be considered to understand this.

First, the main goal to create fear and terror among a certain target group does not necessarily require a statement tying the act of violence to a specific group. The act may indeed be self-explanatory, as, for example, in the bombing of a synagogue (Gensing 2012; Pfahl-Traugher 2012: 97). Indeed, the target group of a terrorist organization does not necessarily need to fear a certain ideology or political actor. For the perpetrator, it could be sufficient to create any kind of fear, for example of not being protected by the authorities and living under the constant threat of being indiscriminately targeted at any time. The NSU case supports this notion as the group deliberately used the same murder weapon, which triggered speculations within the public media about the killing series (labeled “kebab killings” by the press, see Fuchs 2012) and could mean the NSU used a non-specific communication showing the aggressor’s existence (by using the same weapon) and thereby trying to create a constant state of agony through insecurity among ethnic minorities in Germany and to maintain this state for as long as possible. Although all “terrorist acts are a means of communication” (Schmid, Jongman & Stohl 1988: 21), it is necessary to focus on “the calculated production of a state of extreme fear of injury and death, and [...] the exploitation of this emotional reaction to manipulate behaviour” (Schmid et al. 1988: 20), or in short, “the combination of the use of violence and the threat of more to come” (Schmid et al. 1988: 19) to differentiate terrorism from ‘ordinary’ crime. These aspects however, do not necessarily require a group to claim or explain the act of terrorism. According to Stefan Malthaner (2005), one has to distinguish between ‘positive’ (the group a terrorist actor wants to convince of the ‘righteous’ cause and win support) and ‘negative’ (the enemy group and object of the fear generating process) reference groups of terrorism (Borstel & Heitmeyer 2012; Malthaner 2005). ‘Claiming’ and ‘explaining’ then can only be understood as a process of negotiation between these two groups, induced by the terrorist group (through the act of terrorist violence). Terrorist groups wanting to advance a certain political or religious agenda through terrorist acts have to explain to the positive reference groups how these acts fit into the ideological framework, which might not be self-evident or might even be contrary to the public perception of the respective ideology and group’s goals. In order not to trigger the opposite effect – the positive reference group identifying with the victims and thereby rejecting the cause of the terrorist groups – explanations and claims have been used for example by left-wing, Islamist and ethno-separatist terrorists to communicate that their reasons and motives are justified. Indeed,

terrorism may satisfy “personal identification needs and other emotional needs such as revenge and a sense of potency and power” (Corrado 1981 quoted in: Schmid et al. 1988: 24). In this sense, the terrorists would act as ‘agents’ for the emotional needs of the positive reference group. In this understanding, terrorism might also aim to generate a ‘myth’ or ‘legend’ maintained by the terrorist group and acts strong enough to foster the belief of radical movement’s members in the efficacy of the movement. The abstract knowledge of being part of a movement, which is able to maintain a terrorist cell and thereby addresses every part of the violent and non-violent political spectrum of struggle might be an important additive to individual motivation and commitment. In the case of the NSU, it is known, for example, that abstract knowledge about the group was widely present within the German right-wing extremist movement and even in other European countries. In 2010, a notorious neo-Nazi music band (Gigi und die braunen Stadtmusikanten) released the song *Döner Killer* directly referring to the killing series and mocking the authority’s ignorance (Gensing 2011; Pfahl-Traugher 2012; Pidd 2011; Rafael 2012). Another band (Eichenlaub) dedicated a song explicitly to the clandestine group in 1999, celebrating the trio’s underground life. Referring to an interview published by the German magazine *Blood & Honour* in 2000 about the extensive debate within the movement about the trio, the band argued that – knowing the cell personally – the three would have good reasons for their approach (Radke 2011). The myth about a German underground cell even made its way to Italy, which caused the Italian intelligence to contact the German colleagues and inform them about Italian *Blood & Honour* skinheads exchanging stories about a clandestine German cell (Birkenstock 2012; Förster 2012; Stern 2012; Zeit 2012). Another theory regarding the (lack of) use of public communication by right-wing terrorists reflects upon the different cause–effect mechanism in comparison to the goals of left-wing or Islamist terrorism. Right-wing terrorists arguably might want to create a state of anarchy and disorder, which would cause a strong desire for law and order, propagated by right-wing parties (Hoffman 1982, 1986). This effect however, would be nullified by them publicly claiming responsibility for terrorist acts.

A second aspect to understanding the peculiar nature of right-wing terrorist communication strategies (or the lack thereof) is the special role played by violence in right-wing ideology. Although there are considerable differences within the family of Far-Right movements regarding tactical and strategic preferences, violence is among the major elements forming the ‘ideological kinship.’ As right-wing ideologies are essentially based on the notion of inequality between different groups of human beings tied to an assigned social and general value for humanity, violence of any form is not only a means to reach a certain political goal but also the core essence. Violence, incorporating the concept of ‘warrior,’ ‘political soldier,’ or the ‘struggle for existence of the Aryan race,’ is understood anthropologically by the Far-Right. Through the ritualization of violence and enemy concepts, reality is put into an interpreting framework, containing specific behavioral patterns for groups and individuals. Violence itself

has an almost spiritual and timeless value for the Extreme Right, separating the weak from the strong and right from wrong. With a cathartic function, violence dissolves the tension between ideological goals and realistic chances of achievement. Put simply, violence is the driving force of the natural order establishing the justified reign of the 'superior' over the 'inferior' races. Consequently, Right-Wing Extremism cannot be understood or separated from violence in any form. The annihilation of a specified enemy thereby is a core feature of these ideologies and defines right-wing identity (Gensing 2012; Hennig 1983), as well as the group communication and solidarity. This in turn seems absolutely self-evident and obvious to the members of the positive reference group of right-wing terrorism – not just to the members of the neo-Nazi movement, but also, in that case, to any person who would agree with the need for an armed defense against a broad notion of 'threat' from the 'foreign' outsider on the one hand or to the politically acceptable use of violence on the other. Every violent blow against an ethnic minority defined as part of the enemy threatening the 'racial purity' is automatically a blow against the governmental authority responsible for their protection and presence in the first place. Whoever does not understand the ideological – almost spiritual – value of violence automatically belongs to the enemy or the negative reference group, whereas anyone ascribing to this concept of violence would not need any further explanation from the terrorist group but would automatically support it. From the perspective of right-wing terrorism, the act of violence puts the perpetrator on a racial battlefield and automatically separates 'believers' from 'non-believers,' even across specified political groups and movements. The level of organizational tactical control and coherence in fact might be completely irrelevant as the degree of planning and preparation can be very low, as long as the intended effect against the enemy is established. Consequently, the differentiation between 'spontaneous acts of violence' and 'terrorist acts strategically planned by groups' is blurred automatically as the Far-Right employs uncoordinated single acts out of a terrorist motivation. Indeed, executed violence by the Far-Right – with terrorism as the most severe form – should be understood not only as a stand-alone statement, but also as the highest degree of substantiation and concretization of the ideology itself, or in essence: right-wing terrorism and violence means complete ideological freedom for right-wing extremists, incorporating the maximum degree of efficacy in regard to the constraint of the enemy's freedom. In an interview by a right-wing extremist magazine in 1999, one German right-wing clandestine group, calling itself a National Revolutionary Cell, referred to individual terrorist attacks as "personal acts of liberation" (Prantl 2010). Coming back to the lack of communication, right-wing violence is self-explanatory and self-evident for the perpetrator and the positive reference group. The act of attacking and destroying the enemy during an act of war is a simultaneous benefit for right-wing perpetrators together with generating fear and demonstrating the movement's power to its 'foes,' which in turn does not require a sophisticated communication strategy as the attack itself is evidence of the victim's powerlessness. This makes it especially hard to legally and



practically determine whether or not an act of violence from the Far-Right can be seen as a 'terrorist' act or not. Focusing on the victims' perspective does not help here as they naturally tend to view the Far-Right's will to annihilate racial enemies as even more terrorizing than violent acts perpetrated for a more or less rational political goal. This does not mean, however, that right-wing terrorists do not pursue political goals – they simply do not need any additional form of communication (e.g., 'ethnic minorities are to leave Germany,' 'democratic authorities do not possess the monopoly of force'). In many cases additional communication would even be counter-productive, which was reflected in right-wing strategic manuals. The concept of 'leaderless resistance' by the neo-Nazi Louis Beam, the *Turner Diaries*, the *Practical Guide to the Strategy and Tactics of Revolution* by David Myatt and the *Way Forward* by Max Hammer are but a few examples of strategic models either directly advising against public communication to explain the act of violence, or implying the uselessness thereof and focusing on the 'galvanizing' power of violence (meaning the 'battle,' 'fight' or 'struggle'). Nevertheless, many acts of right-wing violence – especially those considered to be 'youth counterculture terrorism' by Sprinzak (1995) – do in fact include a form of political communication. On the local or individual level, right-wing groups often act visibly through a uniform apparel (combat boots, bomber jackets), insignia and vocal acclamation. They mark their territory through graffiti, posters and stickers, they publish 'target lists' online and use the full spectrum of psychological and physical form of terror and violence to intimidate their respective target groups with the aim of expulsing these groups and individuals, conquering geographical space (in Germany called 'national liberated zones' by Far-Right extremists), and annihilating the enemy. Of course not every act of violence by members of the Extreme Right can be counted as terrorism as the boundaries are indeed fluent.

### [3.2 Hate crimes and terrorism](#)

As noted above in [Chapter 2](#), the heterogeneous and partially unclear use of the labels 'hate crimes' or 'terrorism' has been one major cause for the difficulties in establishing a clear definition and adequate assessment of right-wing terrorism. In fact many incidents of right-wing terrorism have been analyzed under the concept of hate crimes (e.g., see Jacobs & Potter 1998), which does share a number of parallel characteristics with terrorism (Deloughery, King & Asal 2012; Green, McFalls & Smith 2001; Hamm 1993; Herek, Cogan & Gillis 2002; Krueger & Malečková 2002). Hate crimes – defined as "a criminal act that is motivated by a bias toward the victim or victims real or perceived identity group" (Blazak 2011: 245) – for example include the desire to "terrorize a broader group" (Green et al. 2001: 483) or create a specific intimidation, for example, through hate speech, which has been suggested as simply

another manifestation of terrorism (Blazak 2011; Herek et al. 2002). The similarities between hate crimes and terrorism have led some scholars to call hate crimes a “close cousin” of terrorism as:

the target of an offense is selected because of his or her group identity, not because of his or her individual behaviour, and because the effect of both is to wreak terror on a greater number of people than those directly affected by violence.

(Krueger & Malečková 2002: 28)

However, other scholars disagree and have argued that the differences between hate crimes and terrorism outweigh each other – arguing that the two are in fact two distinct forms of violence more akin to “distant relatives” than “close cousins” (Deloughery et al. 2012) based on differences such as lack of planning and the spontaneous nature of hate crimes, the downward nature of hate crimes (minority group as target) and the lack of publicity. Mark Hamm (1993: 107) showed that right-wing violence can actually be both a hate crime and terrorism, depending on the level of political and social objectives, which would be – according to Hamm – a prerequisite for terrorism and be missing in hate crimes. Other studies have also noted some phenomenological problems in assessing right-wing violence as terrorism:

In other words, while the political motivation of the act is detectable, how it is supposed to impact the broader political discourse is much less clear; for this reason the symbolic element identifiable in the majority of terrorist campaigns is absent from a significant number of far-right violent attacks.

(Perliger 2012: 85)

However, it has also been argued that hate crimes – as message crimes such as terrorism – need not involve the perpetrators claiming responsibility on their own as the crimes themselves contain the message and usually receive wide publicity (Mills, Freilich & Chermak 2015). Reviewing the differences and similarities between hate crimes and terrorism, Mills et al. (2015: 6) maintain that:

hate crimes attack society at large by attacking its norms, targeting dearly held values of equality, liberty, and basic human rights. Such a conception of hate crimes aligns them with the “upward” nature of terrorism, refuting that hate crimes are only a downward crime.

(Mills et al. 2015: 6)

Showing statistically positive associations between hate crime and terrorism on the US county level, Mills et al. (2015) contest Deloughery et al.’s (2012) claim with the conclusion that “hate crime and terrorism may be more akin to close cousins than distant relatives” (Mills et al. 2015: 24). In consequence, it seems reasonable to assume that hate crimes and (right-wing) terrorism do share important characteristics and, to a certain level, are indeed linked with each other.

Although on the one hand right-wing violence has received an own category with hate

crimes making it theoretically possible to raise the perception of the threat, it did on the other hand seem to have caused the opposite: by stretching the term terrorism and using it in parallel with hate crimes without discrimination this actually has led to significant under-reporting, under-investigation and lack of prosecution as well as lowering the threat perceptions (Engene 2011; Freilich & Chermak 2013; King 2007; King, Messner & Baller 2009). As a result of this unclear terminology, hate crimes – used to describe right-wing terrorism and vice versa – have been called a lesser or poor man's terrorism compared with 'real and dangerous' terrorism, for example, that perpetrated by jihadi groups (e.g., see Mills et al. 2015; Deloughery et al. 2012). This development was criticized by Simi (2010), although he also did not propose a clear terminology, which will be given in this chapter. Right-wing criminal activities – as is the case with any other deviant or radical milieu – stretches over many different types and forms and needs to be categorized to understand and perceive the extent of each type. By far not every criminal act committed by right-wing extremists is automatically motivated and underlined by their ideology. It is necessary to include the basic intentions behind the crimes, although a departure from that approach has been suggested in order to focus solely on the victims instead (Blee 2005a). This would, as a consequence, weaken the definitional value of most crime categories and even cross burnings or swastika graffiti could then be called acts of terrorism. If, for example, one core characteristic of terrorism would be the fear created within the group beyond the victim, every single crime could be labeled as terrorism. When reported through the press or friends, burglary or fraud for example always causes fear of becoming a possible victim in the future as well, even if this was not at all the intent of the perpetrator. In order to understand the nature of right-wing crimes, it is therefore necessary to focus on the perpetrators intents.

### 3.3 A typology of right-wing criminal activities

*Non-political crimes.* Although it might be argued that every crime committed by a right-wing extremist is actually a symptom of a general rejection of the mainstream society, its laws and authority, at least legally speaking, many of the felonies are not displaying any ideological motivation. Surprisingly few academic studies about the non-ideological crimes by right-wing extremists have been conducted so far but those existing indicate that although Far-Right parties and movements have traditionally been advocating 'law and order' politics (e.g., see Ignazi 1995) their members are often multiple offenders and career criminals. North Rhine-Westphalia is the first German state, for example, that has started to collect information about non-political crimes committed by right-wing extremists in 2012. The results of the first statistical evaluation in 2013 showed that for every known politically motivated crime right-

wing extremists committed, there were two non-political ones ranging across many different types of crimes such as theft, burglary, harassment, criminal assault or extortion (Spiegel 2013). Although the classification of whether a crime is seen as politically motivated or not is done by the police and could be subject to bias or incomplete information, this statistical evaluation at least shows that there is indeed a high number of 'regular' crimes being committed by right-wing extremists. Reviewing the Boston Police Department's hate crime files between 1991 and 1992, McDevitt et al. (2002) support that view and show that the vast majority (66 percent) of the perpetrators were actually motivated by thrill seeking and boredom and not by an ideological mission. As a consequence, even violent crimes can be committed by right-wing extremists without having a political or ideological motive, and this needs to be taken into account when assessing right-wing crimes. It is, for example, well known that right-wing extremist prison gangs such as the Aryan Brotherhood (AB), the Nazi Low Riders (NLR) and Public Enemy No. 1 (PEN1) are heavily engaged in drug trafficking, prostitution, identity theft and other forms of organized crime including heavy violence (e.g., see Belt & Doyle 1998; Blazak 2009; SPLC 2015) for the sole purpose of raising funds. Drug trade – especially with methamphetamines – has also been known to be used as a financial resource for German extreme right-wing groups, who also engaged in heavy violence against political opponents at the same time (Bley 2015; MDRSachsen 2013).

In 2013, the Austrian police detected and arrested a group of neo-Nazis calling themselves Objekt 21, who were controlling large parts of the red light milieu along the Austrian–German border and trafficked drugs (Brecht 2013; Reuters 2013). One year later, in June 2014, the multiple offender and well-known militant neo-Nazi, Bernd Tödter, registered an official association named Sturm 18 (Storm 18). Until the association was prohibited in October 2015, members of the group had committed more than 300 crimes including the rape of minor children, violent abuses, physical assaults and many more of which most were not directed against political opponents, the government or other 'enemies' such as ethnic minorities (dpa 2015b; Feldmann & Meyer 2014).

There have also been well documented cases of homicides perpetrated by neo-Nazis without a political motive. For example, on October 7, 2003, the right-wing extremist Thomas Adolf (born in 1958 and a former left-wing extremist, as well as a foreign mercenary by his own account), shot and killed a lawyer together with his wife and daughter in Overath (North Rhine-Westphalia). Adolf was aided by his girlfriend. Although active in the local militant neo-Nazi scene, the subsequent trial revealed that the main motive for choosing the victim was the fact that Adolf had lost a lawsuit with his landlord and became indebted with €10,000. Subsequently, Adolf wanted to rob the murder victim and revenge the lost lawsuit, as the lawyer (the victim) had represented Adolf's landlord in court (afp 2004; Bönisch 2003). Another case of three murders between 1995 and 1996 exemplifies the different motivational aspects and shifts that violent right-wing extremists can make and which need to be taken into

account when classifying a crime. Born in 1969, the highly violent neo-Nazi Thomas Lemke committed three murders with different motives. On July 16, 1995, he killed the twenty-six-year-old Dagmar Kohlmann and forced his girlfriend at the time to participate with the goal of producing incriminating evidence against her. Lemke was afraid his girlfriend would pass on information about him to the police, so he decided to force her into the murder in order to blackmail her. The victim was chosen randomly from Lemke's wider circle of friends. The second killing happened on February 3, 1996, when Lemke raped and stabbed the twenty-three-year-old Patricia Wright to death because she was identified by Lemke as a left-wing activist. Finally, on March 15, 1996, Lemke shot and killed his former comrade Martin Kemming, who had reported other crimes perpetrated by Lemke to the police. Kemming was killed because he was seen as a traitor to the movement and to Lemke especially (Friedrichsen 1997; Loose 1997). While the last two killings were motivated by Lemke's ideology and are right-wing crimes, the first one was simply based on criminalizing and blackmailing his girlfriend.

Nevertheless, right-wing terrorist groups and actors regularly use 'ordinary' crime – such as bank robberies, theft and drug trafficking – to financially support their clandestine operations, to buy weapons and explosives, and to pay for cars, flats and forged documents. These cases of terrorist-supporting crime need to be classified differently of course, as the underlying motivation for these crimes is highly ideologically, that is, to make a clandestine struggle against the enemy possible.

*Right-wing crimes (including non-violent hate crimes).* Depending on the legal situations in the countries analyzed, many ideologically motivated right-wing crimes are in fact not violent but involve the illegal display of right-wing symbols and propaganda, concerts, rallies and other activities. As the German legal code, for example, outlaws the public display of symbols identified with anti-democratic and anti-constitutional organizations (§86 and §86a German criminal code; e.g., the swastika, SS-runes), to deny the Holocaust or to gather for a right-wing concert without registration, most crimes in the police statistics are so-called 'propaganda delicts' ('Propagandadelikte'), which are non-violent illegal acts of production, distribution or the public display of banned symbols and content. Until January 2016, it was, for example, also illegal to sell copies of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in Germany, which was a typical propaganda delict. After the book's copyright had run out in 2016, it became legal again to sell it in Germany. In the year 2014, for example, German right-wing extremists were known to have committed a total of 17,020 criminal offenses, of which 65 percent belonged to the category of propaganda delicts and 20.2 percent were damage to property (BMI 2015: 2). Of course other countries such as the United States or Great Britain do not criminalize the public display of certain symbols or opinions. A number of countries, however, have implemented laws prohibiting hate speech, discrimination or the incitement of hatred (e.g., United Kingdom, France, Sweden and Denmark).

*Right-wing violence.* Violent crimes committed by right-wing extremists include a number of possible ideologically grounded motivations but are not necessarily hate crimes, that is, crimes motivated by a bias towards the identity group of the victim (e.g., see Blazak 2011). One special form of right-wing violence which is not a 'hate crime' per se is the violent reaction towards defectors and 'dropouts' who leave right-wing groups or internal violent group pressure against 'deviant' behavior. One right-wing extremist group in Germany, for example, has been known to punish eating non-German food by forcing the culprit to do push ups while being whipped (Sundermann 2013). Numerous cases of severely threatening, assaulting and murdering defectors are known publicly (Aho 1988). So far only very few studies have tried to distinguish between right-wing hate violence and other motivations behind violent acts. One study conducted in the late 1980s (Kalinowsky 1986: 36) analyzing criminal proceedings and court verdicts against right-wing extremists found that out of twenty-five right-wing heavy violent crimes committed between 1978 and 1982, five were directed against former movement members; this type of crime is called Feme (kangaroo courts) in German. Other forms of ideologically motivated non-bias violence can be seen in violent crimes committed against female partners, for example, because they disobeyed the gender role prescribed by the group's ideology or against people posing a threat to the group. In 2001, for example, five German neo-Nazi skinheads tried to torch to death a twenty-two-year-old man who pressed charges (or was about to) against one of the skinheads. The victim survived with great luck (Jansen 2001). In another case from March 2014, a German special operation police unit had to disarm and arrest a well-known neo-Nazi because he had attacked his girlfriend with a machete (Buntrock 2014). As discussed above, violence plays a significant role within right-wing ideologies and groups, especially those centered on a culture of hypermasculinity such as skinheads. Not only ideologically defined enemies can be targets of violent acts but also fellow group members, women, or any other person giving sufficient reason.

*Right-wing violent hate crimes.* Arguably, most violent right-wing crimes belong to the category of violent hate crimes, that is, the physical assault or killing of individuals on the basis of a bias towards the victim's identity. Although these violent crimes do indeed include creating fear beyond the victim, most of these crimes do not display a clear motivation or strategy to influence a political discourse or change a political status quo (e.g., see Perliger 2012: 85). In fact most violent hate crimes appear to be committed out of a spontaneous group context and under the influence of alcohol, lacking the elements of planning and strategy (e.g., see Blee 2005a: 428; Hamm 1993: 188–195; Willems 1995: 168). This has led to some legal problems classifying these crimes as some criminal codes (e.g., in Germany) see the elements of planning and preparation as an indication for a more serious crime (e.g., terrorism). In consequence, spontaneous acts of violence under the influence of alcohol have been legally demoted to youth contention and delinquency, ignoring the ideological aspect and the fear-

generating goal of these crimes (McGowan 2014: 205). One example of this would be the case of the death of the twenty-two-year-old German punk Falko Lüdtké on May 30, 2000 (Reitzschel 2015). On this day, Falko Lüdtké met a well-known neo-Nazi whom he engaged in conversation asking about his swastika tattoo at the back of his head. Both men were slightly drunk and during the ensuing fight Falko Lüdtké was hit on the head and pushed on the street where a car could not avoid him and ran him over. Lüdtké died two hours later in hospital. Initially the court was unable to determine the motivation of Lüdtké's right-wing opponent and saw partial guilt on the side of the victim having provoked the neo-Nazi. The case was consequently classified as a 'brawl' between adolescents leading to accidental death. In 2015, the case was reopened and investigated by external experts who clearly determined a political motivation behind the violence (Reitzschel 2015). Although motivated by hate and bias towards the victim's political identity as a left-wing punk, this crime lacks any attempt to change or influence a political status quo or discourse, was not planned, and did not lead to any public symbol or political statement regarding the right-wing ideology of the perpetrator. Without a doubt the death of Falko Lüdtké created fear among other left-wing oriented youths in his hometown and provided additional evidence for the readiness to use violence on the side of the right-wing extremists. By far most of the violent right-wing crimes committed fall into this category and display certain typical criteria – such as group context, spontaneity, alcohol intoxication, blunt force with low distance methods and weapons (e.g., fists, boots, bats, knives, chains), and almost excessive use of violence. Between 1990 and 2015 in Germany, for example, sixty-nine of those attacks by right-wing extremists caused seventy-five casualties according to the federal government (dpa 2015a). Unofficial accounts by civil society watchdog organizations have counted up to 184 casualties (Aslan & Winter 2013). This large disparity in numbers has created a public debate between official and non-governmental institutions about the 'real' extent of right-wing extremist crimes. While governmental institutions (mostly police, intelligence and justice departments) have argued that not every crime involving a person known to be right-wing extremist is automatically a right-wing motivated crime (as the unofficial statistics count them), non-governmental sources have criticized the fact that the official statistics deliberately under-report and underestimate the importance of a right-wing ideology for criminal activity. However, the question of when and why a certain crime committed by a right-wing extremist is also motivated by that person's ideology is highly complex and becomes even more difficult when translated to a judicial context where this motivation needs to be proven by facts. Thus, one explanation for the stark difference in numbers regarding right-wing crimes might be the fact that non-governmental sources are not bound to judicial standards regarding the classification of motives and evidence as are the governmental bodies.

Nevertheless, this violence is undoubtedly highly terrorizing and intimidating for a large number of people beyond the victims themselves. This class of right-wing violence does not

primarily aim to change the political status quo but is rather the direct consequence of the ideological necessity to destroy an enemy and to prove one's own legitimate natural superiority.

*Right-wing terrorism.* Following the discussion above, right-wing terrorism is an escalated form of right-wing violent hate crimes. While hate crimes cover the intent to attack and destroy a human being out of animosity against the victim's identity or group (including to intimidate that group), right-wing terrorism adds the intent and motivation to change the political or social status quo through the act of violence. One specific character of right-wing (or hate) terrorism is the lack of victim-target differentiation. Victims and targets do indeed overlap for right-wing terrorists and are not irrelevant to the perpetrator. Right-wing terrorism – akin to insurgent terrorism – combines the act of destruction of an enemy and the strategic aspect of advancing the group's political agenda, which is in fact missing with hate crimes.

Right-wing terrorism often lacks any form of public communication beyond the attack itself and the perpetrators usually do not possess detailed or sophisticated strategies of exactly how the status quo should be changed – although a number of strategic concepts and manuals exist, of course. In order to differentiate right-wing terrorism from other forms of violence, one important indicator is the method or weapon planned to use and used. While right-wing violence hate crimes typically are carried out with low distance methods (e.g., fists, knives, boots, bats) the use of explosives, firearms, arson or chemical weapons indicates not only a higher level of planning and preparation but more importantly the intent to demonstrate a higher level of structural violence, seriousness and threat, aiming to cause a greater psychological impact. While the use of low distance methods primarily reflects a direct conflict between perpetrator and victim, middle to high distance methods primarily reflect a conflict between the perpetrator and the holder of the monopoly of force as these methods consciously mimic the means of warfare otherwise only used legitimately by the police and the military. Again it is absolutely necessary to understand that right-wing terrorism does not usually depart from the goal of annihilating a target seen as part of the enemy force (including foreigners who are seen as a threat to the perpetrator's race) but adds the motivation to challenge the authorities as well. Although right-wing violent hate crimes display a significant disregard for these authorities and laws as well, the methods used are not inherently challenging the monopoly of force.

Of course sometimes specific strategies, political goals, organizational structures or other typical aspects of terrorist organizations are visible among right-wing terrorists. But these characteristics are rare and not necessary for terrorism from the Far-Right.

Coming back to the working definition presented above and summing up the terminological considerations in this chapter, right-wing terrorism includes the use or threat of specific forms of middle to high distance violence executed on the ideological premise of



inequality between human beings and in order to challenge the political status quo – that is, the monopoly of force – through the act of violence as a form of psychological and physical warfare. It is important to note that right-wing terrorism does include a wide array of other motives as well, which create the mentioned overlap with other forms of political violence such as, for example, guerrilla warfare. These motives can be to demonstrate the authorities' weakness, to cause chaos favoring 'law and order' based politics, to frame left-wing groups and cause a government crack-down, to annihilate key individuals of the 'enemy,' to destroy infrastructure perceived to be vital to the enemy, to prove the movement's stamina to members and to gain political or social power through a reign of fear.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

After the considerations above, it becomes necessary to underline what is distinct about right-wing terrorism from other forms of terrorism and what is not. Starting with the latter, existing research and the following detailed analysis of German right-wing terrorism clearly shows that – like all other forms of terrorism – the choice of targets and tactics is strongly, if not predominantly, guided by the ideology behind the groups and actors. It holds true what Drake (1998) had shown for other terrorist groups: ideology provides an initial motive for action and a 'prism' through which they perceive and assess their own and their opponent's actions. Right-wing terrorists are no exception. Their target selection might even be seen as more restrictive and ideologically consequent than in other forms of terrorism, because only very rarely have right-wing terrorists expanded their ideological target definition to the maximum degree, that is, to indiscriminate mass attacks. In the rare instances that they did, ideology still played a major role in the perpetrators rationale, like for example in the underlying strategy of Anders Behring Breivik (Hemmingby & Bjørgo 2015). In the vast majority of right-wing terrorist cases, their target selection was strictly connected to the actors' ideology, meaning that ethnic minorities, Jewish people, immigrants, homosexuals, left-wing politicians and government representatives (e.g., police officers) have been the prime target.

However, right-wing terrorism has also displayed some striking distinctions. Albeit rarely seen by government authorities as equally dangerous as jihadi, left-wing or ethno-separatist terrorist groups, and nor are they subject to equally intense forms of repression in many countries, right-wing terrorists have displayed a strong and predominant tendency for lone actor and small cell tactics. As argued by many scholars, one simple reason for this might be the lack of competence and resources for building and maintaining an adequate organizational structure. Still, right-wing militant thinkers have developed the most detailed strategic and tactical concepts for small cell, leaderless armed struggle, most notably individual authors

from the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany. As the NSU cases exemplifies, these tactics can become virtually invincible, even when executed in a modern Western security environment. As part of the distinctive nature of right-wing terrorism, the tendency to wage a low intensity terror campaign without publicly claiming responsibility over long periods of time has proven to be highly effective. From the perspective of the authorities, this form of terrorism was indistinguishable from ordinary crime and quickly acquired a low priority compared with high intensity forms of terrorism, such as Jihadism. At the same time, the desired effects were still unchanged: creating shock and awe in the target group beyond the immediate victim of the attack and erecting a climate of fear and terror. In addition, the continuous failure and weakness of the government was demonstrated, combined with a destruction of the ideologically designated enemy. Although the NSU's main motto of "deeds instead of words" is reminiscent of the so-called 'propaganda of the deed' (POTD) – one of the oldest theoretical concepts behind terrorist violence dating back to the early anarchist terrorist campaigns (e.g., Bueno de Mesquita & Dickson 2007; Garrison 2004) – right-wing terrorism nevertheless has decisively deployed a different understanding of this concept. Understood as "an act of violence whose signal and/or extreme nature is intended to create an ideological impact disproportionate to the act itself" (Bolt, Betz & Azari 2008: 2), many have equated 'propaganda of the deed' with terrorism in general. More than a single terrorist event, POTD can be seen as political marketing campaign, a "part of a process of narrative construction, reinforcement and confirmation through deeds" (Bolt et al. 2008: 2). Even though this explicit way of communication might be more effective because the attention created ensures the specific power of terrorist groups to craft their own image and narrative, POTD still requires some form of narrative or ideology to which the created attention can be directed. If no actor claims responsibility for the attack or no perpetrator is known, this effect is more or less nullified. Victims and the larger society might suspect numerous different reasons for the attack and – compared with other more visible terrorist narratives – miss the potential message. Right-wing terrorism has for the most part not engaged in any significant theoretical or communicative activity connected to the attacks. The violence towards the victim, the destruction of the enemy and the struggle against the opposing government system were the deeds and purest form of the actors' ideology. To produce chaos and fear seems to be the single most important goal of right-wing terrorism, even if on a low scale. While some groups, for example in Italy and Russia, have argued that this chaos would result in more electoral support for right-wing extreme parties, German neo-Nazis have been equally repelled by these parties and the various right-wing terrorist acts in the last fifty years have not had any significant result for NPD electoral successes.

As explained above, right-wing terrorism is akin to insurgency warfare in this regard and has regularly compared itself with guerrilla organizations fighting a civil war. Even though right-wing terrorists have not issued sophisticated communiqués or strategic long-term

concepts, they have been successful in creating zones of fear and destabilizing the rule of law sporadically and locally. It never seemed to have been a major goal to trigger an overreaction of the opposing force in order to build a support-community. Instead, two other goals – long-term survival/activity and disintegration of government legitimacy – were usually more important. In this way, ‘deeds’ are so essential for right-wing terrorists that they can mostly abstain from words altogether.

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## Right-wing violence and terrorism in post-Second World War Germany

Right-wing motivated acts of violence and terrorism in Germany after the Second World War are deeply rooted within the attempt to establish a tradition of continuity with the National Socialist regime and the emergence as well as development of organized Right-Wing Extremism in Germany needs to be seen in the social and political context of the first decade after 1945. One of the first major political topics influencing the growth of right-wing parties and movements was the creation of the socialist German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the Soviet-controlled Eastern part of Germany in 1949. The subsequent German partition and its solution remained a central political topic for all parties, including the Far-Right. In addition the growing East-West conflict and Cold War resulted in strategic support for the anti-communist forces in Germany through Allied intelligence agencies, oftentimes including right-wing extreme groups and individuals. Highly qualified former Nazis (e.g., from the SS or Gestapo) were swiftly integrated in specialized new organizations, for example, the so-called Organization Gehlen, which later turned into the German international intelligence (Bundesnachrichtendienst, BND), or the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Their intimate knowledge about Soviet military structures and the Eastern European landscape acquired during the Second World War made them valuable assets during the Cold War despite their political past.

Although extreme right-wing parties are not the main topic of this work, they are essential to order to understand the roots of the militant and clandestine German Far-Right during the early years of the Federal Republic. Three political parties attempted to continue the ideological tradition of National Socialism soon after the war had ended: the Deutsche Reichspartei (German Reich Party, DRP) founded 1950 and disbanded 1965, the Sozialistische Reichspartei (Socialist Reich's Party, SRP) founded 1949 and prohibited 1952, and the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (National Democrats Party of Germany, NPD) founded 1964 and which is still active. These parties gave hope for renewing the political success of the Extreme Right and National Socialist ideals to the remaining former cadres of the Third Reich and the still committed followers of the movement. Acting as safe havens for irreformable Nazis, these three parties were key to the re-establishment of working networks,

propaganda and fundraising structures after the downfall of the Third Reich.

However, between 1945 and 1949 all re-establishment of political parties required a license issued by the Allied Control Council and thereby the official establishment of an openly National Socialist party was impossible. Hence, right-wing extremists or former Nazis discussed the strategic infiltration of small but promising new parties versus the establishment of extra-parliamentary organizations. Some former Nazis achieved high political positions within the young German democracy. Kurt Georg Kiesinger (1904–1988) for example became the third German Chancellor between 1966 and 1969 for the CDU party, despite the fact that he had been an NSDAP member since 1933 and was a high-ranking official in the National Socialist Foreign Affairs Office. Another politician with a Nazi past was Hans Filbinger (1913–2007), who became prime minister of the state Baden-Württemberg between 1966 and 1978. Filbinger had to step down after it became public that he had issued death sentences as a navy judge between 1943 and 1945 and was an NSDAP member. The first right-wing conservative party was the DKP-DRP (German Conservative Party – German Reich Party) established in 1946. In 1949, the party gained five seats in the first Bundestag (federal parliament) but dissolved itself due to internal power struggles between the conservative wing and the openly National Socialist wing. The latter split off and founded the strong National Socialist “Sozialistische Reichspartei” SRP (Socialist Reich Party) in 1949 after the license requirement had been abolished. The SRP was prohibited in 1952 after it had gained seats in two German state parliaments. With a membership of approximately 10,000, the SRP acted as a collaboration organization for numerous former high-ranking Nazis, for example former Wehrmacht general Otto Ernst Remer (1912–1997), who had helped to put down the Stauffenberg *coup d'état* against Hitler in 1944. Other former Nazis decided to infiltrate other parties, for example the liberal FDP (see below). One member of the DKP-DRP who entered the first Bundestag was Adolf von Thadden (1921–1996), who had been an officer in the Wehrmacht and NSDAP member since 1939. Thadden was mostly responsible for founding the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) in 1964 as the first unifying political party for the Extreme Right in Germany. He remained chairman of the NPD until 1971. After his death, it became known that he had been an informant for the British MI6 during his time with the NPD.

The NPD itself remained the most important political party of the Extreme Right, although it was politically irrelevant for the most time of its activity. After its creation in 1964, Adolf Thadden became the party's second chairman between 1967 and 1971 during its best electoral results and nearly missed entering the Bundestag in 1969. Afterwards the NPD was not able to regain any significance for the following twenty years. Thadden resigned as chairman in 1971, after the militant wing within the party grew stronger and blamed the “too soft” political standpoint for their failure to enter the Bundestag. Thadden's successor – Martin Mußgnug, who remained chairman till 1990 – attempted to focus the party on nationalistic conservatism

with no success in terms of electoral support. Günter Deckert – Mußgnug's successor – shifted the party's main focus by including more open National Socialist elements into the NPD and starting a process of radicalization. Deckert himself was imprisoned for denying the Holocaust. His successor – Udo Voigt, who became chairman in 1996 – further advanced this process by actively seeking organizational links with openly neo-Nazis groups and skinhead comradeships. He also introduced a new main strategy called the "Three Pillar Strategy," involved the "struggle for the parliaments," the "struggle for the streets" and the "struggle for the minds." This concept was the starting point of a strong increase in the NPD's involvement in public events such as concerts, rallies and youth camps. In 2001, this radicalization led to the first attempt by the German government to prohibit the NPD, which was rejected by the Federal Constitutional Court in 2003 because the majority of the incriminating material had been produced by paid informants from various intelligence services. In 2004, the NPD started to regain some electoral support and won seats in some state parliaments and also added another pillar to its major strategy called "struggle for the organized will," which aims at unifying Extreme Right parties and movements to one common entity. In 2010, Udo Voigt lost internal power struggles over the new party strategy to more extreme and radical forces, showing another shift to extremism. He was replaced by Holger Apfel, who was succeeded by Udo Pastörs and Frank Franz in 2014 (e.g., Staud 2005; Brandstetter 2006; Backes, Mletzko & Stoye 2010). The party has clearly shifted to a more violent and criminal approach since 2000. Between 2002 and 2012, for example, 110 elected NPD officials across Germany had committed 120 crimes or were charged, while in office. These crimes mostly consisted of physical assault, illegal restraint, possession of weapons and explosives, robbery and blackmail (SWR 2012). This shows how the party has become not only a political institution openly tolerating severe crimes by its members and leading personnel but also setting clear examples to their supporters regarding the NPD's disrespect for the democratic legal order.

Going back to 1950 however, after the license requirement of the Allied Control Council had been abolished, a number of right-wing extremist organizations and parties were founded. Most notably, a support and network organization for former Waffen-SS members (HIAG), the Viking Youth (active between 1952 and 1994, when it was prohibited), and many openly National Socialist publishing houses. In addition, previously illegal associations of former military members could now be re-established. In 1951, the German parliament adopted a law designed to allow for the re-employment of former officials of the National Socialist state who were not classified as high ranking or charged. In consequence, up to 90 percent of the former state employees could be reintegrated into the post-Second World War German bureaucracy.

In 1950, the positive German economic development had a negative impact on the electoral support for right-wing parties, however, in 1959, the first nationwide waves of neo-Nazi crimes – mostly swastika paintings on synagogues – swept over the country, which intensified with the trial against Adolf Eichmann 1961 in Israel. During the first German recession in

1966/67, right-wing parties saw their first major surge in electoral support, creating the climate for the NPD's best results a few years later.

Regarding the development in the violent and militant part of the Far-Right, one concept with wide inspirational value – albeit lacking any military value at that time – were the Werewolf guerrilla tactics developed in the last months and weeks of the Third Reich, which did produce a small number of arson attacks and assassinations, but remained a propaganda stunt (Biddiscombe 1998). Nevertheless, small, clandestine cells operating in the fashion of insurgent or guerrilla movements can be seen as a very early and continuously strong aspect of the German militant Extreme Right ever since. Of course, a number of still committed National Socialists, former SS soldiers and officers, and adolescents socialized and educated by the Nazi state played an important part in reviving the militant Right after the war, which led a number of politicians and experts to assume this phenomenon would naturally die out sooner or later. Seventy years later, Germany, nevertheless, has experienced wave after wave of right-wing militancy in many different forms, which indicates that the Extreme Right was able to renew itself and to maintain a constant level of attraction towards new followers. This chapter gives a chronological account of the most important events, groups, networks, individuals and developments regarding the violence and terrorism from the Far-Right in post-Second World War Germany. A detailed encyclopedic list of all relevant groups and actors will be given in [Chapter 9](#).

As mentioned above, the first visible re-emergence of Extreme Right public activism occurred in 1959, when the two DRP members Arnold Strunk and Paul Schönen painted swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans on a newly opened synagogue in Cologne, causing a wave of 470 registered similar events across West Germany within the following four weeks. This period became known as the “Schmierwelle” (roughly “graffiti wave”) in the German press (Maxwill 2014). In addition, right-wing parties could gain small initial electoral successes in several German states during the early 1950s and 1960s, nurturing the hope among right-wing extremists of being able to take over the republic through the ballot box again. Soon the NPD party established itself as the most successful political force of the Far-Right having entered seven state parliaments between 1964 and 1968 – a success attributed generally to the economic depression and political stagnation perceived by large parts of the population, caused by a federal coalition government between the two largest parties (CDU and SPD).

At the same time, between the mid-1950s and mid-1960s, the conflict in South Tyrol began to turn violent with several bomb attacks being carried out in different waves of terrorism by clandestine insurgency movements supported by German extreme right-wing individuals and groups. One of the supporters fueling the conflict was a clandestine network of former SS-security agency (SS-Sicherheitsdienst) officers who had established their own intelligence among former SS members in the 1960s and reportedly delivered explosives to partner organizations in South Tyrol (Spiegel 2013). But also within Germany, former SS-officers and

Nazi officials practiced clandestine tactics in an attempt to regain power. On January 15, 1953, the British occupation government publicly reported that a conspiracy of former high-ranking Nazis aiming to infiltrate the liberal party (FDP) had been uncovered. The so-called “Naumann-circle” or “Düsseldorf-circle” was led by the last secretary of state in Goebbels’ Ministry of Propaganda, Werner Naumann (1909–1982). Naumann gathered at least twenty-eight known former high-ranking SS and NSDAP officials in an attempt to strategically infiltrate the young liberal party (FDP) in North Rhine-Westphalia in order to rehabilitate National Socialism, themselves, and re-erect an authoritarian state (Jenke 1961: 155–199; Maxwell 2013).

In the elections of 1969, the NPD party narrowly missed the 5 percent threshold to enter the federal parliament (Bundestag) leading to the party’s first internal crisis and political decline. Nevertheless, these events also convinced the more radical wing of the political right that waiting for electoral takeover of the government would be hopeless. Although it is widely believed that the NPD’s failure to enter the Bundestag caused the first generation of post-war right-wing terrorists to become active (Horchem 1982: 29; Pfahl-Traugher 2012a, 2012b; Rosen 1989), at least two small groups planning attacks out of a National Socialist ideology were detected prior to the election of 1969: a three-person cell attempting to assassinate the Federal Prosecutor General and carry out an arson attack against the German coordination office for the punishment of war criminals in Ludwigsburg between 1965 and 1966 (“Werewolf Cell”); and a group of eight Germans and Austrians planning explosive attacks against infrastructure in South Tyrol between 1963 and 1964 (“Group around Dr. Burger”). These groups, however, were not seen as a threat to the public safety and were completely ignored by the press and academia at that time, even after a clearly right-wing motivated Josef Bachmann, who had contacts to other neo-Nazis and right-wing terrorists, attempted to assassinate the left-wing activist Rudi Dutschke 1968, which greatly impacted the radicalization process of the extreme left in Germany at that time (Spiegel 2009). That only slowly changed after more sophisticated and better prepared groups and individuals were uncovered after 1969.

In addition, for the 1960s, no detailed statistics about right-wing crimes exist. However, the annual intelligence report of the German Ministry of the Interior for 1970 states that 6 percent of 1,724 right-wing crimes between 1960 and 1970 – that is, 103 – were carried out with terrorist motives including: arson, bomb explosions, homicide, manslaughter, and kidnapping (BMI 1971) making for a substantial number of violent right-wing extremist incidents during that first decade of organized Far-Right movements and parties since the prohibition of the SRP in 1952.

## 4.1 The emergence of right-wing terrorism

Generally, the Wehrsportgruppe Hengst (Military Sports Group Hengst) is seen as the first German right-wing terrorist group after the Second World War (Pfahl-Traughber 2012a, 2012b; Rosen 1989; Sundermeyer 2012) although the two prior small groups mentioned above were determined to be criminal associations with the intent to commit crimes against the state by German courts, lacking the legal definition of terrorism at that time (BGH 1965, 1966). Active between 1968 and 1971, the group Hengst was founded by the NPD member Bernd Hengst, who was incarcerated in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) for acts of terrorism in 1963, but released early and deported to the Federal Republic of Germany. Hengst attacked an office of the German Communist Party in 1968 with a semi-automatic rifle and was arrested three years later by coincidence during a traffic control, in which the police officers found heavy machine-guns and explosives in his car. In the subsequent house searches, extensive plans for terrorist attacks – mostly against individuals and institutions of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), the German railway and ammunition depots of the German army – were found. Plans for bank robberies and an elaborated group structure were also discovered. Even an employee of the German Ministry of Defence (department of defense technology) was among the eighteen members of the group.

In the same year of the NPD's failure to enter the Bundestag – 1969 – the Europäische Befreiungsfront (European Liberation Front, EBF) was founded yet again by two NPD members and one former foreign legionnaire as a “combat group against communism” (Rosen 1989: 51). Fourteen members were arrested in 1970 because they planned to attack electricity infrastructure during the meeting of the German Chancellor Willy Brandt with the GDR Prime Minister Willi Stoph. Estimations regarding the group size vary between 30–35 members. The EBF had known contacts with former Belgian SS-officers and the French Organisation Armée Secrete (OAS). In several German cities, the EBF had created ‘divisions’ generally using a military hierarchy (with a ‘high command,’ propaganda division, and ‘special operations division’). The EBF is also an early example of how quickly lone actors might disengage from larger clandestine and militant organizations to conduct attacks on their own (with or without the knowledge and support of these groups), a phenomenon that has continuously happened within the militant right-wing in Germany. One EBF member, Ekkehard Weil, used a sniper rifle in 1970 to shoot a Soviet soldier and committed an arson attack in 1979 against a bureau of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei West-Berlin (Socialist Unity Party West Berlin). Weil escaped from prison in 1979 and fled to Austria, where he committed bomb attacks against Jewish shops and homes together with two other neo-Nazis in 1982. He was sentenced to prison again in 1998 as investigators found explosives and material for the construction of bombs in his home, together with extensive right-wing extremist propaganda

material. Weil again escaped arrest and was rearrested 2000 in Bochum. He was released in 2005 and German intelligence expects him to return to violent action (BfV 2004: 16; Botsch 2012: 81).

Between 1969 and 1970, the NPD experienced internal power struggles and a splitting off into several more radical factions. To prevent the party from completely breaking apart, the Aktion Widerstand (Action Resistance, AW) was founded in October 1970. This initiative was both an official association and an unofficial network of groups and individuals. Designed as a non-parliamentary movement focused on street activism against the German government's policy towards the GDR and the Soviet Union, the AW quickly turned violent and was officially disbanded by the NPD in 1971, as the organization was heavily criticized for its 'SA' like behavior. However, Aktion Widerstand gathered over 3,000 militant Far-Right activists for a short time and accelerated the subsequent development within other parts of the movement, as well as inspiring later leading figures (e.g., Michael Kühnen, Karl-Heinz Hoffmann, see Botsch 2012: 62–63). During its short existence, dozens of arson attacks, assaults and violent threats were committed across West Germany with notes and graffiti being left referring to 'Aktion W.' or simply 'Resistance,' as internal newsletters had called for the establishment of illegal resistance cells with no organizational structure (Neumann & Maes 1971: 40). Still during AW's active time in 1970, the well-known right-wing extremist Horst Tabbert founded the Nationale Deutsche Befreiungsbewegung (National German Liberation Movement, NDBB) which sought to attack the GDR and Soviet institutions in West Germany and border installations on the 10th anniversary of the building of the Berlin wall in August 13, 1971, with the ultimate goal of becoming the new NSDAP. The group carried out a number of violent attacks on left-wing bars but was detected and most members were arrested on August 12, 1971 (Spiegel 1971).

A similar short-lived organization discovered before the execution of their bombing plans was the Nationalsozialistische Kampfgruppe Großdeutschland (National Socialist Combat Group Greater Germany, NSKG) established in 1972 by twenty-five right-wing extremists from Bavaria and North Rhine-Westphalia under the direct influence of the American neo-Nazi Gary Lauck (Rosen 1989: 52–53). The NSKG saw itself as the executor of Adolf Hitler's last will and included at least three members of the German army (one soldier and two sergeants). With active ties to American and Palestinian terrorists, the group planned several bomb attacks and kidnappings but was quickly discovered (after seven months) by the German authorities before they could carry out any. Just one year before the NSKG's short-lived activities, Gary Lauck, born in 1953 to a German-American family in Wisconsin in the United States, had founded the Auslandsorganisation (overseas organization) of other German neo-Nazi 'combat groups' (Atkins 2011: 110; SPLC n.d.). Lauck would later become one of the most influential right-wing extremists for the German violent right-wing movement without German citizenship. He is a noted Germanophile and quickly developed close ties with high-



ranking German neo-Nazis, such as Michael Kühnen, Gottfried Küssel and Christian Worch. After the NSKG was banned, Lauck founded the NSDAP/AO in 1972 claiming it to be the continuation of the original National Socialist German Workers Party. Lauck's main activities were the production and distribution of illegal neo-Nazi propaganda material, including bomb building manuals and guidelines for armed clandestine warfare. However, his involvement went beyond ideological support and he subsequently faced several arrests and charges in Germany. In 1972, he was arrested for distributing illegal propaganda, expelled in 1974 after racist speech in Hamburg, and arrested again in 1976 during another attempt to smuggle illegal propaganda into Germany. For that attempt, he was sent to prison for four months. In 1979, Lauck was heard as a witness in the 'Bückeburg' trial against Michael Kühnen and others charged with forming a terrorist organization (see below). After being promised by the German authorities not to be charged and arrested during his stay in Germany, he agreed to give his statement in court. The remaining court files of that trial show the intimate knowledge and structural embeddedness of Lauck in one of the earliest German right-wing terrorist organizations. During the 1990s, Lauck established contacts to numerous European neo-Nazi organizations, for example in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and in Germany, where he helped Kühnen to create the *Gesinnungsgemeinschaft der Neuen Front* (Ethos-Community of the New Front, GdNF, see below). Lauck also played a leading role in establishing the World Union of National Socialists (WUNS) in the early 1990s. After having been arrested in Denmark in 1995, he was deported to Germany and tried for the distribution of illegal neo-Nazi propaganda material. He was found guilty and sent to prison for four years. Lauck was released in 1999 (Spiegel 1996). He continues to produce large amounts of illegal propaganda material and runs a number of websites considered to be essential by German neo-Nazis.

In addition to the NSKG, EBF, NDBB and AW, the early 1970s saw the founding of one of the most important networks for militant right-wing activists in that decade. In 1971, one of the leading German neo-Nazis at that time – Friedhelm Busse, a DRP and NPD member, an active supporter of South Tyrol terrorist groups and a co-founder of the 'Action Resistance' – who had already been sentenced to a short prison term because of explosive related offenses in 1963, founded the *Partei der Arbeit/Deutsche Sozialisten* (Workers Party/German Socialists, PdA/DS) which turned into the *Volkssozialistische Bewegung Deutschlands/Partei der Arbeit* (The People's Socialist Movement of Germany/Workers Party, VSBD) in 1975 and was banned for being anti-constitutional in 1982 (Hoffman 1986: 3; Horchem 1982: 30; McGowan 2006: 295; McGowan 2014: 200). The VSBD gathered former AW members, militant neo-Nazis and active terrorists and acted – similarly to the AW – as a network to raise funds, distribute training and equipment, and provide the opportunity to find like-minded activists. Several terrorist groups and lone actors came out of the VSBD, for example Frank Schubert, who was detected by Swiss border police in December 1980 while trying to smuggle weapons from Switzerland to Germany. In the subsequent shoot-out, a Swiss and a German police officer were killed by



Schubert, who committed suicide later (Horchem 1982: 33). In 1981, five other VSBD members were intercepted by the police on their way to a bank robbery and used hand grenades and machine-guns in an attempt to avoid arrest. In the subsequent shooting, two of the right-wing extremists were killed. One person involved was Klaus-Ludwig Uhl, who was a former member of the French *Fédération d'Action Nationale et Européenne* (FANE). In addition to French groups, the VSBD maintained ties with Belgian terrorist groups (Spiegel 1981c). A small sub-group, calling itself *Kommando Omega*, was founded in Paris and aimed to assassinate judges, prosecutors and 'traitors' (defectors from the right-wing movement). In 1983, the surviving members and Friedhelm Busse were charged with forming a terrorist organization (Maegerle 2002; Spiegel 1983). Four other VSBD members were arrested 1982 in Belgium for bank robberies and for membership of a terrorist organization. They were sent to Germany and put on trial (Horchem 1982: 30). Shortly after the VSBD was officially prohibited and its leader Friedhelm Busse imprisoned, former members founded the *Nationale Front/Bund Sozialrevolutionärer Nationalisten* (National Front/Covenant of Socialrevolutionary Nationalists, NF/BSN) in 1983 in Munich. The group was renamed in 1984 the *Nationalistische Front* (Nationalist Front, NF) and turned into a nationwide political party in 1985, but never received any significant election results. Since 1986 and until the group's prohibition in 1992 based on its 'anti-constitutional nature,' the NF's leader was the former German army sergeant Meinolf Schönborn (b. 1955), who was expelled from the NPD because of his outspoken xenophobic agitation. Shortly before the NF was prohibited, Schönborn started an internal discourse about the establishment of terrorist cells, which he called *Nationale Einsatzkommandos* (National Task Forces), targeting the federal government, the justice system and the Allied Forces. The concept consciously combined methods of the RAF and the *Freikorps* (Free Corps) of the Weimar Republic and aimed to create a short (lasting one or two days) but nationwide wave of terrorist attacks by hundreds of these task forces to cripple the national executive infrastructure (Bittner 2002). Initial investigations against Schönborn by the Federal Prosecutor General suspecting the formation of a terrorist organization were dropped, because it could not be proven that he actually had left the theoretical stage and moved on to preparation. Schönborn himself continued the NF after it was banned and was subsequently imprisoned in 1996. In July 2012, the German authorities executed nationwide house searches against an armed group of neo-Nazis, including Schönborn's home (Brandstetter 2012), called *Neue Ordnung* (New Order, NO), but again the charges were dropped. Even before the NF formulated its terrorist strategy, the group was a harbor or inspiration for individual terrorists. In December 1988, for example, the nineteen-year-old member Josef Saller committed an arson attack against a house in Schwandorf, killing three Turkish women and a German man (Spiegel 1989). It was suspected that he was a supporter of the NF. Later in the 1980s, one former VSBD section leader, Walter Kexel, would become one of the most notorious right-wing terrorists of that decade.

However, in the early 1970s, yet another essential and notorious militant right-wing organization was founded: The Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann (Military Sports Group Hoffmann, WSG). Established 1973 by Karl-Heinz Hoffmann and banned as a militant anti-constitutional organization in 1980, the WSG is arguably the most influential organization for the militant Extreme Right in Germany, ranking even before the VSBD, as almost all the later leading militant members of the Far-Right (e.g., Michael Kühnen, Odfried Hepp and Arndt Marx) were trained and socialized within the WSG. In addition, the group is connected (albeit rarely legally proven) with a high number of individual acts of violence (killings, bombing attacks and arson). After the groups prohibition for example, the WSG-member Gundolf Köhler committed the most severe terrorist attack in post-Second World War Germany: the bombing of the Munich Oktoberfest 1980, causing thirteen casualties and wounding 211 people (Hoffman 1982, 1986; Horchem 1982: 33; Von Heymann 2008). This attack is also the most controversial in post-war German history as the authorities quickly came to the conclusion that Köhler acted alone and closed the case. However, a number of journalists – most notably Ulrich Chaussy (e.g., 2014) – gathered evidence (witness statements, documents, police files) over decades strongly suggesting that Köhler, in fact, did not act alone. Several times the Federal Prosecutor General declined to reopen the investigations until in December 2014 when additional witness statements appeared (Spiegel 2014). Currently the attack is being reinvestigated. Also in 1980 another WSG member, Uwe Behrendt, assassinated the Jewish publisher Shlomo Levin and his wife with a weapon stemming from the WSG arsenal (Horchem 1982: 33). With about 440 members, divisions all over Germany, a military infrastructure and hierarchy (including uniforms, ranks and insignia) and members extensively trained in guerrilla warfare, including the handling of explosives, insurgent tactics and raids on military targets, the WSG was the right-wing group getting closest to becoming a fully armed and active insurgent or guerrilla movement so far after the Second World War. Contacts with other international terror organizations of that time (i.e., Fatah) provided Hoffmann with the opportunity to establish a training camp in Lebanon and a ‘foreign division’ with fifteen members committing raids and attacks on Israeli checkpoints and US oil refineries (Botsch 2012; Horchem 1982: 37; Pfahl-Traughber 2012a, 2012b; Rosen 1989; Sundermeyer 2012). However surprising, members of the WSG Hoffmann were not the first German neo-Nazis to work closely with Palestinian terrorist organizations. During the Olympic Games on September 5, 1972, Germany witnessed another devastating terror attack. Eight members of the Palestinian organization ‘Black September’ entered the living quarters of the Israeli Olympic team and took eleven athletes hostage. The group demanded the release of 232 Palestinians, two German ‘Red Army Faction’ members and one Japanese prisoner. A failed German rescue attempt resulted in the death of all hostages, five terrorists and one police officer. After the release of classified documents in 2012, German authorities provided information that the Palestinians were closely working with and aided by at least two German

neo-Nazis: Willi Pohl and Wolfgang Abramowski. Willi Pohl bought cars and worked as driver for Abu Daoud, the leader of the Palestinian group, during Daoud's previous visits to Germany to collect information about the Olympic camp. Wolfgang Abramowski, a close friend of Pohl's, was a specialist in counterfeiting passports and allegedly provided fake documents for the Palestinians. Both neo-Nazis traveled to Beirut in July 1972 and were arrested in October, shortly after the attack. The authorities saw sufficient proof of their involvement with the Palestinians, as both were found in possession of six specially manufactured Belgian hand grenades filled with Swedish explosives delivered to Saudi Arabia and used by the Palestinians during their operation in Munich (Kellerhoff 2012). The contact between the Black September organization and the two neo-Nazis was allegedly facilitated by Udo Albrecht, one of the most notorious and criminal leaders of the German right-wing extremist underground of that time (Horchem 1982: 36). With a long criminal record including bank robberies, money counterfeiting, explosive offences, weapons trading and numerous prison escapes since 1956, Albrecht had had close contacts to the PLO since 1970 and founded the Volksbefreiungs-Front Deutschland (People's Liberation Front Germany, VFD) – a classic guerrilla type organization following the PLO model – and the Wehrsportgruppe Ruhrgebiet (Military Sports Group Ruhr Area) with three other neo-Nazis. Together with Karl-Heinz Hoffmann of the WSG, he sold military vehicles and weapons to the PLO in Lebanon. Albrecht offered the Fatah support in their fight against Israel in Germany, in exchange for the establishment of a training camp in Jordan. During the conflict between Jordanian forces and the PLO 1970–1971 – known as the 'black September' – Albrecht fought together with twelve German neo-Nazis alongside the Fedajin (Horchem 1982: 36) and was arrested by the Jordanian army, released and arrested again in 1971 in Vienna. Daoud and Pohl allegedly planned to free him from prison, which never happened due to Pohl's arrest. Albrecht fled to Lebanon in 1981 via the German Democratic Republic but was arrested again in the same year. Allegedly he was also responsible for establishing contacts between Fatah and the WSG (Pless 1979; Spiegel 1981a; Sternsdorff 1984). Albrecht's connections with the Palestinians were in fact so close, that in 1973, during a hostage tacking by the Black September organization at the Saudi Arabian embassy in Khartoum, the release of Albrecht became one of the terrorist's demands (Spiegel 1981a).

During the end of the 1970s, in 1977, the former German army lieutenant Michael Kühnen (1955–1991), who became one of the leading theorists of the militant right in Germany, founded the Aktionsfront Nationaler Sozialisten/Nationale Aktivisten (Action Front of National Socialists/National Activists ANS/NA) – also under the direct influence of Gary Lauck – and gathered around 300 members in over thirty sections across Germany until the ANS was prohibited in 1983 (Horchem 1982: 30). Similar to the WSG, VSBD and AW, the ANS functioned as a pool and socialization institution for other members and inspired them to form smaller sub-groups and become active. Directly leading to the formation of the first right-

wing group legally classified as a terrorist organization – the Wehrsportgruppe Rohwer (Military Sports Group Rohwer) with seven members, committing three robberies and four raids against German and Dutch army installations and soldiers between 1977 and 1978, led by the former paratrooper and sergeant Lothar Schulte (the group also planned several kidnappings, to free Rudolf Heß from prison and to attack GDR border installations) – the ANS quickly rose to become the most militant umbrella organization of the Extreme Right after the WSG was prohibited. The Rohwer group's members were sentenced to prison on terrorism charges in 1979 as a result of the widely followed Bückeburger Prozess (Bückeburg trial), during which Gary Lauck was heard as a witness. Michael Kühnen was charged and found guilty of sedition; his involvement in the Wehrsportgruppe Rohwer could not be proven. Within the close proximity of Kühnen's ANS, another terrorist group, the Gruppe Otte (Group Otte), was formed by Paul Otte and Hans-Dieter Lepzien, who shortly before the founding of their cell had met with Gary Lauck in Copenhagen (Rosen 1989: 59). Focusing on attacks against courts to prevent or interfere with lawsuits against 'comrades,' the group committed two bombings in Flensburg and Hannover in 1977 and prepared a third one (supposedly the prepared bomb was handed over to Kühnen for further use). All the group's members were sentenced to prison terms of between three and six years in 1981. After the ANS/NA was prohibited, Kühnen quickly restructured the organization. The first step was to dissolve the ANS/NA into several smaller 'reading circles' which he later (in 1984) reunited in the Gesinnungsgemeinschaft der Neuen Front (Ethos-Community of the New Front, GdNF). In parallel, former members of the ANS/NA strategically infiltrated the Freiheitliche Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (Free German Workers Party, FAP), which was founded in 1979 but had no significance until 1983. Prohibited in 1993, the FAP was the single most important hub for militant right-wing extremists during the early 1990s, especially as an education and training facilitator for cadres. Although the party never entered any parliament, it developed a very dynamic and militant activism, for example, sending FAP members as mercenaries to Croatia during the Bosnian war in 1992, which caused the Federal Criminal Police Office (Bundeskriminalamt, BKA) to open investigations suspecting the formation of a terrorist organization (Klußmann 1997; Spiegel 1994, 1995). In 1988, when Friedhelm Busse became the FAP leader until it was prohibited, the party split into two fractions due to internal fights about the homosexuality of Michael Kühnen, who died in 1991. The wing who were opposed to Kühnen left the FAP in 1990. A high number of former FAP cadres are now leading figures within the militant and clandestine spectrum of the Extreme Right in Germany (Mecklenburg 1996: 269). Likewise at the same time, the GdNF, seeing itself as the 'new SA,' was weakened by internal splits between supporters of and opponents against Kühnen. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the GdNF was used by Kühnen – and after his death by Christian Worch, Arnulf Priem and Gottfried Küssel (all leading figures of the militant Far-Right) – to establish paramilitary groups, provide training and creating multiple organizations in East Germany

(Mecklenburg 1996: 270). Both the GdNF and FAP were central in transmitting highly trained and ideologicalized cadres to small groups of activists across Germany and in developing new strategies and tactics for the militant Far-Right.

The year 1980 saw the founding of yet another right-wing terrorist group led by the lawyer Manfred Roeder – the Deutsche Aktionsgruppen (German Action Groups, DA). Although detected and arrested by the authorities in the same year, the group managed to execute five bomb and two arson attacks on buildings connected to the government (district offices) and civil society (schools and refugee homes) resulting in at least two deaths (Hoffman 1982, 1986; Horchem 1982: 30). Roeder, who had become a notorious and militant neo-Nazi as early as 1970, was sentenced to thirteen years in prison for founding and leading a terrorist organization and was released early in 1990. Six years after his release, he was charged again for disturbing an exhibition about the war crimes of the German Wehrmacht; in the trial that followed, two members of the later National Socialist Underground (Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Böhnhardt) observed the proceedings as visitors (Sundermeyer 2012: 39). The other three members of the DA group, among them the medical doctor Heinz Colditz, were sentenced to life imprisonment (Botsch 2012; Pfahl-Traugher 2012a, 2012b; Rosen 1989; Sundermeyer 2012). Roeder is also thought to have had intensive international contacts with, for example, the Ku Klux Klan and Palestinian groups (Horchem 1982: 37; Spiegel 1981d). As an indication to the DA's commitment and future attack plans, the armory acquired in this short amount of time consisted of 156 kgs TNT, 230 explosive devices, fifty rocket-propelled grenades, 258 hand grenades, automatic weapons and 13,520 rounds of ammunition (Rosen 1989: 64). Obviously the DA was preparing itself for several years of large-scale urban guerrilla warfare. One major goal of the group was to force the German government or the Allied Forces in Germany to release the imprisoned Rudolf Heß, to deport all foreigners and to expel the US Army from Germany – demands which they stated in letters where they claimed responsibility for the attacks. The main trial of the DA members was observed and strategically analyzed by Odfried Hepp, a former WSG member and highly radical neo-Nazi, who drew several conclusions for his own future operations out of the DA's failure (Winterberg & Peter 2004: 167–168). In Hepp's opinion, Roeder tried to live a double life as terrorist and 'normal' citizen. Terrorism – according to Hepp – can only work with full-time commitment. In addition, Roeder rejected the use of bank robberies and other criminal activities in order to acquire resources, which Hepp concluded to be necessary. Claiming responsibility for the attacks led the authorities to detect the group too quickly in the eyes of Hepp, hence he concluded that secrecy was absolutely necessary to avoid arrest. Together with the previously mentioned former VSBD section leader Walter Kexel, he formed the Hepp-Kexel Zelle (Hepp-Kexel Cell) in 1982 and gathered four other activists. Strategically following the German left-wing Red Army Faction's concepts and specifically targeting members of United States Armed Forces in Germany (Winterberg & Peter 2004), the small

group carried out three car bombings and several bank robberies in December 1982. The group quickly gained special attention from the German population and the authorities as they were and still are the only right-wing terrorist group that has produced and published a theoretical pamphlet about their goals and ideas for a wide audience trying to ideologically unite left-wing and right-wing ideas for a combined struggle against American 'imperialism.' Odfried Hepp later contacted and worked for the GDR Ministry of State Security (Stasi), after the rest of the group was discovered and arrested. In 1984, he became a member of the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF) and was arrested 1985 in France while trying to build a West European PLF cell. Kexel committed suicide in prison in 1985.

The last right-wing terrorist group of the 1980s was uncovered in 1987 through the arrest of its founder and leader, the engineer Peter Naumann, and the only other member Bernhard Archner (called the 'group Naumann'). Naumann had been known as an explosives expert within the right-wing movement since 1974 and was involved in several right-wing organizations during his career (Botsch 2012). In 1979, for example, he supposedly destroyed television transmitters with explosives to prevent the airing of a documentary about the Holocaust (Rosen 1989). Although this attack could not be legally tied to Naumann, at least one bomb attack in 1978 and the theft of twenty kilograms of military grade TNT from the German army could indeed be proven and he was sentenced to four and a half years in prison. His activities did not stop there however. In 1995, it was revealed by the authorities that Naumann had constructed at least ten weapon depots containing about 200 kilograms TNT, mines, hand grenades, automatic weapons and ammunition (BfV 2004: 10) across Germany. Since 1994, another right-wing terrorist group, Gruppe Ulrich (Group Ulrich), with four members and close ties to Naumann, was allegedly supplied with explosives by him. The group planned to attack German police, army and border police buildings. In 1996, the German Federal Prosecutor General opened preliminary investigations against the Group Ulrich on the charges of forming a terrorist organization (§129). The role of Naumann could not be clearly determined and the explosives remained hidden, leading the Prosecutor General to drop the charges. Nevertheless, all members were sentenced to prison for other offences (BfV 2004: 10–11).

After the German reunification in 1989/1990, during a time of widespread lack of law and order in the German East and an extraordinary wave of right-wing street violence against refugee homes, a Skinhead group in East Berlin, the Lichtenberger Front (Lichternberg Front), turned to neo-Nazism and developed into the Nationale Alternative (National Alternative, NA) in January 1990. The NA was the first and only right-wing extremist party officially recognized by the vanishing GDR government and became the major center for Right-Wing Extremism in Eastern Germany in the early 1990s. Similar to the WSG, VSBD and the ANS, the NA functioned as a network of individuals and smaller sub-groups directly leading to individual acts of terrorism and violence, for example, the killing of a police officer by Kay

Diesner (who was a member of the NA and the White Aryan Resistance) in 1997, after he tried to shoot and kill a left-wing bookseller as an act of revenge for attacks against right-wing activists from the militant left. After his arrest, Diesner demanded to be treated as a 'prisoner of war' (Botsch 2012: 109). Within the NA, again leading figures of the movement, for example, Michael Kühnen, Christian Worch, Ingo Hasselbach and Gary Lauck (Hasselbach & Bonengel 2001: 71) trained members using combat manuals of the US Army (Sundermeyer 2012), stockpiled weapons and created a major ideological education facility. The group conducted several combat exercises with live ammunition together with German Ku Klux Klan sections (Hasselbach & Bonengel 2001: 102). After its organizational peak in the second half of the 1990s, with an estimated 600 members and divisions in every major East German state, the NA more or less dissolved itself due to internal rivalries and fragmentation triggered by the inability to compensate for the loss of Michael Kühnen, who died in 1991 (Hasselbach & Bonengel 2001). One NA member split off the group and rose to individual importance for the militant right-wing movement. Arnulf Priem (b. 1948) had already founded and led a Wehrsportgruppe (military sports group) between 1974 and 1984 – the Kampfgruppe Priem (Combat Group Priem) – with close ties to the WSG Hoffmann and Manfred Roeder of the DA. Priem, who was also a member of the American Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei/Aufbauorganisation (National Socialist German Workers Party/Establishing Organization NSDAP/AO), developed close ties between neo-Nazi and criminal motorcycle gangs in Germany. He founded the pagan right-wing extremist group Wotans Volk (Wotan's People) in 1987, which was closely connected to Michael Kühnen's GdNF. Priem was arrested and sentenced to prison in 1995 on the charges of "forming an armed group" and the possession of explosives (Stark 1995).

As mentioned earlier, in the first years after the German reunification a surge in right-wing violence as a result of combined East and West German neo-Nazi groups and movements swept over the country. Tolerated or assisted by the local population, large-scale pogroms happened for example in Hoyerswerda<sup>1</sup> (September 17–23, 1991) and Rostock Lichtenhagen<sup>2</sup> (August 22–26, 1992), which 'inspired' several smaller acts of terrorism, for example in Mölln<sup>3</sup> (November 23, 1992), and Solingen<sup>4</sup> (May 29, 1993) amongst several other cities. Official statistics by the criminal police and intelligence counted 1,499 right-wing motivated arson attacks between 1991 and 1994. In absolute numbers, most of the attacks were carried out in West German states. Relative to the states' population however, the lesser populated East German states ranked first. In addition, with the reunification and the opportunity to easily travel across Germany to join other right-wing groups attacking refugee homes, it is highly difficult to determine whether these attacks were an exclusive East or West German phenomenon.

Many researchers and most authorities have assumed that these events were not coordinated by coherent organizations and planned with a long-term strategy, although the

prime minister of the state Mecklenburg-West Pomerania Berndt Seite called the pogrom a “concerted action of extremist forces” (Sundermeyer 2012: 66–67). Nevertheless, the events’ momentum seemed to have built a self-sustaining crowd, which was supported by organized groups from all over Germany. However, in 2013, the aforementioned Arnulf Priem stated publicly in an interview that he had been ‘invited’ to the pogroms in Rostock Lichtenhagen 1992 (DasErste 2013), which shows a degree of coordination and planning involved in at least one of the riots, which went unnoticed by the authorities. These events had a major impact on the right-wing movement, their strategies and activities in the 1990s. The national and international reaction, as well as the fear created within immigrant communities in Germany, were unparalleled after 1945 and thereby reached a central goal of the extreme right-wing ideology. Relatively unconstrained in their violence, the German extreme right-wing scene drew the conclusion in the late 1990s that violent armed resistance and largescale pogroms were indeed possible, although the German government reacted with more focused repression, a wave of group prohibitions and arrests. A major lesson for the Extreme Right however was, that the German population could be incited to massive acts of resistance that could be called sporadic and short-term rebellion against the authorities. During that time several sub-groups and individuals radicalized and went clandestine, for example, the three later members of the NSU cell. Using widely accessible tactical knowledge within the right-wing movement located in the former German Democratic Republic, which successfully avoided large-scale repression by the East German authorities including the Staatssicherheit (Stasi), many neo-Nazis learned numerous new techniques of clandestine operations in that time. In addition to the East German movement’s knowledge of clandestine operations some right-wing extremists – among them the notorious FAP cadre Eckart Bräuniger (b. 1971) – took the opportunity to gather real combat experience in 1994 during the Bosnia conflict, fighting as mercenaries on the Croatian side and taking weapons and explosives back with them to Germany along with their extensive training in guerrilla warfare (Klußmann 1997: 38; Spiegel 1995; Von Bullion 2006). Together with the West German movement’s experience in maneuvering within a representative democracy and free press landscape, the joint right-wing extremist movement after 1990 developed an intensive internal momentum fostering radicalization processes for individuals and groups. In 1991, for example, twelve members of the 1. Werwolf Jagdeinheit Senftenberg (1st Werewolf Hunting Unit Senftenberg) – described by the state prosecutor as one of the most dangerous neo-Nazi groups in East Germany (Spiegel 1993) – were arrested and charged with forming a criminal organization. The group trained with weapons and explosives for an “armed revolution,” planned bank robberies and committed a homicide (Maegerle 2002: 166; Spiegel 1993).

Some individuals, however, left out the clandestine element and directly attacked government representatives. The thirty-one-year-old Michael Berger, for example, was stopped by a police patrol in July 2000. He immediately opened fire on both officers, killing



one and left the crime scene, but not to avoid arrest however. Berger, a member of the militant neo-Nazi scene in Dortmund, searched for the next police patrol and attacked the officers, killing another two policemen. He later committed suicide (Schauerte 2011). Three years earlier, in 1997, a group of six neo-Nazis was intercepted and stopped by the authorities in Saxony. The group had acquired an extensive armory of fully automatic weapons and operational explosive devices. However, concrete planned attacks could not be proven (BfV 2004: 14). In the same year, two neo-Nazi groups were arrested by the police shortly before they could execute bomb attacks against left-wing politicians – the Kampfgruppe Schörner (Combat Group Schörner) with four members, and the Kameradschaft Treptow (Comradeship Treptow) with about thirty members (BfV 2004: 15; Klußmann 1997: 37). Later in 1997, the German authorities detected a right-wing extremist group within the Armed Forces, which had acquired weapons, chemicals and a ‘Milan’ anti-tank rocket launch pad, as well as plans to build bombs (Klußmann 1997: 37). Alarmed by the high number of right-wing groups intercepted shortly before executing attacks in the mid and late 1990s, the German authorities estimated the number of “individuals mentally and technically capable of terrorist attacks” in the right-wing scene at between 50–100 people in 1997 (Klußmann 1997: 38). Between 1992 and 1996 the police confiscated twenty-three weapons of military quality and origin from right-wing extremists, twenty-five improvised explosive devices (Bundesregierung 1997: 2) and opened nine preliminary investigations on charges of forming terrorist organizations (Bundesregierung 1997: 6). In 1998, a right-wing extremist group of four was arrested by the authorities in Göttingen on similar charges by the Federal Prosecutor General. Although a substantial amount of chemicals sufficient for the creation of explosives and bomb building manuals were found, the authorities could not prove a “structural minimum of a coherent organization” (BfV 2004: 19) and the terrorism charges were dropped. The group allegedly radicalized due to constant violent attacks of left-wing extremist groups and decided to return the violence (BfV 2004: 19).

Between 2000 and 2001 at least seven known groups planned and prepared for substantial explosives and arson attacks and several were carried out. In March 2000, Carsten Szczepanski, who was later revealed to be a paid informant of the Brandenburg intelligence service, founded a Combat 18 cell in Brandenburg. He already had established another German KKK section with his extensive international contacts in 1992 and was sentenced to eight years in prison on homicide charges in 1995. After his early release in 1999, he gathered six more ‘comrades’ and organized the cell, calling itself National Revolutionäre Zelle (National Revolutionary Cell). The group built at least one functional bomb and acquired a sniper rifle with 300 rounds of ammunition. Szczepanski tried to persuade the group to use the bomb and the rifle to attack left-wing activists. In June 2000, the group members were arrested and the bomb was secured. All of the members were sentenced to several years in prison but no terrorism charges were put forward by the Federal Prosecutor General. Szczepanski was

revealed as an informant during the trial and put into witness protection (BfV 2004: 21; Greger 2005: 62–64). In 2013, the authorities confirmed that he was deployed as an informant in the NSU's close periphery in Chemnitz during 1998, shortly before and after the group's descent into the underground. He reported to the authorities about a small group of neo-Nazis about to go underground. Later Szczepanski was employed by one of the NSU's closest supporters in Chemnitz but did not provide any additional information. As he is still kept under witness protection, the Brandenburg intelligence declined to release any 'case related' information (Fröhlich 2013a, 2013b) to the investigators of the NSU.

During 2000, a group of three neo-Nazis executed an arson attack on a synagogue in Erfurt and left an ideological note claiming responsibility, however not referring to the group. Another group of two right-wing extremists committed a bomb attack against a Turkish restaurant in Eisenach and another group of three planned a bomb attack against a refugee home in Bremen (BfV 2004: 21–22). Between 2000 and 2001, a group calling itself the Nationale Bewegung (National Movement, NB) committed four arson attacks against Turkish and Jewish shops and always left notes claiming responsibility. The group stopped all activities around January 2001 for unknown reasons and was never arrested by the authorities (BfV 2004: 25). Also in 2001, one of the largest (100–120 members) and most violent neo-Nazi skinhead organizations, Skinheads Sächsische Schweiz (SSS), was prohibited and several members arrested. Amongst other weapons, two kilograms of TNT, anti-tank rockets and rocket-propelled grenades were secured by the police (Maegerle 2002: 156). During the trial, the judges determined that the group systematically established a climate of fear and insecurity in their area (Landgericht 2003). In 2001, another small group of four neo-Nazis allegedly planned bomb attacks against Turkish and Jewish institutions in Berlin. Their homes were searched by the police but no explosives could be found (BfV 2004: 28).

In the same year, the next group legally classified as a terrorist organization under the umbrella of the Kameradschaft Süd (Comradeship South, KS) was founded in Munich with an estimated twenty-five members seeing itself as the successor of the WSG – calling itself the Schutzgruppe (Protection Group). In September 2003, nine members of the group were charged by the German Federal Prosecutor General with forming a terrorist organization, among them the leader of the KS, after arrests had led to the discovery of explosives and precise plans to detonate a bomb during the foundation ceremony for a new Jewish community center in Munich in the same year (Verfassungschutz 2005: 56–57). The KS is still active.

Also in 2003, another small right-wing extremist cell gathered in the state of Brandenburg. Founded by an eighteen-year-old high-school graduate, the Freikorps Havelland (Free Corps Havelland, FH) aimed to drive out shopkeepers and merchants with immigrant background by the means of arson attacks against their shops and homes. Until their arrest in 2004, the group with six members committed ten arson attacks. The group was charged and found

guilty of being a terrorist organization by the Brandenburg constitutional court, which was reaffirmed by the Federal Constitutional Court (Pfahl-Traugher 2012a, 2012b; Verfassungsschutz 2005: 56). Between 2003 and 2006, the last known right-wing terrorist group before the NSU's discovery planned and prepared large terrorist attacks. Using the *Turner Diaries* as strategic guidelines, a five-person group of the Dortmund Blood & Honour organization formed a Combat 18 cell financed by the concerts of a band led by one of the members. It had close ties with the Flemish neo-Nazi terrorist group Bloed, Bodem, Eer en Trouw (BBET),<sup>5</sup> which consisted of seventeen members (eleven soldiers) and was very active in arms dealing and military training within the European Blood & Honour network, provided explosives, weapons and training. The cell, called the Oidoxie Streetfighting Crew, dissolved itself in 2006 due to internal rivalries and two members of the group committed a homicide shortly afterwards. The group was again closely investigated in 2012 after the NSU's discovery, as one of their assassinations (April 4, 2006) was executed in close proximity to the former unofficial headquarters of the Dortmund cell (Schraven 2012). However, no connections between the two groups could be proven.

As shown above with the example of Arnulf Priem and his strategic alliance between neo-Nazi and motorcycle gangs, right-wing terrorists did not only use bank robberies to finance their operations, they sometimes also directly engage in organized crime. An Austrian-German group, Objekt 21, active between 2010 and 2013, developed structures similar to mafia organizations and controlled large parts of the red-light districts close to the German-Austrian border. During the arrest, police found ten kilograms of TNT, heavy machine-guns and €3.5 million (Brecht 2013). Investigators assume that these heavily armed networks play a central role in financing and providing arms to other neo-Nazi cells, which focus on terrorist action (Brecht 2013).

After the NSU's discovery, the German authorities were hard pressed to deliver results against the violent Far-Right. Although between 2011 and 2014 the Federal Prosecutor General opened twenty initial investigations against forty-one neo-Nazis suspected of the formation of multiple terrorist groups (Gensing 2014), all of these investigations were dropped till 2015 (Gensing 2015b), including one into a European Werewolf Cell consisting of six members from Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. The group allegedly planned bomb attacks in Germany and had created its own encrypted communication software to coordinate them (Röbel & Schindler 2013). These decisions by the investigators and prosecutors reflect the legal problems encountered in classifying right-wing groups as terrorist organizations. In fact, most of the actors and groups in this study have not been legally categorized as 'terrorist' according to §129a of the German criminal code, which was designed to match the characteristics of left-wing terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s (Spiegel 1993). As the criteria for determining a 'terrorist association' contain according to established German jurisprudence (as the term is not legally defined) a minimum group size of three, a minimum of structural

organization ensuring collective decision-making and hierarchy binding for all members, the deliberate subordination of the individual under a collective will, and the long-term orientation of the group (Zöller 2014: 409). Not only are some elements exceptionally difficult to prove in court (e.g., the subordination of individual will) but also the common lack of strategic concepts, clearly identifiable group structures and long-term orientation among right-wing terrorists are effective barriers for legal classification as terrorism. In consequence, most right-wing perpetrators have been charged with individual crimes such as illegal possession of weapons, explosives, homicide and criminal assault although some press commentators postulated very early on that they could see no recognizable differences between left-wing terrorism and terror from the Far-Right regarding planning, preparation and the execution of violence (Spiegel 1981c: 27).

Associations have mostly been prohibited on the basis of their anti-constitutional nature. Of course this concept also excludes lone actor terrorism completely – a problem which the German government tried to solve in 2009 by introducing §89a to the criminal code focusing on the individual preparation of a serious crime threatening the security of the state. However, the Federal Court of Justice decided in 2014 (BGH 2014) that the unambiguous individual determination to attack the societal security needs to be proven, effectively ruling out lone actor terrorism again.

Nevertheless, four additional right-wing terrorist groups have been uncovered in 2015. One calling itself the Deutsche Widerstandsbewegung (German Resistance Movement, DWB), which in fact seemed to have consisted of only a forty-eight-year-old music teacher (Röbel 2015) who carried out eight arson attacks on government buildings in Berlin between August 2014 and July 2015. After every attack, the DWB left notes claiming responsibility and accusing the German government of consciously fostering the “balkanization” (Spiegel 2015f) of the German people. The second right-wing terrorist group, Oldschool Society (OSS), included no more than ten members who were all arrested on May 6, 2015. Active since November 2014, the group was detected shortly before they could execute bomb attacks on mosques, Salafists and refugees (Götschenberg 2015). Including members of another highly violent right-wing organization prohibited in 2012 – the Kameradschaft Aachener Land (KAL) – the OSS had extensive personal experience in violent tactics, including homicide and the faked use of chemical weapons. In January 2016, the German Federal Prosecutor General charged four core members of the OSS with membership of a terrorist organization. These four had formed what they called a “secret council” within the OSS and had planned the attacks (Spiegel 2016a). The third terrorist organization – albeit classified as a criminal association by the German authorities – had been under surveillance at least since January 2014 and all thirteen members (eleven men and two women between 21–36 years old) were arrested in October 2015 in Bamberg and charged with planning two bomb attacks on refugee homes and left-wing activists (dpa 2015e, 2015f; SZ 2015). It is noteworthy that several

members of this “Bamberg Group” were members of the local right-wing party “Die Rechte” and had also organized PEGIDA demonstrations in the past, which indicates the fluent transition between organized right-wing parties, non-institutional anti-immigration movements and right-wing terrorism. In addition to those groups, the high number of refugees applying for asylum in Germany since the outbreak of the Arab Spring and especially the Syrian civil war in 2011 has caused outbreaks of collective and unorganized xenophobic violence across Germany (see Section 4.4). During 2014 and 2015, a steady escalation of violent tactics (from spontaneous attacks on uninhabited or designated refugee homes with arson to coordinated explosive attacks on inhabited refugee shelters) also caused the creation of smaller clandestine right-wing cells, which planned and committed more strategic acts of violence and terrorism. One such cell was discovered and members were arrested in November 2015 after the four right-wing extremists (who belonged to a right-wing vigilante group of seven members called FTL/360) had executed an explosive attack on an inhabited refugee home in Freital injuring one person on November 1 and another bomb and butyric acid attack on a left-wing housing project in October 2015. During the house searches, police found extensive additional explosives and chemicals, as well as neo-Nazi propaganda material (dpa 2015g; Gathmann & Reimann 2015; Schlottmann & Schawe 2015).

Another development causing concerns for German authorities was the increase of right-wing extremists with an outstanding arrest warrant for crimes like bank robberies, arson, assault and homicide. Dated September 15, 2015, the German authorities reported that 450 arrest orders for 372 right-wing extremist offenders could not be executed because the suspects had gone underground. Two years earlier, the authorities had reported 268 right-wing offenders with an outstanding arrest warrant (Braun 2015).

Confronted with these developments of a strong increase in anti-immigrant violence and right-wing extremist crimes since 2010/2011, the German Federal Minister of Justice, Heiko Maas, saw that the internal peace of the the German society was under threat and called for a special meeting of all state justice ministers in March 2016, aiming to improve judicial measures against these crimes. At the same time, the head of the Federal Criminal Police, Holger Münch, warned against the potential risk of new NSU-like cells being formed in the current highly dynamic situation within the extreme right-movement (Tagesschau 2016).

## 4.2 Lone actors

As mentioned above, to be legally categorized as a lone actor terrorist is almost impossible in Germany. Nevertheless, right-wing extremists have committed many crimes such as bomb attacks, arson attacks and assassinations alone. Understanding lone actor terrorism as the use

of terrorist tactics by individuals with minimal or no visible organizational support (see Gill 2015: 11–15) prevents the analytical mistake of other ‘lone wolf’ concepts, as most, if not all, right-wing lone actors were members of some right-wing organization at some point in their life, indoctrinated at least partially through some form of exchange with other activists or saw themselves as part of a wider movement. Still, it is possible to focus on those perpetrators who differ from others in the sense that they have carried out the attack alone and were not active members of any group during the attack. This last point needs to be discussed as potentially biased however. As seen above, in many cases (e.g., Frank Schubert, Ekkehard Weil) individuals have detached themselves from right-wing organizations shortly before they executed their attacks. While it is mostly unknown whether this was strategically done to prevent potential blowback on the organization or if these lone actors for some reason were in fact really distancing themselves from the group because, in their eyes, it was not radical enough. This chapter gives a brief account of the most important cases of right-wing lone actors in Germany after the Second World War in addition to the cases discussed above. A full list of cases is provided in [Chapter 9](#).

As one of the first right-wing lone actors known in Germany, the twenty-four-year-old Josef Bachmann (1944–1970) shot the left-wing activist and student protest leader Rudi Dutschke in the head twice in April 1968. He had prepared for the attack and waited for Dutschke in front of the bureau of the socialist students association. Bachmann, who was sentenced to seven years in prison, carried an article of a right-wing newspaper with him during the attack. The article contained a “wanted poster” for Dutschke and called for someone to “stop him.” During his interrogation, Bachmann expressed disappointment that Dutschke had survived the attack, calling him a “communist pig.” Although Bachmann was not known to be an active member of any right-wing group, it was reported that he practiced shooting with an NPD member and met with members of right-wing terrorist group, Group Otte (Spiegel 2009).

Eight years later (after Ekkehard Weil had started his terrorist career in 1970, see above), in May 1976, the nineteen-year-old German army private Dieter Epplen attempted to execute a bomb attack on the radio station of the Allied Forces AFN in Munich. The bomb detonated too early, leaving Epplen severely injured. It was reported that he was an admirer of Karl-Heinz Hoffmann and his military sports group, albeit not an active member (Spiegel 1976).

The 1980s not only saw the most lethal and active right-wing terrorist organizations in post-Second World War Germany so far but also six devastating attacks carried out by individuals and lone actors, several of which were highly controversial regarding the involvement of other organizations.

When Frank Schubert, for example, was detected by the Swiss border police during his attempt to smuggle weapons and ammunition across the border into Germany in 1980 and killed two border policemen in the subsequent shoot-out, Schubert was still a member of the VSBD. Schubert committed suicide shortly after and was found dead in close proximity to the

place of the confrontation with the police (Hoffman 1986; Horchem 1982; Rosen 1989; Spiegel 1981b). The background of Schubert's activities could not be established by the authorities. Schubert was well known to the authorities for his right-wing motivated violent outbursts and crimes and he was facing trial in 1981 for several crimes he had committed during a political rally (Schmidt 1981). Accordingly, Schubert was still an active and engaged member of the VSBD at the time of his death. The involvement of any other person could not be proven however.

After the banning of the WSG in 1980, former members committed the two most lethal right-wing attacks in that decade. Uwe Behrendt (1952–1981) shot and killed the Jewish publisher Shlomo Levin and his partner Frieda Poeschke with a machine-gun in their home on December 19, 1980. Levin had published critical articles about the WSG on several occasions. After the assassination, Behrendt met with the former head of the WSG, Karl-Heinz Hoffmann, and reported the murder. Hoffmann helped Behrendt to hide and flee to Lebanon. He committed suicide in September 1981. Hoffmann's involvement in the crime could not be proven. Behrendt was hence thought to have acted out of his own motive, although he was involved with the WSG's foreign division in Lebanon and received financial and practical support before and after the attack. No less controversial was and remains the bomb attack at the Munich Oktoberfest 1980 carried out by the former WSG member Gundolf Köhler (1959–1980) who was killed during the premature explosion (Chaussy 2014). The attack killed thirteen and injured 200 people and is still the most devastating terrorist attack in post-Second World War Germany. Köhler was a student of geology at that time and had extensive contacts to leading militant neo-Nazis across Germany and it was suspected that he had attempted to frame left-wing groups to support the election campaigns of right-wing parties (Spiegel 2011). The lone actor thesis is still highly controversial – as noted above – and surfacing additional evidence forced the Federal Prosecutor General to reopen the investigation in 2014 (Spiegel 2014).

Another lone actor with loose ties to right-wing organizations – Helmut Oxner, a twenty-six-year-old roofer – committed a mass shooting at a discotheque known for its popularity among American servicemen and Afro-Americans in June 1981 in Nuremberg. Oxner, who opened fire at the cashier's office, killed three and wounded two people. During the shoot-out with the police, Oxner was hit and shot himself in the heart and lungs to commit suicide. In his pockets, articles from the American NSDAP/AO and Gerry Lauck were found. Just the day before he carried out this attack, he had been found guilty in court for having threatened 'foreigners' and for applying neo-Nazi graffiti together with a friend. Oxner was facing the continuation of that trial in the fall (Spiegel 1982). Clearly Oxner was inspired by right-wing propaganda and highly ideologized but the involvement of any other person in the attack is not known.

In August 1982, the former WSG member Stefan Wagner – who also was a friend of



Gundolf Köhler – took several hostages in Frankfurt/Main and engaged in an hour-long shoot-out with the police. Before he committed suicide, he reportedly told one of the hostages that he had been involved in the Oktoberfest bombing (Spiegel 1985; Von Heymann & Wensierski 2011).

The last known lone actor of the 1980s was the nineteen-year-old painter apprentice Josef Saller, who carried out an arson attack on December 17, 1989 in Schwandorf, killing four and wounding five people of mostly Turkish background. During his trial, Saller stated his motive as xenophobia. He was described as a “typical loner” by witnesses and no organizational involvement could be proven, although it was suspected that he might have been a supporter of the NF (Spiegel 1989).

Between 1990 and 2010, large-scale and well-organized militant right-wing organizations decreased with more clandestinely operating small cells emerging. Still, a number of noteworthy lone actor cases became public during these years. One of these was the Austrian Franz Fuchs, who was responsible for a series of mail bombs in Austria and Germany between 1993 and 1995, killing four and injuring nine people, targeting politicians, foreigners and media representatives. During his arrest in 1997, he attempted to commit suicide by detonating a bomb, which severed both of his hands. Fuchs claimed to be the leader of a Bajuwarische Befreiungsarmee (Bavarian Liberation Army, BBA) but in the following investigations no other members or accomplices could be detected (BfV 2004: 12). The fifty-one-year-old Fuchs committed suicide in prison in 2000.

In 2000, two additional extraordinary cases of right-wing lone actors became known. The previously mentioned thirty-one-year-old Michael Berger – an active neo-Nazi in Dortmund – shot and killed three police officers. During a traffic control, Berger immediately opened fire, fled the scene and searched for other policemen. When he found another patrol, he opened fire against them and killed another two officers. He committed suicide later (Diehl 2011). The second was twenty-two-year-old André Chladek, who left active service as a soldier in the German army’s elite special operations unit (Kommando Spezial Kräfte, KSK) in April 2000; he attacked a German army unit training with weapons and live ammunition in June, 2000. He stole six pistols and 1,550 rounds. Afterwards, he avoided the subsequent manhunt for six weeks before he turned himself in to the authorities. His plans included assassinating leading politicians, army officers, media and civil society representatives. Chladek was not previously known to the military intelligence as a right-wing extremist but displayed a clear right-wing ideology during his investigation. He was sentenced to seven years in prison in 2001 (BfV 2004: 24; Gensing 2012: 54).

Two years later, in 2003, police searched the home of the right-wing extremist Alexander Modler and found eleven operational improvised explosive devices (IEDs), ammunition and weapons. Although investigators found material (T-Shirts, propaganda material) of the local Kameradschaft München (Comradeship Munich), suggesting contacts to the above-mentioned



Kameradschaft Süd, KS, no active connections could be proven in court (BfV 2004: 32).

Presumably inspired by the attacks of Anders Breivik in 2011, the thirty-two-year-old Dominic H. had gathered an extensive collection of weapons, explosives and combat gear closely resembling the equipment used by Breivik. When the police tried to enter his apartment in Munich in April 2014, he unsuccessfully tried to detonate several improvised explosive devices and then shot himself. Authorities later reported that they had found copies of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and extensive literature about the Oklahoma bombing 1995 (Rieber 2015). However, no connections with other right-wing extremists or organizations could be found, nor specific attack plans.

The last known right-wing motivated lone actor attack was carried out on October 17, 2015. In a knife attack, forty-four-year-old, unemployed Frank Steffen, who had been a member of the FAP party in the early 1990s, stabbed Henriette Reker, the candidate for mayor in Cologne. Reker was an outspoken proponent of a liberal refugee policy, which caused Steffen to attack her in a motivation – as he claimed – to protect German children and culture, which might have been a reference to the so-called “14 words” of the American neo-Nazi David Lane. In the following investigation, Steffen expressed his fears of the Sharia law being implemented in Germany and that foreigners would take away German jobs (Diehl 2015). It is not known if Steffen had any other active ties to the right-wing movement but his socialization with the FAP seems to have been essential for his continued and strong right-wing extremist beliefs and the decision to act out violently. On October 19, 2015, the Federal Prosecutor General took over the investigations and revealed indications that Frank Steffen had planned and prepared for the attack beforehand. When police searched his apartment, they discovered that he had wiped his computers and removed personal belongings and items (dpa 2015c).

### 4.3 Right-wing violence in post-Second World War Germany

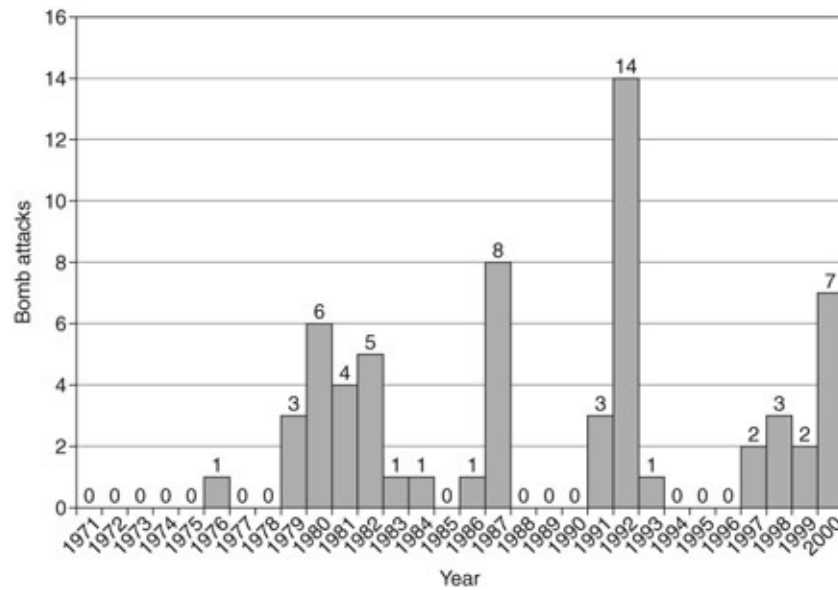
Right-wing violence and terrorism in post-Second World War Germany goes beyond the more or less well-known groups and individuals portrayed above. In fact, the vast majority of violent acts have not been attributed to specific groups or perpetrators and have not been covered widely by researchers or the press. In many cases, the perpetrators remain unknown, although a right-wing background is either obvious or very likely. As part of the official German statistics about right-wing crimes, the annual intelligence reports are the most important source of information. Dating back to 1971, a continuous collection of statistics about numerous right-wing crimes using the same classification criteria can be accessed up till 2013. The annual intelligence report for 2014, for the first time in forty-three years, does not break down right-wing crimes into delict specific subsections. In addition, the German

government reformed their main definitions and crime classification scheme in 2001, introducing the concept of 'politically motivated crimes.' Before 2001, right-wing extremist crimes were statistically reported by the police under the concept of 'state protection delicts' (Staatsschutzdelikte), including mainly violent crimes committed with the (ideologically right-wing based) intent to actively attack and overthrow the democratic government and political system in Germany, attacks on left-wing activists, and so-called 'propaganda delicts' ('Propagandadelikte' according to §86 and §86a of the German criminal code, i.e., non-violent illegal acts of production, distribution or public display of banned right-wing extremist symbols and content). With the reformed classification scheme introduced in 2001, right-wing extremist crimes were now categorized as 'politically motivated crimes – right-wing' (politisch motivierte Kriminalität – rechts, PMK-R) and focused on the perpetrator's intent and the crime's circumstances (BMI 2011: 263). If the victim of the crime was chosen because of political orientation, nationality, ethnicity, color of skin, religion, sexual orientation or disability, the crime would be counted as politically motivated. In all cases, however, the responsibility to attribute the case to these frameworks lay with the officers responding to the initial crime and filing the first report. If they did not recognize or ignored the above-mentioned criteria, the crime would not be counted within these statistics.

Although most of the crimes listed in these intelligence reports do not give further information about perpetrators or the reason why police and intelligence have determined that these crimes must have been committed by right-wing extremist offenders, these statistics are nevertheless valuable in shedding light on the extent of right-wing violence as seen by the German authorities, especially for the decades before online information sharing greatly simplified the reporting of these crimes. The following statistical account gathers the information provided by the German annual intelligence reports between 1971 and 2000, as well as 2001 and 2013 after the new classification scheme was introduced.

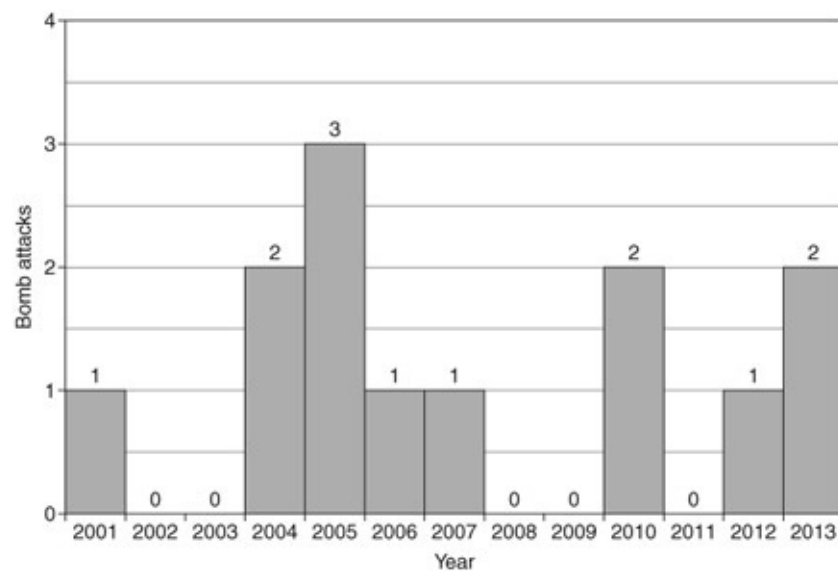
## ***Bomb attacks***

Attacks carried out by right-wing extremists involving the use of explosives in various stages of sophistication (ranging from fully functional bombs to enhanced firecrackers) are presumably those crimes most associated with right-wing terrorism. In the first part of the annual intelligence reports before 2001, a total of sixty-two right-wing motivated bomb attacks were counted by the German police and intelligence. Four peaks of activity can be shown. The first



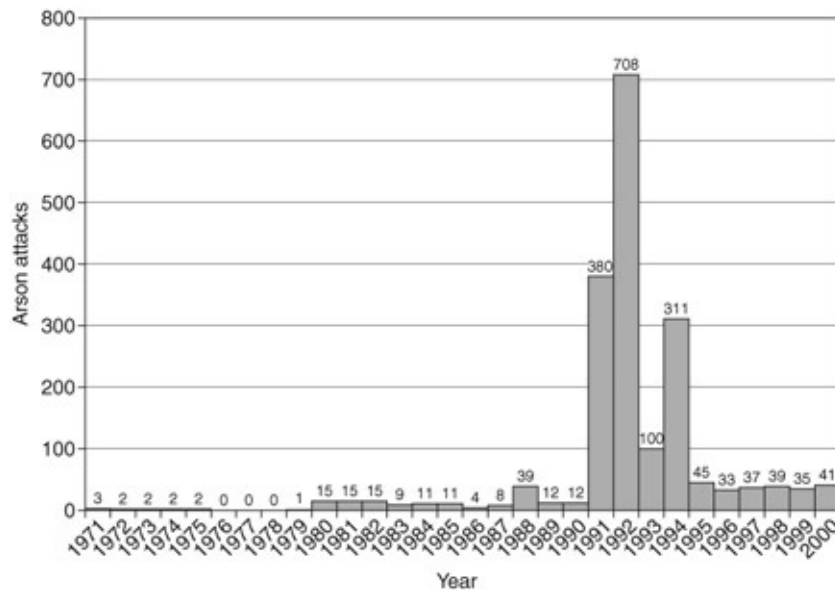
[Figure 4.1](#) Bomb attacks 1971–2000.

Source: BfV and BKA reports.



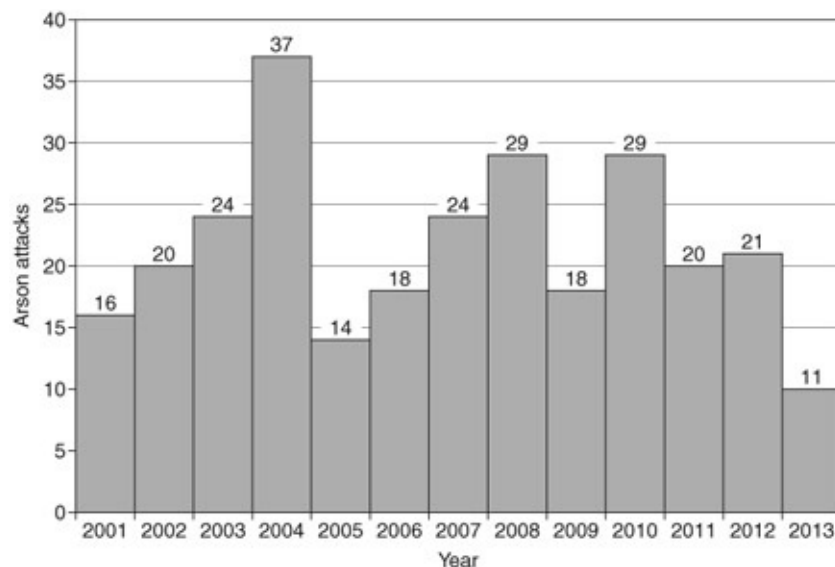
[Figure 4.2](#) Bomb attacks 2001–2013.

Source: BfV and BKA reports.



[Figure 4.3](#) Arson attacks 1971–2000.

Source: BfV and BKA reports.



[Figure 4.4](#) Arson attacks 2001–2013.

Source: BfV and BKA reports.

peak occurred between 1979–1982, with eighteen explosive attacks carried out in four years, which marked a sharp increase in the use of this tactic and reflects a wave of organized right-wing terrorism during the early 1980s. The next three peaks occurred with eight attacks in 1987, fourteen attacks in 1992, and seven attacks in 2000. Most of these bomb attacks could not be attributed to specific groups or individuals publicly, although it is expected that the police and intelligence services did investigate suspects in most cases. The sharp increase of bomb attacks in 1992 especially indicates the highly violent atmosphere experienced across Germany after the reunification of 1989/1990, with a wave of right-wing motivated attacks against

refugee homes lasting till 1993/1994.

After the new reporting system of politically motivated crimes was introduced in 2001, the number of recognized right-wing explosive attacks did not significantly change and stabilized to a comparatively low level. It needs to be noted however, that previously unknown events, such as the bombings carried out by the National Socialist Underground, were not included in these official statistics.

### ***Arson attacks***

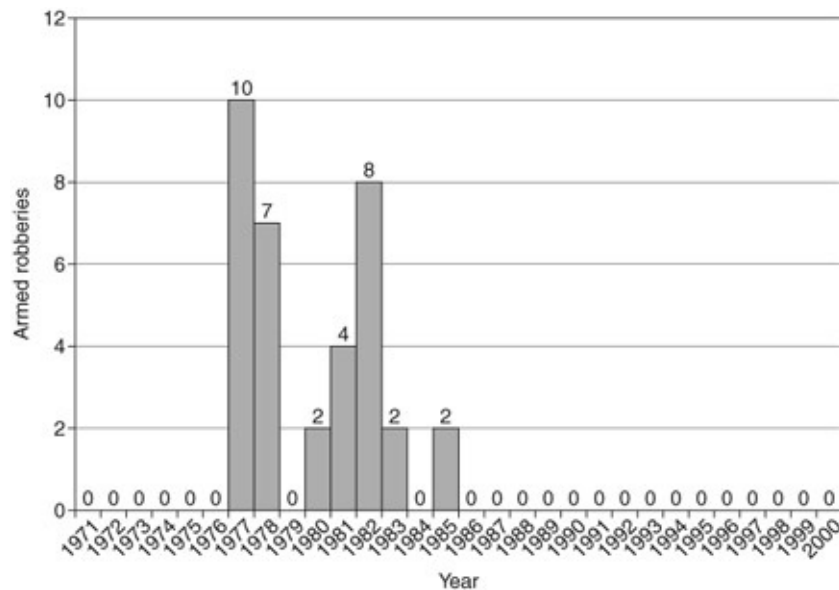
As one very common form of right-wing violence, arson attacks have received similar attention from the media and the authorities because of their publicity oriented effect paired with the high level of fear created within the target group. Arson and explosive attacks are very similar in regard to their terrorizing and publicity gaining effect and are thus strong indicators of a right-wing terrorist motive. As with explosive attacks, arson is essentially about sending a political statement or message to a wide audience and not primarily about killing a specified target.

Arson attacks became more and more common among right-wing extremists in the early 1980s, peaking in 1988 for the first time with thirty-nine attacks. After the reunification of 1989/1990, the unparalleled surge in arson attacks, mostly against refugee homes across Germany, created a nationwide and international outcry. Between 1991 and 1994, 1,499 right-wing motivated arson attacks were counted by the authorities. In absolute number, most of these attacks were carried out in West German states (i.e., 747 in the West compared with 344 in the former East between 1991 and 1992). Counted in terms of crimes per capita, however, the former GDR states consistently rank highest regarding right-wing violence.

After 1994, the number right-wing arson attacks stabilized on a more or less to a similar level compared with the number of attacks before the reunification.

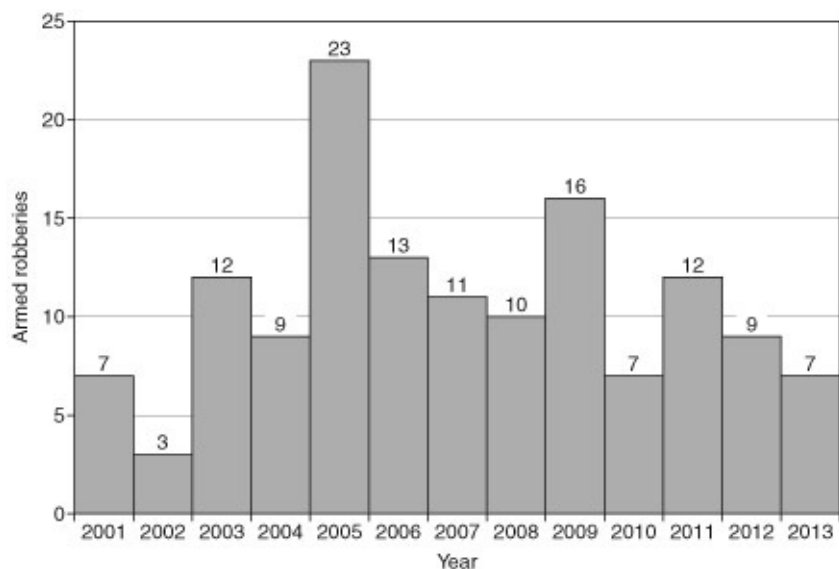
### ***Armed robberies***

Although armed robberies are not in themselves terrorist crimes, they have frequently been used to finance terrorist operations. In addition, this form of crime reflects a willingness to use violence and force to acquire resources either for political or non-political reasons by right-wing extremists. Especially between



[Figure 4.5](#) Armed robberies 1971–2000.

Source: BfV and BKA reports.



[Figure 4.6](#) Armed robberies 2001–2013.

Source: BfV and BKA reports.

1977 and 1985, a number of right-wing motivated armed robberies were reported by the authorities, reflecting again the wave of organized right-wing terrorist groups at that time and the popularity in the use of robberies to finance clandestine operations.

After the new classification scheme was introduced in 2001, the numbers of armed robberies by right-wing extremists increased sharply and remained on a continuously high level when compared with the number given till 2000. This might reflect the widening focus, which included the victim's characteristics and perpetrator's intent. Before 2000, only those robberies considered by the authorities to aid a direct attack on the government and political

system were counted. Now the statistics included robberies targeting shops owned by 'foreigners' for example. The NSU alone carried out fourteen armed robberies to finance their operations. All of them were not included in these statistics as the right-wing background was not known to the authorities at that time. Nevertheless, it stands to reason that financing right-wing terrorism became much easier with more funding opportunities created through the Internet, strategic alliances with motorcycle gangs, the drug trade and prostitution. The NSU, for example, was supported financially through concerts and donations in the early months of their clandestine activities.

## *Homicides*

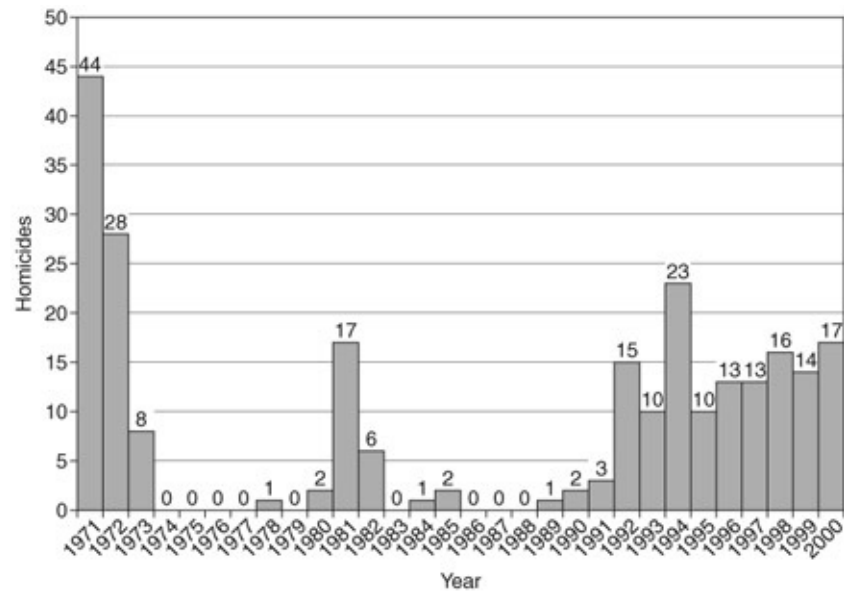
Including planned, attempted and executed homicides and murders carried out by right-wing extremists also does not necessarily show right-wing terrorist activities but covers a wider aspect of right-wing brutality and violence as well. Clearly the willingness to directly assassinate victims among right-wing extremists came in three waves before 2001. The first was between 1971 and 1973, the second was between 1980 and 1982, and the third started after 1992.

With the new politically motivated crimes system after 2001 the number of reported planned, attempted and executed homicides dropped slightly but remained constant with a short break between 2005 and 2007.

The number of casualties from right-wing violence is still highly controversial in Germany with large discrepancies between the official statistics and the numbers gathered by journalists and civil society watchdog initiatives. The numbers given for the period after the German reunification is especially contested by non-governmental sources. [Figure 4.9](#) only shows the numbers of casualties given by the annual intelligence reports. There are no official statistics for victims injured by right-wing extremists and now the German government has recognized a much higher number of casualties between 1990 and 2013.

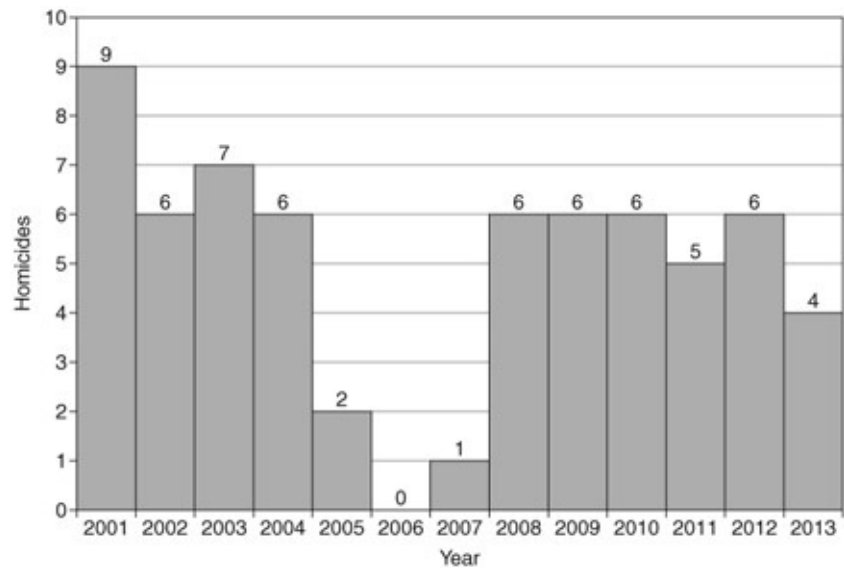
After 2001, no casualties were reported by the annual intelligence reports. After the NSU's discovery in 2011, the German government ordered a general reinvestigation of all unsolved murder cases since 1990 in order to find potential right-wing backgrounds. Currently the government has acknowledged that sixty-nine right-wing attacks between 1990 and 2015 have caused seventy-five casualties (dpa 2015b). This number was highly criticized by civil society watchdogs





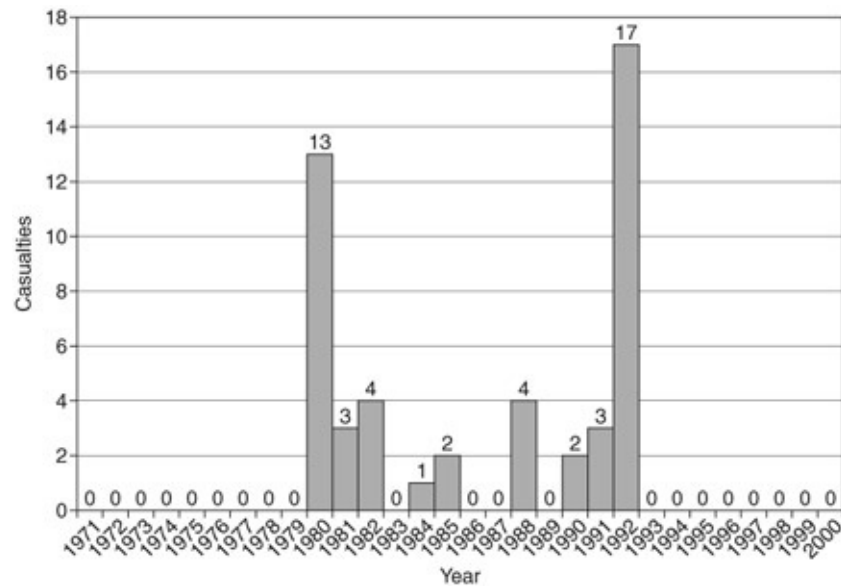
[Figure 4.7](#) Homicides 1971–2000.

Source: BfV and BKA reports.



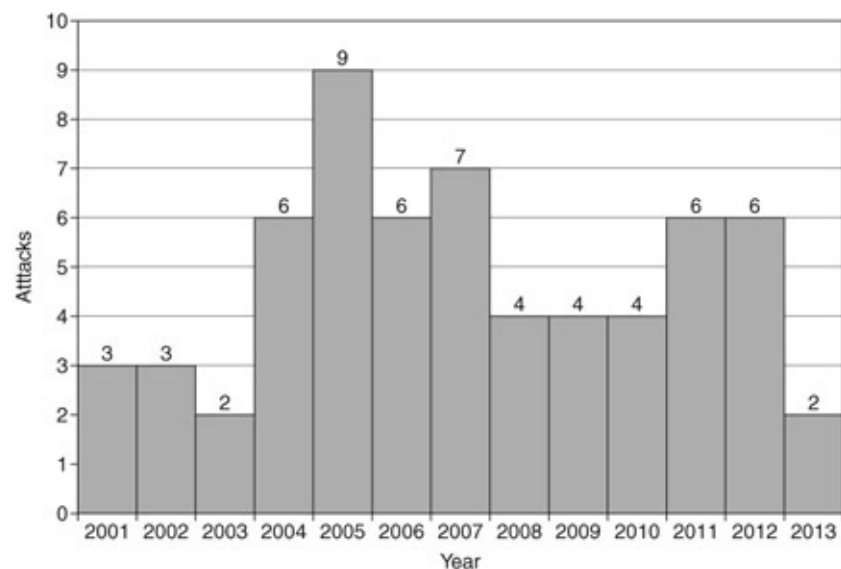
[Figure 4.8](#) Homicides 2001–2013.

Source: BfV and BKA reports.



[Figure 4.9](#) Casualties 1971–2000.

Source: BfV and BKA reports.



[Figure 4.10](#) Attacks on infrastructure 2001–2013.

Source: BfV and BKA reports.

who counted up to 184 casualties over the same period (Aslan & Winter 2013), which in turn was criticized by the government, arguing that not every homicide involving a right-wing activist could be classified as a right-wing motivated attack.

## ***Attacks on infrastructure***

With the new PMK system, additional crimes perpetrated by right-wing extremists have been included in the statistical analysis. “Dangerous interferences with air, railroad, street, or sea

traffic,” according to §315 of the German criminal code, essentially covers attacks on traffic infrastructure such as railroads, bridges, streets and airports. Since 2001, sixty-two of these attacks by right-wing extremists have been counted by the German authorities with a background mostly unknown to the public. A peak in these attacks was seen between 2004 and 2007.

## ***Kidnappings***

Since 2001, the annual intelligence reports have also included kidnappings perpetrated by right-wing extremists. A total of twelve incidents have been reported by the authorities in the annual reports of the BfV and BKA without giving any specific details. Although some right-wing terrorist groups have plotted kidnappings, only few have actually carried them out and even less cases are well known publicly. Groups like the NSKG, EBF, Wehrsportgruppe Rohwer and the Gruppe Neumann discussed the kidnapping of specific politicians and left-wing journalists such as Simon Wiesenthal or Serge and Beate Klarsfeld. In these cases, the groups decided not to execute their kidnapping plans in favor of technically less demanding operations. It is also not clear what exact goals the groups connected with their kidnapping plans. During the earlier years of post-Second World War German right-wing terrorism, one major goal of many groups was to force the release of the imprisoned Rudolf Hess (former deputy of Adolf Hitler, 1894–1987). Although one speculation is that the aim was to use the kidnapped high-ranking or well-known individuals to achieve his release, within the official statistics below, the reported kidnapping cases are dated after 2001 and – from what is known – have not been carried out with similar ambitious motives. Mostly left-wing activists from antifa groups or victims designated as ‘anti-social’ or ‘criminal’ were kidnapped, tortured and oftentimes killed by mostly right-wing skinheads. One of the early known cases happened on April 22, 1997 in Sassnitz (Mecklenburg West-Pomerania) when neo-Nazis kidnapped and tortured the unemployed and fifty-year-old Horst Gens. After having thrown their victim into a ditch, the perpetrators returned later to kill Horst Gens. During the trial the mostly adolescent neo-Nazis explained their motive as “beating asocials” (Zeit n.d.). In June 5, 2002, five neo-Nazis (three men and two women) kidnapped twenty-three-year-old German Gunnar S. during the day in a public space near Frankfurt Oder. While being held for several hours, the victim was severely tortured (e.g., raped, beaten, forced to eat bird feces, burned with a hot iron). Police interrogations revealed that the perpetrators wanted to revenge the alleged rape of a girl by the victim. Police could not confirm that allegation (Schröder 2004). Another case from the same year involved the kidnapping and torture of a left-wing student from the town of Rinteln by the high-ranking neo-Nazi Marcus Winter (taz 2006). Although he was convicted and sent to prison, his crime was not seen as politically motivated by the

authorities and was hitherto not included in the official statistics. In November 2013, a group of neo-Nazis from the so-called Blue White Street Elite (a cooperation between right-wing extremists and soccer hooligans) kidnapped a young left-wing activist in the town of Burg, close to Magdeburg (Saxony-Anhalt) in the aftermath of violent clashes with left-wing groups around 2 am in the night. With the goal of gaining information on names and addresses of other left-wing activists, the neo-Nazis drove into a wood and abused their victim for a couple of hours until they released him (Speit 2013). A more severe case of kidnapping perpetrated by right-wing extremists happened in April 2015. After being held by two high-ranking neo-Nazis (one of two was Bernd Tödter, who was also called as a witness in the NSU trial and was the leader of the banned group Sturm Cassel 18) for seven days, the forty-six-year-old male victim managed to escape on his own. Although the motives are not entirely known – the perpetrators robbed their victim and shaved of his hair in addition to beating him – it seems that one goal was to force the victim to become a member of the perpetrators' neo-Nazi group (n24 2015; SZ 2015).

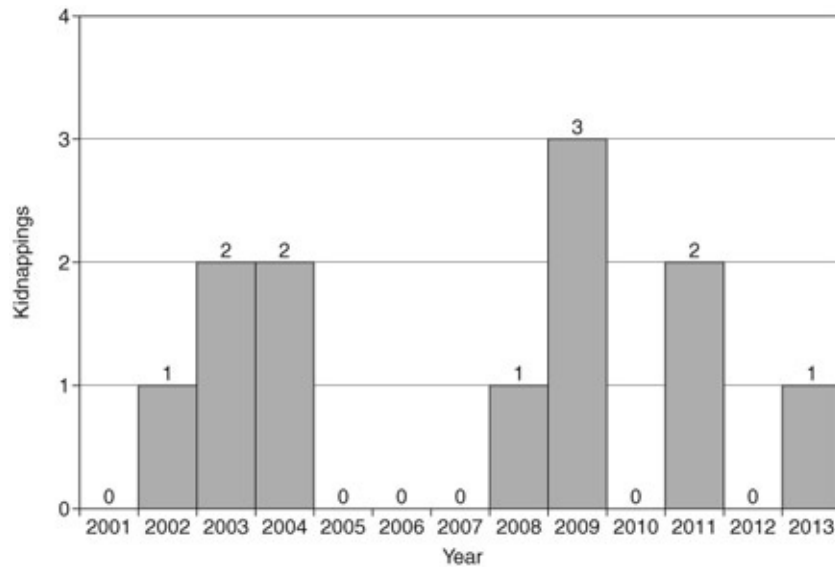
These cases show that recent cases of kidnapping involving right-wing extremists are not strategic operations with long-term political goals but usually involve inter-personal motives as well. Many of the incidents happened spontaneously, target left-wing activists or criminals and do not last more than a couple of hours. However, many details of the cases reported in the statistics are not known to the public and the tactic of kidnapping is regularly discussed in strategic publications of the Far-Right. Nevertheless, kidnappings seem to be too complex and complicated to be executed for most right-wing groups and for those using small cell or leaderless resistance tactics the long-term holding and provision of hostages might be too resource intensive and cause a high risk of detection.

## ***Extortion***

Fifty-six cases of extortion carried out by Far-Right activists have been reported by the authorities since 2001. Again no further information regarding the background to these incidents is publicly known.

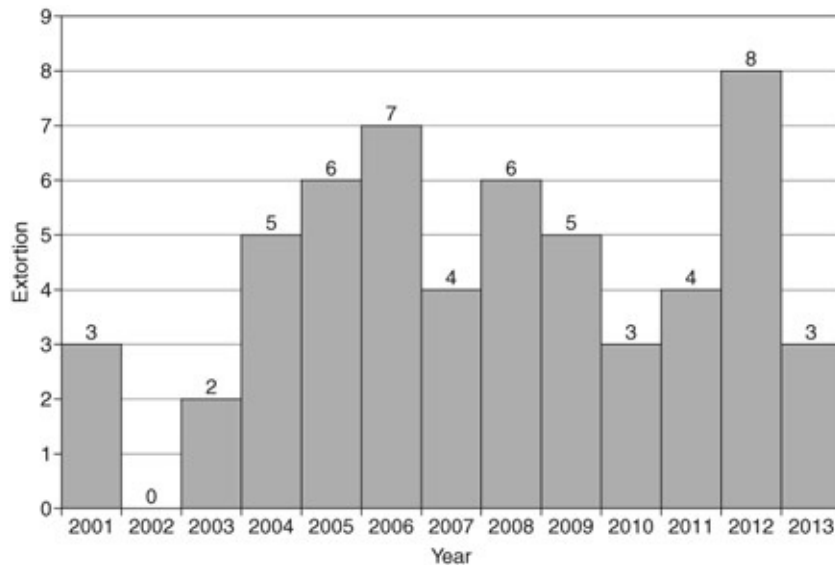
## ***Overall violent politically motivated crimes***

After the new statistical definition of 'politically motivated crimes' was introduced in 2001, the numbers of 'overall' crimes now include any violent crime



[Figure 4.11](#) Kidnappings 2001–2013.

Source: BfV and BKA reports.

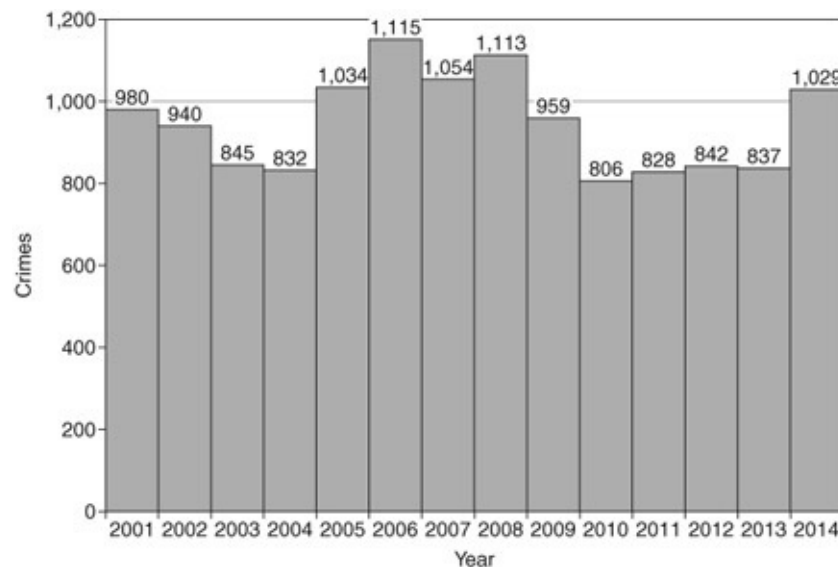


[Figure 4.12](#) Extortion 2001–2013.

Source: BfV and BKA reports.

for which the authorities could identify a right-wing extremist motive, including physical assault in addition to the above separately discussed crimes. Crimes against property (e.g., arson against uninhabited buildings, swastika paintings on refugee homes) are not included. The annual intelligence reports show an average base rate of 944 violent right-wing crimes every year since the new definitional framework was implemented. Especially the years between 2005 and 2009 have seen an increase in violent activity from the Far-Right. One important external influence on the level of right-wing violence is the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ in Europe starting in 2012/2013. Since the outbreak of various conflicts in Syria, Iraq, North Africa and other countries in the aftermath of the Arab Spring the numbers of refugees and

asylum applications in Germany have steadily risen up to an estimated 1.5 million asylum seekers in 2015 (Reuters 2015) and so has the number of violent attacks against housing installations for refugees. In 2014, the German authorities counted 1,029 violent right-wing crimes, including more than 900 cases of criminal assault (BMI 2015a: 2). Overall, violent crimes have increased by 22.9 percent and criminal assaults by right-wing extremists have increased by 23.3 percent compared with 2013 (BMI 2015a: 2–3). In 2014, twenty-six violent attacks on mosques perpetrated by right-wing extremists (Bundesregierung 2015) – a number which is dwarfed by the explosive increase in violent right-wing attacks against refugee homes in recent years. While in 2013 authorities counted fifty-eight violent attacks (ZeitOnline 2015), 2014 saw 175 attacks (BMI 2015b) and in the first three-quarters of 2015, 461 violent



[Figure 4.13](#) Politically motivated violent crimes 2001–2013.

Source: BfV and BKA reports.

attacks by right-wing extremists on refugee homes had been counted by the authorities (dpa 2015d; Kampf & Mascolo 2015). Although not yet close to the wave of right-wing attacks on refugee homes experienced in the early 1990s, the developments are certainly resembling the mechanisms of collective radicalization and the pace of increase in violence. As the official overall statistics for 2015 are not yet available while this book is written, the full numbers are not known but it is already clear that right-wing violence will reach a new peak well above all previous years since 2001 (see also the following section for a detailed analysis).

## [4.4 Right-wing arson and collective violence as terrorism](#)

Right-wing violence and terrorism has always included arson as a tactic to spread fear and

panic amongst their target groups. In many cases, individuals or groups have reflected about the strategic value of arson and deliberately decided to use it instead of explosives or other forms of violence. Especially in Germany the attempt to kill through fire has an extraordinary symbolic value implicitly referring to the crematories of the National Socialists' concentration camps. There is, however, a difference between arson (and other forms of violence) carried out by coherent groups as part of their strategy and what the German public has experienced as large-scale arson-based pogroms carried out by unorganized and spontaneous crowds against refugee homes. As was mentioned earlier, the first wave of these large-scale arson pogroms happened shortly after the German reunification 1990 and the second wave – albeit a little bit different in manifestation – has occurred since 2012. In the eyes of the German public, these waves of right-wing violence were mostly not seen as terrorism because they (as it was assumed) occurred spontaneously without previous planning and (usually) by intoxicated crowds of adolescents. Arguably no other form of right-wing violence has created a similar confusion on whether to include it under the label of terrorism or not. Legally the answer is easy – at least in Germany. Without coherent group structures, previous planning and strategic reflection, the German judicial understanding of terrorism cannot be applied to this phenomenon. Nevertheless, the 'terrorizing' effect of these arson attacks carried out by large crowds with the support of the local population has been extremely agonizing for refugees and immigrants in Germany at these times. In addition, arson always carries a very high degree of protest and symbolic character addressing the media, politics, supporters and opponents alike. As pointed out in an analysis of right-wing arson attacks in the early 1990s, Neubacher showed that for most of the perpetrators, the symbolic character was even more important than the protest value of arson (Neubacher 1998: 27–29). Between 1991 and 1994, 1,499 right-wing motivated arson attacks were counted by the authorities. In absolute numbers, most of these attacks were carried out in West German states (i.e., 747 in the West compared with 344 in the former East between 1991 and 1992). Counted down to crimes per capita, however, the former GDR states consistently rank highest regarding right-wing violence. Of these crimes, in only 60 percent of the cases have the authorities started official investigations leading to verdicts against 295 individuals between 1990 and 1995 (Neubacher 1998: 104) displaying a very untypical pattern of right-wing violence at that time. Remarkably 63.3 percent of the perpetrators had not been previously convicted of any crime and only 21 percent were known to be active in a right-wing party or skinhead group. In 30.9 percent of the cases, the attack was directly carried out by two people, in 41.2 percent by three to five people, and in 15.4 percent by more than ten people; 68.5 percent of the perpetrators were intoxicated (mostly with alcohol) during the attack and in 60 percent of the cases documented by courts, there was almost no time invested in planning or preparation before the attack (Neubacher 1998: 177–207). While the organizational characteristics of these attacks certainly did not fit the typical picture of terrorism in Germany at that time, the perpetrators' intent did.



In the majority of cases, the relationship between victim and perpetrator was irrelevant, while the main motive was to achieve a high media impact to transport a signal against the government and a large hated group of immigrants (Neubacher 1998: 211). Although the quality of the political message and signal was not sophisticated or embedded in a long-term group-based strategy the combination of (violent) protest against immigration and the attempt to force refugees to leave the country through fear shows the terrorist quality of large and spontaneously acting groups based in a joint understanding and unity guided by right-wing extremist ideology. Known to Extreme Right activists and groups, the (violent) potential of a large and infuriated crowd has become especially visible in the second wave of right-wing violence against refugee homes which started in 2013. While in this year authorities counted fifty-eight violent right-wing motivated attacks (Zeit-Online 2015), 2014 saw 175 attacks (BMI 2015b) and in 2015 the Federal Criminal Police (BKA) counted 901 violent actions against refugee shelters with a right-wing background out of 1,005 attacks in total (Diehl 2016). Of these, ninety-four attacks were arson, compared with six arson attacks in 2014. Again the upsurge in violence seems to have been caused by a widespread negative public debate about immigration, as was the case in the first wave in the early 1990s (Neubacher 1998: 48–49). This time, however, the violent tactics diversified and included arson attacks on designated but uninhabited refugee homes, direct threats against politicians, violent clashes with the police protecting the refugees, car bombs, explosives and other means. Still, the twofold signal of the attacks was to protest against the immigration policies of the government and to force refugees out of the location or threaten them not to come in the first place.

One example of these episodes of collective right-wing violence happened in the small village of Heidenau in Saxony where about 100 right-wing extremist protestors orchestrated an organized attack against the police responsible for ensuring the safety of 120 refugees on two consecutive nights in August 2014, injuring thirty-one police officers (Chambers 2015; Zeit 2015b). Although the refugees could enter and remain in their buildings, the police declared a case of emergency claiming that they could no longer guarantee their safety (Spiegel 2015e). This in turn led to other refugees refusing to be transferred to Heidenau, out of the fear caused by the right-wing extremists (dpa 2015a).

Another example of these collective right-wing violent tactics was seen in the small town of Tröglitz (Saxony-Anhalt) between January and April 2015 (Spiegel 2015c). When the political decision to house forty refugees in the community of Tröglitz starting in May 2015 became public, the local NPD party organized demonstrations against these plans every Sunday from January. When they planned to conduct a rally directly in front of the home of the mayor, Marcus Nierth, and after he had received severe death threats, he resigned in March 2015 from his office out of fear for his family and himself, which caused a nationwide scandal. On April 4, the housing unit designated for the refugees was burned down through an arson attack. After these events, death threats from the Far-Right were sent to the District Administrator, Götz

Ulrich, who was subsequently put under police protection. In October, the authorities arrested a first suspect but did not reveal any further information and released the person in the same month. In January 2016, Götz Ulrich decided not to reopen the burned down refugee home (MDR 2015).

A third example of the escalation in collective right-wing violence and the terrorist nature could be seen in the town of Freital (Saxony) in June 2015 (Huggler 2015; Zeit 2015a). Although the NPD and AFD (Alternative für Deutschland) parties had been organizing and conducting anti-immigration protests in the village since January, a steady escalation in the tactics used led to a number of uncoordinated violent attacks against immigrants and culminated at a week of daily protests by up to 1,500 right-wing extremists directly in front of the refugee home starting on June 22, 2015. The protestors tried to storm the installation and block any new refugees from entering. Only large-scale police deployment could hinder the crowd from entering the facilities. On July 27, the car of a city council member in favor of housing refugees was blown up by a bomb and on September 19, the local office of the left-wing party DIE LINKE was attacked with IEDs. On November 1, an explosive device detonated in front of an inhabited refugee home in Freital injuring one person (Gathmann & Reimann 2015). A few days later, a group of four neo-Nazis was arrested in Dresden and Freital because of this and two other attacks against a left-wing housing project (dpa 2015g). These four suspects were part of a vigilante group called FTL/360, which remains one of the most violent and right-wing extremist controlled groups of that kind in the area.

Although no statistical evaluations or scientific studies about this second wave of large-scale violence against refugee homes exist so far, the initial data suggests at least some similarities with the first wave. For example, out of 148 perpetrators identified by the authorities in one analysis only forty-one (27.7 percent) had been convicted of previous crimes and the majority were not active in any organized right-wing group (Spiegel 2015b). The role of alcohol, however, seems to be different. Only thirty-two perpetrators (21.6 percent) were intoxicated during the attack (Spiegel 2015b). This picture was supported by a later additional police analysis looking at 228 perpetrators (dpa 2015d; Kampf & Mascolo 2015). Only fourteen people had committed two or more of these attacks, 167 lived in close proximity to the attack sites, the average age was between 20 and 25 and alcohol was very rarely involved. About 50 percent of the perpetrators were known to the police due to previous crimes and only one-third had committed right-wing crimes of any sort before attacking a refugee home (dpa 2015d; Kampf & Mascolo 2015). Although the majority of perpetrators had not participated actively in right-wing extremist organizations previous to their attacks, most of them did nevertheless display clear right-wing extremist ideologies in social media or otherwise (Biermann et al. 2016), showing that a large number of the attacks have been orchestrated by highly loose individuals and small groups sharing only their ideology.

Focusing on the arson attacks only (sixty-one cases between January and August 2015;

thirty-seven cases since mid-July), an internal study conducted by the BKA showed a clear radicalization and escalation in the violence used, which shifted from targeting uninhabited to inhabited buildings in forty of the sixty-one cases conducted again by perpetrators who were mostly not part of an organized right-wing group (Baars 2015). One of these acts against inhabited buildings was the arson attack against a refugee home in Salzhemmendorf (Lower Saxony) in August 2015. After the two perpetrators had consumed alcohol and listened to right-wing extreme rock music, they spontaneously decided to throw a fire-bomb into a house inhabited by a refugee family from Zimbabwe, who narrowly escaped death (Hagen 2015; Spiegel 2015a). Starting in February 2016, the trial against the two men and one woman between 24–31 years old was based on hate against refugees as the main motive. Particularly interesting is the fact that one of the perpetrators was a fire-fighter, who participated in the extinguishing operations following the attack. He was discharged after his involvement in the crime became clear. In addition to him, the youth affairs officer of that fire-department had to leave his position because he had openly supported the NPD party in social media networks (NDR 2016). The Salzhemmendorf cases exemplifies how a potential disintegration of organizational and moral boundaries between violent Right-Wing Extremism and the ‘middle’ of the society can raise the threat from xenophobic or racist violence from hitherto unknown parts in communities.

This development caused the German authorities to be concerned that other forms of organization, for example, leaderless and small clandestine cells, might be orchestrating the attacks, although so far no indications for that could be found (Spiegel 2015d), however, some attacks clearly show an increasing degree of planning, preparation and sophistication. At the end of August 2015, a designated refugee shelter in Nauen (Brandenburg) was burned down by filling the gymnasium with gas and setting fire to the building in a coordinated and detailed way, suggesting to the police investigators the involvement of organized right-wing groups although the perpetrators could not be found yet (Fröhlich, Krüger & Kohlhuber 2015). Another case from January 2016 in Barsinghausen near Hannover (Lower Saxony) included setting fire to a designated refugee home after placing opened gasoline canisters on each of the building’s floors. This tactic put the fire-fighters under direct risk of being killed in a subsequent large-scale explosion (Spiegel 2016b) and shows the increased targeting of individuals and institutions involved in assisting refugees and maintaining refugee shelters.

An additional study by the German newspaper, *Die Zeit*, looking only on those attacks carried out against refugee shelters which seriously harmed or endangered refugees between January and November 2015 (222 incidents) showed that in only 5 percent of the cases were the authorities able to identify the perpetrators and gather enough evidence to charge or convict them (Blickle et al. 2015). The same study also reveals that almost half of the ninety-three arson attacks against refugee shelters in the same time-frame were directed against inhabited buildings, which signifies the continuous escalation of violent tactics.

Parties such as the NPD or Der Dritte Weg (The Third Way) have been involved in organizing protest groups online (typically via Facebook) and stirring up anti-refugee sentiments with falsified statistics of immigrants' crimes or claims of specific events witnessed by friends and colleagues such as incidents of rape or child abduction by refugees. One case showing the potential impact of these tactics happened on November 1, 2015 in Magdeburg (Saxony Anhalt), where a group of three refugees was attacked by over thirty people and heavily beaten with baseball bats and other weapons. Only two days before the attack, right-wing extremists had spread the claim of having witnessed an incident of mass rape of a nineteen-year-old girl by refugees from the local shelter on Facebook – a crime that never happened. Within hours the post was liked more than 1,000 times and the comment section revealed highly aggressive potential as well as calls to organize groups and 'take action' (Mayr & Siemens 2015). Parties like Der Dritte Weg have also published guidebooks on how to organize large-scale protests and have officially registered demonstrations that have turned into violent action or shortly before the arson attacks in the majority of cases (Gensing 2015a). In this way, although not proven to be directly involved in the attacks, right-wing parties have created the local climate and provided the opportunity for right-wing motivated violence and tried to occupy the rather new phenomenon of right-wing populist protest movements such as PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident) and its franchises across Germany (for a detailed analysis, see Thran & Boehnke 2015). Even if some attacks have been carried out by organized neo-Nazis who took part in the rallies, most of these violent acts were seemingly perpetrated by individuals with no ties to the extreme right-wing movement but who were deeply embedded in these right-wing anti-immigration protest movements. It is known that in some instances militant right-wing extremists have co-organized or participated in these demonstrations, thereby creating a direct but completely non-institutional link between organized, militant and experienced neo-Nazis and a large crowd of otherwise 'normal' citizens (i.e., not previously known for right-wing extremist involvement) protesting against various issues but mainly against immigration and refugee policies. The Bavarian franchise of PEGIDA – first called BAGIDA (Bavarians Against the Islamization of the Occident) and now PEGIDA – for example, was co-organized by two neo-Nazis who were sentenced to prison on terrorism charges as part of the Schutzgruppe's plot to execute a bomb attack on the construction site of a Jewish community center in 2003 and who also participated regularly at these demonstrations: Karl-Heinz Statzberger and Thomas Schatt (cf. Khamis 2015). In addition, the organizers and speakers at the PEGIDA franchises in Düsseldorf, Duisburg and Thuringia are mostly organized right-wing extremists (Spiegel 2015g).

Another incident from January 2016 demonstrates this new threat posed by hybrid and loose right-wing extremist groups, which have had no coherent structure and form themselves for violent clashes and operations shortly before the perpetration. During a demonstration of

the PEGIDA chapter in Leipzig (called LEGIDA) on January 15, 2016, a group of an estimated 250 neo-Nazis attacked the left-wing dominated district of Connewitz, smashed windows, used illegal explosives, assaulted individual victims and devastated several blocks. After the initial surprise, the local police arrested 211 right-wing extremists (Gerl 2016). One of the main aspects of this attack is that it had been well organized and coordinated within right-wing chat rooms since January 7 at the latest. Using the label “Storm on Leipzig” and the hashtag #le1101, several smaller groups and loose networks had orchestrated the attack (Radke 2016), which was the most violent right-wing mass riot in Leipzig since the National-Socialist pogroms in 1938 (Puppe 2016).

In parallel, the increasing number of vigilante groups with right-wing extremist involvement or guidance has caused some concern for the security agencies. Although not a recent phenomenon (Röpke 2015), after the high number of nationwide sexual assault cases on New Year’s Eve 2015/2016, perpetrated mostly by refugees, Far-Right groups and parties have stepped up their efforts to capitalize on widespread fear of criminal activities from refugees (Shuster 2016). Although authorities could only name seven clearly right-wing extremist vigilante groups in January 2016, there is currently no clear definition and therefore the statistics lack accuracy (Meisner 2016). As the example of the FTL/360 vigilante group in Freital shows (see section 4.1), these more organized groups can act as a link between neo-Nazis and other violent right-wing extremists and the large group of frustrated anti-immigration protesters (Hinder 2016; Lachmann 2016). It seems that this development can also be seen in other European countries like Finland (e.g., the Soldiers of Odin) for example (Rosendahl 2016).

Although the aspects of spontaneity, large crowds without hierarchy or organization and intoxication are untypical for political violence usually associated with terrorism, this right-wing collective violence displays other essential characteristics placing it into that very category. One of the first intents of right-wing collective (arson or other) violence is to directly challenge the government’s monopoly of force. This was especially visible in the pogroms in Rostock Lichtenhagen, where the local population hindered police and firefighters reaching the refugee home, and during the violent clashes in Tröglitz and Heidenau. Second, these collective attacks create terror and fear in a wide target group beyond the victims of the attack itself. Third, these acts of violence, especially arson, are carried out with a strong motivation to send a signal or create a public symbol of resistance for a wide audience. Fourth, this tactic belongs to distance methods of violence and coercion, of which the perpetrator can strategically attack and hide afterwards in the large crowd or escape from the location altogether.

Collective right-wing attacks typically include a dual political message based on a long-term political goal: immigrants have to leave the country (as well as left-wing activists) and politicians need to change their immigration policy. To fight back against government

decisions and democratic principles in fact seems to be the main motivation behind right-wing collective violence and not to attack a specific group of refugees. In this way, collective right-wing violence is akin to guerrilla violence, although less coordinated and strategic. Right-wing organizations and groups have been careful not to directly coordinate or lead these attacks but rather to stir up the climate of panic, fear, hate and urgency to act amongst the local population. In this way, right-wing groups have acted as the ideological godfather for the violence providing a reasonable cause, call for action and legitimization. In terms of organizational links to the perpetrators however, collective right-wing violence is disrupted between the ideological instigators and executors. In this sense, right-wing collective violence can be conceptualized as 'hive' or 'cluster' terrorism, in which terrorist acts – acts of violence carried out with a political goal against a group larger than the victims of the attack – are carried out by or out of largely uncoordinated and spontaneous crowds but using highly lethal and frightening forms of distance-based violence, for example, arson and explosive. These terrorist hives form shortly before the attack and disseminate afterwards.

## 4.5 The four generations of right-wing terrorism and a short history of strategic concepts

German researchers have suggested three waves or phases of right-wing radicalism and terrorism before 1990 (Pfahl-Traughber 1999) with the first one starting right after the Second World War. The second phase was followed with the newly founded NPD and its electoral successes in the 1960s and the third one starting in 1980 with renewed electoral successes for right-wing parties and the establishment of a radical and violent right-wing youth movement. These waves have been determined mainly by looking at the election results for right-wing parties and do not incorporate the dynamic development within the wider movement. Right-wing terrorism since the early 1960s can be differentiated roughly into four generations. The first generation of right-wing terrorist groups between 1969 and 1980 consisted mainly of larger SA-style paramilitary associations (the Wehrsportgruppen, military sports groups) targeting representatives of the government (military, police, politicians). They saw themselves as military units or insurgent movements fighting against an enemy occupying their territory. Consequently, violence against immigrants was rarely a part of their activity. The second generation of right-wing terrorism between 1980 and 1990 tried to absorb the lessons formulated by leading neo-Nazis after a wave of government repression against the Wehrsportgruppen and militant organizations in the early 1980s. This decade saw a number of organizations (e.g., DA, Hepp-Kexel-Group) closely resembling strategies and tactics from the left-wing Red Army Faction (Rote Armee Fraktion, RAF) but still mainly targeting politicians

and the military personnel of German and Allied forces. After the German reunification in 1989/1990, a wave of right-wing violence against refugees perpetrated by large and seemingly spontaneous gatherings of juvenile activists swept over Germany. The fundamental changes in the (East) German society brought the need for realignment within the right-wing movement. West and East German groups merged and quickly adapted to the widespread frustration and disintegration especially among the East German population, as well as a short-term legal and executive vacuum resulting from the collapse and reorganization of the East German authorities. The first half of the 1990s was dominated therefore by the third generation – called “Youth Counterculture Terrorism” by Sprinzak (1995) – consisting of large subcultural groups (e.g., skinheads) targeting immigrants and refugees with street-based violence and intimidation. Although they had already been present in the former GDR, these groups could only gain a high level of momentum and dominance within parts of the German society through a combination of societal change and organizational influx from West German groups and individuals (e.g., Michael Kühnen). From 1995, the fourth generation of right-wing terrorism slowly began to manifest itself: dynamic networks consisting of larger groups and organizations (parties, comradeships, associations) – functioning as ‘incubators’ and hubs aggregating knowledge, structural capabilities, ideological foundations and a pool of human resources – and small cells breaking off from these larger hubs after a phase of organizational radicalization. These cells and individuals, however, rarely go completely underground but typically maintain some form of connection to the hub for organizational, financial and personal support. Operating autonomously, the cells and lone actors rarely connect to each other and rely on these hubs for assistance in the separation phase in order to become self-sustaining. However, the cells and lone actors are highly ideologicalized and therefore almost never completely loose the ties to the movement. Rather, existing in a genuine and complex transitional stage between clandestine operations and movement attachment, these cells seem to be stabilized by and connected to the movement in this nexus mainly through the common ideology. In most known cases, cells separating from the hub did not manage to find this optimal ideologically stabilized position between underground and the wider movement and therefore did not receive the necessary assistance to avoid detection and survive as an entity for a long time. This development came as a consequence during the mid-1990s as the internal strategic discourse was also advancing quickly into that direction. Several core concepts were debated and distributed within the movement during that time. The two most important ones were both published in 1992 and replaced the *Turner Diaries* by William Pierce written in 1978 as the major strategic and tactical source of inspiration for the extreme right. The concept of “leaderless resistance” – written in 1983 and published in 1992 by the American neo-Nazi Louis Beam (Kaplan 1997) – propagated the strategic and tactical advantage of small (down to one man) cells, completely autonomous and without any communicative or hierarchical link to each other. Only bound together by a shared ideology and the knowledge of when and how to



strike, these “phantom cells” (Beam) were designed to maximize the efficacy of their operations confronted by modern security measurements. The concept of leaderless resistance was explicitly recommended in 1996 by the German Blood & Honour network within their national magazine. Also in 1992, a German two-volume book named *Bewegung in Waffen* (Movement in Arms) was published by the American NSDAP/AO. Allegedly written by a group of German neo-Nazis around Henry Fiebig, Christian Scholz and Christian Malcoci – all leading FAP cadres of that time – using the pseudonym ‘Hans Westmar’ (Spiegel 1995). The Federal Prosecutor General charged Fiebig and Scholz with the attempted founding of a terrorist organization in 1997, as the German Federal Criminal Police saw the manual as a “stringent” and realistic concept but the Higher Regional Court Hamburg rejected the charges because of lacking organizational characteristics (Klußmann 1997; Maegerle 2002: 166; Rath 2011; Spiegel 1995). The concept combined modern city-guerrilla tactics with the 1945 ‘Werwolf’ strategy of the National Socialists laid out in the strategic manual *Werwolf: Winke für Jagdeinheiten* (Werewolf: A Guide for Hunting Units), which was also reprinted and widely distributed in the German extreme right-wing movement (Maegerle, 2002: 166). Westmar – using the RAF as a positive example – listed important targets within the infrastructure, included extensive manuals for explosives handling and bomb making, as well as a comprehensive ideological concept. According to Westmar, the activist should not completely enter the underground but keep the ties to the movement and regular life (the “weekend-terrorist”). However, already in 1979, the German paratrooper and reserve officer Manfred Heidenfelder, who was imprisoned for the distribution of illegal propaganda material, called for targeted killings and the threatening of bomb attacks and tried to use the RAF and their martyrdom cult in regard to imprisoned ‘heroes’ in order to attract more followers among young soldiers and students for the Deutsch-Nationale Verteidigungsorganisation (German National Defence Organization, DNVO). The DNVO remains a very mysterious organization and seems to have been active between 1977 and 1979, mostly amongst students and German military personnel based on violent anti-Semitism (Heidenfelder 1979; Rosen 1989; Spiegel 1979). Heidenfelder, who allegedly had close contacts with Michael Kühnen and Manfred Roeder, saw imprisoned comrades and himself as “prisoners of war” (Spiegel 1979).

The RAF with its concepts and tactics was not only picked up theoretically by right-wing thinkers but also included through personal experience. The former lawyer Horst Mahler (b. 1936), who defended members of the RAF in 1968 and was sentenced to fourteen years in prison for forming a criminal organization, for bank robbery and for the ‘rescue’ of Andreas Baader (RAF) from prison; he was allegedly a co-founder of the RAF and trained in terrorist tactics in Jordan. In 1977, however, Mahler renounced militant Marxism and slowly developed an Extreme Right political opinion. Beginning in 1997, he publicly converged to the Far-Right and was a member of the NPD between 2000 and 2003 after which he left the party and joined

more radical groups.

As the RAF was based on a rather elitist ideology (i.e., only students and intellectuals could bring the revolution), other left-wing groups gradually became more important as role models for the militant Far-Right. The “Revolutionary Cells” actively propagated to feed back every action to the “masses” in their “contact theory” (Horchem 1982: 29). In addition, the IRA and ETA – due to their claimed close relationship of terror and fight for the people (Prantl 2010) – were incorporated as examples for the Extreme Right as well.

As mentioned earlier, in 1991, the Nationalistische Front (NF) had already published the concept of National Task Forces (Nationale Einsatzkommandos), which used historical examples of the Waffen-SS and Freikorps. Although relevant – the Federal Prosecutor General started investigating thirty NF members for allegedly forming a terrorist organization – the concept was more of an abstract strategy than an elaborated tactical concept. Tactical manuals with specific operational guidance were not in short supply in the early and late 1990s within the right-wing movement. Known to the authorities, the most popular and widespread manuals were the *Manual for Improvised Explosives* included in the *Movement in Arms* books, the official Swiss Army manual for sabotage and guerrilla warfare, the standard manuals of the US Green Berets, as well as the *Terrorist Handbook* (Bundesregierung 1997: 4). At around that time, another conceptual development took place within the NPD. In a theoretical NPD magazine’s article of 1991, the idea of National Befreite Zonen (national liberated zones) was put forward and picked up by other right-wing extreme online forums (e.g., Stormfront, Thule-Netz) and has become a standard reference in the movement since the mid-1990s. In the beginning, the idea aimed to create (by force or slow subversion) geographical areas (city districts, streets, small villages) in which the Far-Right movement would control a major part of social life, define ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ behavior, and determine generally accepted political values. Combined with the above-mentioned third generation of right-wing violence or “youth counterculture terrorism” (Sprinzak 1995: 35) other tactics (e.g., the concerted moving of activists into one city district, concerted joining of activists in sport clubs), this concept, although heavily debated amongst German scholars and politicians regarding its conscious application, could unfold as a strong inspiration for Far-Right groups and arguably had a strong effect on some geographical areas in Germany (Botsch 2012: 122). Within the last decade, the concept was also used to formulate the strategic influence of public discourses with the aim of infiltrating them under ‘disguised’ arguments or terms, which has been especially visible in the heated public debate following the sharp increase of refugees since 2011. Organized right-wing groups would use the label of “concerned citizens” to stir up fears and animosity against refugees and asylum seekers, deliberately avoiding right-wing vocabulary but essentially turning local public opinion xenophobic.

The second significant theoretical concept developed within the NPD was the idea of a Nationaler Widerstand (National Resistance). Seen as a military-tactical concept, national

resistance is a self-reference of Far-Right groups and describes a loose nationwide network of non-parliamentary activism. Obviously the NPD aimed to gain some degree of control over non-NPD groups when it propagated the idea for the first time in 1998, during their '1. Day of National Resistance.' The concept can be seen as a nationalist melting-pot without defined boundaries, hierarchies or even an ideological mainstream and is only united by the concerted will to fight the democratic system. The term became one of the most important references in right-wing popular culture (slogans, apparel, music) and thereby was used to establish a form of collective identity, leaving aside elaborated ideology and structures, but still transporting some form of self-evident basic consensus (Pfahl-Traughber 2003). As the role of definition and self-perception in regard to the national resistance is left to the groups and individuals themselves (starting from the consensus), almost every ideological fraction and, more importantly, tactical means were attracted by the concept. Most definitely the NSU saw itself as the avant-garde of the national resistance against the democratic system and enemies of the German race, as can be seen later in this work through some statements ascribed to the cell after their discovery.

Terrorism as a tool to annihilate the enemy and carry out a sense of ideological superiority was discussed within the Far-Right in regard to another possible effect: the creation of disorder and anomy, arguably leading to a higher desire for order, structure and security among the population; these are the political values typically focused on by right-wing parties. This strategy of tension – most notably employed by Italian right-wing terrorists in the early 1980s and a few German terrorists – was consequently debated in the main strategic manuals, arguing that terrorism indeed could cause better election results for right-wing parties – a concept that would be countered by the perpetrators publicly claiming responsibility for the attacks (Hoffman 1982, 1986; Prantl 2010). Some examples of these strategic manuals are *Blood & Honour Field Manual* and *The Way Forward* authored by Max Hammer (an alias believed to be used by the Norwegian neo-Nazi, Erik Blücher) detailing the necessary elements of an underground struggle by the Extreme Right in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Heerdegen 2015: 199–200). Another very important and much more specific manual that came from the Blood & Honour movement was written by David Myatt – one of the leading strategists of Combat 18 in the late 1990s – titled *A Practical Guide to The Strategy and Tactics of Revolution* (Myatt 1996). One of the similarities between Myatt's guide and the NSU's mode of operations is that Myatt recommended the use of bicycles to reach and escape from the attack sites. However, it has not been proven that the NSU members actually knew of or used these manuals and guidebooks for their own activities.

These theoretical concepts cannot be analyzed separately. They merged in different degrees within different groups and were interpreted differently by right-wing extremists. In general, however, the development both in strategy and tactics of Far-Right terrorism over the last forty years shows a major trend to dismantle and disengage from visible and overarching

hierarchies, to 'streamline' ideological debates down to a minimum, and to avoid any attackable organizational feature while finding the maximum degree of political efficacy. Clandestine terrorist operations of more or less independent cells and groups are one necessary consequence of this strategic evolution.

It can be argued that in addition to these theoretical concepts of the Far-Right, the four waves of right-wing militancy (first 1969–1980; second 1980–1990, third 1990–1995 and fourth since 1995) might have been influenced by or even correlated with waves of electoral support for right-wing extremist parties. However, the NPD, by far most important party, received its best electoral results between 1966 and 1968, when the party entered seven state parliaments and narrowly missed entry in the Federal Parliament (Bundestag). After 1969, the NPD experienced a sharp decline in electoral support at both the federal and state level. It wasn't until 2006 that the party began to regain any political significance when it entered two state parliaments (Saxony 2004, Mecklenburg West-Pommern 2006) and had a strong increase in electoral support in five other states, although without gaining seats (Berlin, Brandenburg, Saarland, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia). In consequence, the first wave of right-wing militancy starting in 1969 might have been motivated by the decline in the NPD's political importance. However, the party's electoral performance seems not to have had a wide-reaching impact on the militant Far-Right till the early 2000s. Although the party strategically decided to include violent skinhead groups in the 1990s, organized terrorist structures operated more or less independently from the NPD's electoral results. This exemplifies the internal split in the German neo-Nazi movement regarding the choice of strategies. While the NPD mostly advocates a change from within (i.e., acceptance of democratic principles to gain power), the more violent parts of the movement reject participation in elections altogether. As for the second relevant right-wing party – the Deutsche Volksunion (German People's Union, DVU) – electoral successes could only be seen between 1997 and 2007, when the DVU gained seats in three state parliaments. However, the DVU never had a strong impact on more militant groups, as the party was seen to be even more 'bourgeois' than the NPD. In addition, it is well known amongst violent right-wing extremists that political parties like the NPD and DVU are a prime target for the intelligence services and – as the first failed attempt to ban the NPD in 2003 was made public – can have a high number of informants. It is therefore much more likely that after 1969 violent Right-Wing Extremism distanced itself from electoral entities altogether. However, as the NSU case shows, personal friendships and acts of support can work across institutional boundaries and in numerous cases financial resources from the NPD ended up providing material support for more violent groups and even terrorist cells. Also, many right-wing terrorists have been NPD party members at some time in their career, which might have had a strong influence on their socialization into the militant underground through the development of personal friendships, the acquisition of skills and knowledge, as well as fostering their politicization.

# Notes

- <sup>1</sup> In the course of the events, a refugee and another foreign contract worker's home were attacked and torched by right-wing extremists with the assistance of the local population.
- <sup>2</sup> Several hundred right-wing extremists from all over Germany attacked, torched and besieged a refugee home under the applause of about 3,000 local residents, who intercepted and hindered the police and fire brigades from reaching the building.
- <sup>3</sup> Two local neo-Nazis fire-bombed two houses of Turkish families, killing three women and severely wounding nine other inhabitants. Shortly after the attacks, phone calls claiming responsibility for the acts were recorded by the police.
- <sup>4</sup> Four neo-Nazis torched a house of two families, killing five inhabitants.
- <sup>5</sup> The members were arrested in 2006 under the Belgian anti-terrorism laws.

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## The ‘National Socialist Underground’ (NSU)<sup>1</sup>

### 5.1 Short group history and activities

Beate Zschäpe, Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Böhnhardt have been the nucleus of the National Socialist Underground (NSU) and lived together for more than thirteen years. The trio, with yet unknown roles and responsibilities of each member, killed at least ten people and committed fourteen armed robberies.

The trio met at the early 1990s in the East German town of Jena. Regularly visiting the youth club ‘Winzerclub,’ they came into contact with other activists of the Extreme Right movement, who became essential for their following terrorist activities, for example, Ralf Wohlleben and André Kapke. Dating back to long before the German reunification, Jena in fact had a right-wing extremist tradition of more than a decade and had a well-established reputation within the nationwide movement, as for example the notorious and militant ‘Anti-Antifa’ strategy was developed by Thuringian activists in the summer of 1994 (Jüttner 2011c, 2011d). The concept led to the establishment of the Heimatschutz (home protection-)concept and the founding of the Thüringer Heimatschutz (Thuringia Home Protection, THS) in 1996, which quickly became the most important network for all kinds of neo-Nazi groups in Thuringia, combining militant and moderate groups at the same time – something the NPD party had failed to achieve.

Beate Zschäpe, Uwe Böhnhardt and Uwe Mundlos were early members of the Kameradschaft Jena (Comradeship Jena), a subsection of the THS, together with André Kapke, Ralf Wohlleben and Holger Gerlach. (Jüttner 2011c). The group was known for being committed neo-Nazis long before 1998, the year in which the three core members of the NSU went clandestine. They regularly participated in far-right rallies, distributed propaganda material and were convicted for different politically motivated crimes. In September 1996, André Kapke, Uwe Mundlos, Uwe Böhnhardt and Ralf Wohlleben visited the trial of a former right-wing terrorist Manfred Roeder (DA) in full skinhead ‘uniform’ and followed it closely – an event that arguably impacted the group as it had with Odfried Hepp almost sixteen years earlier (R. Erb 2012). The group did not stay in the role of silent observers but rolled out a banner in front of the court room saying “Our grandfathers were not criminals.” Two months

later, the same group was expelled and forbidden to re-enter the Buchenwald concentration camp memorial site, because they had appeared in SA-like uniforms (R. Erb 2012). This particular event is very important in proving the early networks and friendships of the later cell and also to understand the ideological radicalization, which clearly pre-dated the physical one in this case.

Slowly propagandistic actions, which were becoming more and more provocative and ideological in their nature, turned into the first steps towards organized violence. “Deeds instead of shallow talk” became the dominant topic within the movement in these years. In September 1997, the three later cell members placed a fake bomb in a suitcase with a large swastika painted on it right in front of the Jena theatre. Although investigations of the police led to the interrogations of Böhnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe, no arrests followed (R. Erb 2012; Peel 2012; Spiegel 2011; SpiegelOnline 2012). In January 1998, the police found four operational pipe-bombs and 1.4 kilograms of TNT in a garage in Jena-Lobeda. Quickly the police suspected the three young neo-Nazis again and feared that they could have built other explosive devices, but Böhnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe escaped the attempt to arrest them and fled underground, which marked the official start of their clandestine life (Peel 2012). Already at that time the right-wing movement was closely following the trajectory of the three, which can be seen for example in the song *Warum?* (Why?) dedicated to the trio by the neo-Nazi band called Eichenlaub (Jüttner 2011b). After five years of fruitless manhunt by the State Criminal Police Office (Landeskriminalamt, LKA), the investigations were closed in 2003 without any results (Welt 2011).

Hiding out in the apartments of close friends in Chemnitz (Saxony), the trio managed to escape the manhunt and attempted arrests for the first few months (Fuchs & Goetz 2012b: 33). Later Böhnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe lived in their own apartments, rented for them by supporters. In the first years, the trio financed their life with donations from the movement (e.g., solidarity concerts) before they turned to robbing bank. Böhnhardt and Mundlos carried out at least fourteen armed robberies between 1998 and 2011 (Peel 2012; Spiegel 2011; SpiegelOnline 2012; Welt 2011).

The NSU perpetrated the first known killing on September 9, 2000 and the last one on April 6, 2006, with the majority of the victims being small shopkeepers, of which eight were of Turkish background and one was of Greek background. In each case, Böhnhardt and Mundlos used the same weapon, a silenced Česká CZ 83, calibre 0.32 ACP. All victims were killed during the daytime through shots directed at their faces from close range. The first victim was Enver Şimşek, a thirty-eight-year-old business man with Turkish roots, who owned several flower shops in southern Germany. On June 13, 2001, Böhnhardt and Mundlos shot Abdurrahim Özüdoğru, who worked as a machinist for a large company in Nuremberg and had been helping out in a tailor’s shop (Müller, Wermelskirchen & Klaubert 2011; Peel 2012; Spiegel 2011; SpiegelOnline 2012). Two weeks later, Süleyman Taşköprü died in his

greengrocer's shop in Hamburg-Bahrenfeld after being shot in the head three times. Habil Kılıç was the fourth victim and was killed in his greengrocer's shop in Munich-Ramersdorf on August 21, 2001. Two and a half years later, the next killing happened in Rostock-Toitenwinkel on February 25, 2004 (Peel 2012). The victim was Mehmet Turgut, who was just visiting the city. On June 9, 2005 the terrorists killed İsmail Yaşar in Nuremberg in his own kebab shop. A few days later, on June 15, Theodoros Boulgarides was killed in his shop in the vicinity of the other murder in Munich. On April 4, 2006, Mehmet Kubaşık was found dead in his shop in Dortmund. Two days later, Halit Yozgat, who ran an Internet café in Kassel, became the last known victim of the killing series (Müller et al. 2011; Peel 2012; Spiegel 2011; SpiegelOnline 2012). This particular assassination remains highly controversial as the police quickly found out that an informant of the Hessian intelligence service (Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz) was present in the café while the owner was shot. Claiming not to have heard or seen anything, this detail gave rise to suspicions that government agencies might somehow be linked to the terrorist organization.

In addition to targeted killings of ethnic minorities, the NSU also perpetrated at least two bombings in January 2001 in Cologne in front of a grocery store, which heavily injured the nineteen-year-old daughter of the owner (Menke 2011), and in June 2004, detonated a nail bomb in another Cologne street with a high concentration of Turkish shops. The last bomb severely wounded twenty-two people and caused extensive damage (Peel 2012; Spiegel 2011; Spiegel-Online 2012; Tagesschau 2012). Another bomb attack in June 1999 in Nuremberg has been attributed to the NSU by the prosecutors but the group's involvement remains unclear.

The last known terrorist act by the NSU was committed on April 25, 2007. On that day the police officer Michèle Kiesewetter and her colleague stopped their regular patrol for a lunch break on a public parking square, close to an ongoing public festival in Heilbronn. Unnoticed by the two officers, Mundlos and Böhnhardt approached Kiesewetter and her colleague sitting in the police car and immediately shot them in the head at close range. Kiesewetter was killed and her colleague survived but was seriously injured. The perpetrators took the officers' weapons, which were recovered four years later (Abendblatt 2012; Peel 2012; Spiegel 2011; SpiegelOnline 2012).

Between 2007 and 2011 the group remained passive from what is known so far. Before killing their last known victim in April 2007 the group had robbed a bank on January 18. On September 7, 2011 the group committed their penultimate known crime by robbing another bank, before being detected after their last robbery almost one month later. There are no credible explanations for this period of passivity and the group had indeed planned a number of potential attacks at that time but not carried out any. It needs to be noted that given the long period of clandestine operations, the group's extensive armory and funds, as well as their nationwide mobility, the option that should be considered is that the group in fact did carry out attacks between 2007 and 2011 but without being discovered.

In addition, the NSU trio planned numerous other attacks, which they did not carry out for unknown reasons. In the debris of the group's flat in Zwickau, several maps, target lists and annotations to possible attack locations were found. The group reconnoitered attack locations beforehand, took pictures and analyzed the suitability, for example in 2003 in Stuttgart (Schmidt 2013). At no time did the investigators link up these crimes and consider their possible right-wing background.

[Table 5.1](#) List of the NSU's bank robberies

<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount stolen</i>
December 18, 1998	Chemnitz, Saxony	30,000 DM
October 6, 1999	Chemnitz, Saxony	5,000 DM
October 26, 1999	Chemnitz, Saxony	63,000 DM
November 30, 2000	Chemnitz, Saxony	39,000 DM
July 5, 2001	Zwickau, Saxony	75,000 DM
September 25, 2002	Zwickau, Saxony	49,000 €
September 23, 2003	Chemnitz, Saxony	473 €
May 14, 2004	Chemnitz, Saxony	30,000 €
May 18, 2004	Chemnitz, Saxony	70,000 €
November 22, 2005	Chemnitz, Saxony	0 €
October 5, 2006	Zwickau, Saxony	0 €
January 18, 2007	Stralsund, Mecklenburg-West Pomerania	84,995 €
September 7, 2011	Arnstadt, Thuringia	15,000 €
November 4, 2011	Eisenach, Thuringia	71,920 €

On November 4, 2011, Mundlos and Böhnhardt rented a caravan and carried out another bank robbery in Eisenach. Using bicycles to leave the crime scene and wait in a strategically parked caravan until the police searches were cancelled was the group's standard mode of operation for robberies. By coincidence bystanders had observed Mundlos and Böhnhardt arriving at the caravan and storing the bikes. An alarmed police patrol nearby informed their dispatch via radio communication that they were about to investigate the caravan, not knowing that the two terrorists were monitoring police communication channels and were aware of the officers closing in. After several shots were fired (the sequence and amount could not be reconstructed clearly), the caravan was set on fire from the inside before another two shots were heard by the officers. Mundlos and Böhnhardt had killed themselves after setting fire to the vehicle, which contained an extensive storage of weapons (among them the police

weapons of the killing in 2007) and ammunition, as well as large amounts of money from other robberies. Only a couple of hours later, Beate Zschäpe set fire to the group's flat in Zwickau, in which they had lived for almost four years, and this caused a large explosion (Peel 2012; Spiegel 2011; SpiegelOnline 2012; Welt 2011). Zschäpe had left the scene, and mailed about twelve prepared envelopes containing copies of DVDs claiming responsibility for their acts to newspapers, mosques, parties and one right-wing extremist mail order company, and stayed hidden for several days before turning herself in to the police, accompanied by her lawyer. Searching the debris of the flat, investigators found more weapons, among others the Česká of the first nine murders, and a laptop containing copies of the video claiming responsibility. Zschäpe, the last surviving member of the NSU, is standing trial, charged with co-founding a terrorist organization and the complicity in ten murders, two bombings and fourteen bank robberies, all since May 2013.

[Table 5.2](#) List of the NSU's murders

<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Victim</i>
September 9, 2000	Nuremberg, Bavaria	Enver Şimşek
June 13, 2001	Nuremberg, Bavaria	Abdurrahim Özüdoğru
June 27, 2001	Hamburg	Süleyman Taşköprü
August 29, 2001	Munich, Bavaria	Habil Kılıç
February 25, 2004	Rostock, Mecklenburg West-Pomerania	Mehmet Turgut
June 9, 2005	Nuremberg, Bavaria	İsmail Yaşar
June 15, 2005	Munich, Bavaria	Theodoros Boulgarides
April 4, 2006	Dortmund, North Rhine-Westphalia	Mehmet Kubaşık
April 6, 2006	Kassel, Hesse	Halit Yozgat
April 25, 2007	Munich, Bavaria	Michéle Kiesewetter

[Table 5.3](#) List of the NSU's explosive attacks

<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Type</i>
June 23, 1999	Nuremberg, Bavaria	Pipe bomb
January 19, 2001	Cologne, North Rhine-Westphalia	Mail bomb
June 9, 2004	Cologne, North Rhine-Westphalia	Nail bomb

## 5.2 Short biographies of the NSU trio

### *Uwe Mundlos*

Uwe Mundlos – who arguably was the informal leader of the NSU cell – was born in August 1973 in Jena. He grew up in a well-educated and economically stable environment, with his father being a professor of computer science and his mother a saleswoman (Baumgärtner & Böttcher 2012; Fuchs 2012; Gensing 2012c; Spiegel 2011). Mundlos, who had a reputation of being very caring for his handicapped brother, was a member of the GDR youth organization FDJ until 1987 and left the grammar school after the 10th grade in 1989 with good grades, especially in the sciences (Baumgärtner & Böttcher 2012: 24). After completing his job training as businessman, he was accepted at the well-established Ilmenau-Kolleg to finish his Abitur<sup>2</sup> (Fuchs 2012: 48; Spiegel 2011). During the era of the GDR, Mundlos became a right-wing skinhead as early as 1988 (Spiegel 2011); it was a subculture with a long-standing tradition in the area. After German reunification the youth club Winzerclub opened in 1991, where he regularly met with his later comrades and other members of the right-wing scene. Mundlos became an active member of the Kameradschaft Jena (Comradeship Jena), a subsection of the Thüringer Heimatschutz (Thuringia Home Protection, THS), participated in NPD rallies, Rudolf Heß memorial marches, Blood & Honour concerts and published theoretical articles in notorious right-wing magazines. The earliest that Mundlos could be counted amongst the core of the militant Anti-Antifa movement in Thuringia, together with Beate Zschäpe and Uwe Böhnhardt was in 1995. In that same year, he was charged and found guilty of one of his first political crimes: the manufacturing and distribution of symbols and material related to anti-constitutional organizations. From April 1994 till March 1995, Mundlos completed his mandatory military service as a member of the armored infantry. During his military service, he attracted the attention of his superior officers several times due to his outspoken National Socialist worldviews. At least one military trial was held because Mundlos was found to be in possession of right-wing extremist propaganda material while wearing uniform and because he used business cards with the picture of Adolf Hitler on them. At that time, the German Military Intelligence Service (Militärischer Abschirm Dienst, MAD) investigated and interrogated Mundlos with the aim of recruiting him as an informant. Mundlos rejected the offer and the MAD closed the case (Gebauer 2012). Contrary to German army regulations strictly forbidding the promotion of right-wing extremist soldiers, Mundlos was promoted to private first class (Gefreiter) due to his good performance. After his military service Mundlos, Zschäpe and Böhnhardt radicalized further as can be seen in their subsequent crimes, directly indicating the direction of their future activities. In October 1996 and New Year 1996/1997, two fake bombs bearing swastikas were placed by the group in front of a soccer stadium and sent

to a police station, newspaper and the local regulatory authority's office. In September 1997, the trio placed a suitcase with a swastika in front of the Jena theatre, containing a small amount of TNT which was not ignitable. These events caused the police to search the homes and garages of Mundlos and his comrades which led to their subsequent move underground. Mundlos was generally described as an open and intelligent character, keen on debates and able to tolerate contrary opinions, at least during the first half of the 1990s. Put in one word by one of his former friends, Mundlos was an "intellectual" (S. Erb 2011). Uwe Mundlos killed himself 2011.

### ***Uwe Böhnhardt***

Uwe Böhnhardt was born in October 1977; he was the youngest of three children. His father worked as an engineer and his mother as a primary school teacher. Although he was described as not being a quick learner, he received good grades until the German reunification, when he had to transfer to another school due to the nationwide education reformation in 1991 (Fuchs 2012: 87; Spiegel 2011). Three years earlier in 1988, one of Böhnhardt's brothers had died under unknown circumstances. These two events are thought to have negatively influenced Uwe Böhnhardt, who started to commit petty crimes and acts of violence as a member of the local skinhead community. In 1992, his parents contacted the state social services and asked for help regarding his increasingly worrisome behavior. He was transferred to another school specializing in problematic adolescents but had to leave that institution one year later without a degree (Fuchs 2012: 89). During the time of nationwide pogroms against foreigners in Germany (Rostock Lichtenhagen, Mölln, Hoyerswerda, Solingen), Böhnhardt met Mundlos and Zschäpe in the Winzerclub but was still committing crimes (getting more violent and severe) almost on a daily basis, which led to a sixteen-week juvenile arrest in 1993 (Fuchs 2012: 93; Fuchs & Goetz 2012b). Obviously the arrest made a strong impression on Böhnhardt as directly afterwards, he finished his school certificates and job training as a craftsman and stopped committing non-political crimes (Fuchs 2012: 93). In these years, Böhnhardt was almost only seen publicly in company with Mundlos and Zschäpe. He was described as a choleric and aggressive character, with a fetish for weapons and the tendency to violent outbursts (Fuchs 2012: 99). Uwe Böhnhardt killed himself 2011.

### ***Beate Zschäpe***

Born in January 1975 in Jena, as the only daughter of her mother, she was mainly raised by her grandmother and never got to know her father – a Romanian student, who met Beate Zschäpe's mother during her university studies in dental medicine. Beate Zschäpe experienced



her mother's two divorces and moved six times during her first fifteen years (Baumgärtner & Böttcher 2012; Fuchs 2012; Gensing 2012c; Spiegel 2011). In 1991, she left school after the 10th grade with a degree and finished her job training as a gardener between 1992 and 1996. In around 1991/1992, she joined the local neo-Nazi movement, participated in rallies (some of which she herself organized) and committed violent crimes against left-wing activists and foreigners. The Thuringia intelligence service planned to recruit her as an informant in the 1990s, but discarded the attempt due to Zschäpe's narcotics consumption (Jüttner 2013). She was involved in romantic relationships with both Uwe Mundlos (with whom she was engaged) and Uwe Böhnhardt (Fuchs 2012). She rented a garage for the group's early bomb experiments and during the subsequent home search by the police, several weapons were found in her room. Her role in the NSU cell seems to have been to manage the money brought in through the bank robberies, to maintain contacts with the public and the neighborhood (allegedly to maintain an image of normality) and to organize the group's household, while Böhnhardt and Mundlos seemed to have had the role of the 'soldiers.' After the failed bank robbery in 2011, leading to the death of Mundlos and Böhnhardt and the subsequent discovery of the group, she set fire to her apartment, mailed out copies of the group's DVD, and turned herself in to the authorities. Beate Zschäpe is standing trial for the crimes committed by the NSU together with four alleged supporters since May 2013. In December 2015, her lawyers read a statement to the court on her behalf, explaining that Zschäpe rejects all the allegations and had neither participated nor planned any of the murders or bomb attacks. Having felt incapable of leaving Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Böhnhardt out of emotional commitment, she did not see herself as a member of the NSU. However, this statement conflicts with a number of other witness statements and court evidence (Diehl 2015) and needs to be viewed with caution. After a number of conflicts between Zschäpe and her first group of defense lawyers about the question whether or not to give a statement, her new defense lawyers seem to have changed her defense strategy, now portraying her as a marginal bystander. Zschäpe in consequence admitted "moral" guilt but rejected any involvement in the NSU's crimes. In a second statement responding to the court's questions, Zschäpe again let her lawyers state that she would not have had any influence on the two other NSU members, that she was highly dependent on her comrades and was an alcoholic. In addition, she incriminated other well-known right-wing extremists for supporting the NSU by providing weapons and hiding places. All the names she provided belong to individuals who had already been charged in the NSU trial. Zschäpe reiterated that she was not involved in any crime and did not have the opportunity to stop the other two group members from killing (Spiegel 2016).

### [5.3 Support network](#)



The NSU's support network is an object of debate amongst the authorities, experts and prosecutors in Germany, although it is most likely that the full extent of the trio's contacts and supporters within the right-wing movement will never be entirely known. However, it is clear that a large number of right-wing extremists in Germany and Europe had some knowledge about the NSU and facilitated different material and non-material support for their operations in one way or another. The German authorities internally estimated the NSU's support network at approximately 129 individuals (Zeit 2013) although the Federal Prosecutor's arraignment only charged a small circle of four individuals with supporting a terrorist organization. This "inner circle" is called the "close periphery" in this study and is defined by the fact that its members were in direct regular contact with the NSU's members, that they facilitated the acquisition of weapons, fake identity documents, safe houses and other essential elements for the cell. In contrast, the "wider network" consisted of right-wing extremists who had mostly never met a NSU member but nevertheless supported their cause, for example, through donations, the passing on of information and the provision of contact details. Financial back-up was another kind of support which was indispensable for the cell during the first years of their underground activities, as it took them some years to become financially autonomous through bank robberies. Since 1999, the German right-wing extremist movement organized solidarity concerts for the trio and numerous activists donated money to the NSU. Some right-wing music bands supported the three terrorists by dedicating songs to the group. This chapter will give an overview of the individuals who supported the NSU and describe their standing within the Far-Right movement but it remains speculative and incomplete as most of the information regarding the support network comes from journalistic and left-wing (e.g., Antifa) sources. In addition, as the majority of the supportive acts provided by the wider network are either not illegal per se or time-barred, the German authorities will most likely not investigate the full support base of the NSU in the future, which is why this chapter aims to give a very brief general outline about the types of support and individuals behind it, making the NSU's clandestine nature possible and successful.

The chapter will start with the NSU's "close periphery" and the second part is divided into organizational clusters mapping the wider network. What will become apparent though is that many individuals supporting the NSU had multiple group identities and affiliations at the same time, which makes it extremely difficult to place them in one particular cluster. One lesson to be drawn out of this fact is that multiple group affiliations are a special characteristic of modern right-wing terror organizations and networks and serve a distinct strategic purpose. One will see that not only did "extremist" organizations (e.g., Blood & Honour) support the NSU but so also did right-wing political parties (e.g., the NPD). The overarching bond between the NSU and its supporters from almost every possible organizational background within the German right-wing movement was the shared ideology and a specific "code of honor" uniting these activists against an enemy: the democratic society. Most of the wider

network's members did not hesitate to give small elements of support without even knowing the specific purpose or reason for it. This became partially publicly visible during the NSU trial in Munich. One regularly heard the witness – Thomas Gerlach, one of the leading neo-Nazis in Thuringia – for example, who was suspected of being a member of the Hammerskin Nation division in Germany, that he had provided weapons for the NSU via contacts in Switzerland and Spain. Gerlach refused to answer any relevant questions about his own political involvement, which he described as the goal to fundamentally change the German society, referring to his personal “system of ethics” (Wertegefüge) causing him to refuse any form of cooperation with the court (Jansen 2014).

## *The close periphery*

### *André Kapke*

André Kapke (born 1975 in Jena, a NPD member and a leading militant neo-Nazi in the former THS and other ‘free resistance’ networks) was one of the closest supporters of the NSU from the very start. Kapke knew the trio personally through his own involvement in the Jena THS section and was regularly seen with Böhnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe on numerous occasions, such as at rallies and concerts (Jüttner 2011a). After Böhnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe evaded the police's arrest attempts, André Kapke tried to recover the keys of Zschäpe's flat, which had been confiscated by the police (Fuchs & Goetz 2012b: 39). In the late 1990s, Kapke and Ralf Wohlleben (charged with supporting a terrorist organization in the NSU trial) organized solidarity concerts for the NSU. Wohlleben instructed André Kapke to buy new identity documents using the money (4,000 DM) from one of the concerts to help the trio to leave the country. However, Kapke took the money and never delivered the documents, claiming that it was stolen from him, which led to considerable rumors within the right-wing movement that he had in fact misappropriated the money (Jüttner 2011a). It is important to note that these rumors were so widely spread that they could be publicly reconstructed after the NSU's discovery. The internal discussions about comrades in the underground being betrayed by Kapke gives an impression of how aware large parts of the movement were to the happenings and fate of Böhnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe.

### *Juliane Walther*

On January 27, 1998, Juliane Walther, at that time the girlfriend of Ralf Wohlleben, also attempted to reclaim Zschäpe's keys, after she had been successful in doing the same for

Mundlos' apartment. Obviously she and her boyfriend were trying to secure evidence or get hold of personal belongings the trio needed (Fuchs & Goetz 2012b: 39).

### *Ralf Wohlleben*

Next to André Kapke, Ralf Wohlleben (born 1975 in Jena, formerly deputy chief chairman of the NPD Thuringia and NPD spokesperson) was the most important member of the NSU's close periphery support structure. He also was a member of the THS, as well as the Thuringia NPD and allegedly helped the trio to escape in 1998, supporting them with financial assistance (Schmidt & Speit 2012). Ralf Wohlleben had the role of main facilitator or contact point between the trio and the rest of the movement, as well as their families. He made phone calls for the NSU and organized money transfers (Schmidt & Speit 2012). In addition, he actively searched for other right-wing extremists willing to provide help, for example, Holger Gerlach, whom he put in contact with the cell (Jüttner 2011a). Ralf Wohlleben was arrested November 29, 2011. The German Federal Prosecutor General charged him with assisting in nine cases of murder and for the facilitation of the murder weapon and ammunition to a terrorist organization.<sup>3</sup> Holger Gerlach (born 1974 in Jena, an active neo-Nazi till 2005 and classified as low-level follower by the authorities) was also arrested shortly after the NSU's discovery. He gave an extensive confession in which he claimed Ralf Wohlleben "was the centrepiece of the supporter circle"<sup>4</sup> (Diehl, Korge, Menke & Witte 2011; R. Erb 2012). In 1998, the Thuringia intelligence service (Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz) had initiated a so-called "G-10-Maßnahme"<sup>5</sup> against Wohlleben and another suspect, Jürgen Helbig, because the intelligence service knew that André Kapke was not the only neo-Nazi having contacts to the hidden trio (Wetzel 2012). Obligated by law to justify the surveillance, the intelligence service wrote in a memorandum that a "circle of individuals in Jena around André Kapke have direct contact to the three wanted persons" (Wetzel 2012). Jürgen Helbig allegedly acted as a courier for Böhnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe transporting various goods for the cell (Heilig 2012).

Ralf Wohlleben was arrested on November 29, 2011 and charged with supporting a terrorist organization and for being an accessory to six murders. He is the only NSU supporter who remained in investigative custody even when the Munich trial started in May 2013. He remained silent till December 2015 when he gave a statement to the court denying that he had supplied the murder weapon. Although he confessed to having helped the NSU trio to escape the police, he claimed to have had no knowledge about their crimes. Arguing that paid informants like Tino Brandt were more important supporters, Wohlleben also clearly displayed an unchanged right-wing extremist ideology to the court and the audience. He claimed that his own violent actions in the past were motivated entirely by threats and attacks from left-wing activists. He was allowed to screen a right-wing movie in court to exemplify

his own ideology, which focuses on anti-capitalism, ethnopluralism and anti-multiculturalism (Ramelsberger 2015). His strong conviction of ethno-pluralism especially showed an advanced ideological reflection regarding attacks against the democratic political system (for a detailed description of that ideological subsystem, see Spektorowski 2003).

### *Holger Gerlach*

Holger Gerlach was the third essential contact person for the NSU. The Federal Prosecutor General charged him with facilitating passports and driving licenses for the trio, at least since 2007, although he officially claims to have left the neo-Nazi movement in 2005. He is also thought to have rented several caravans for the NSU, one of which was used by Böhnhardt and Mundlos during the assassination of Michèle Kiesewetter. In addition, Gerlach made phone calls, organized money transfers, actively engaged in fund-raising for the NSU within the movement and asked for hiding places (Diehl et al. 2011; Spiegel 2012). He established contact to a befriended married couple – both with close connections to the Blood & Honour and motorcycle gang networks – who provided financial aid to the trio over years. Gerlach himself allegedly donated 3,000 DM to the group. In 1999, together with another Blood & Honour comrade, Hannes Knoch, Gerlach approached the well-known NPD member and producer of Far-Right music and merchandise, Thorsten Heise, during his wedding and asked him to assist with bringing the three terrorists out of the country (Röpke & Speit 2012). In the same year, Gerlach participated in a solidarity concert for the NSU, organized by the neo-Nazi band “Eichenlaub” (oak leaves). Hannes Knoch and another Blood & Honour member, Hannes Franke, accompanied him (Röpke & Speit 2012). In his statement after the police interrogation, Holger Gerlach confessed to having been given another weapon for the NSU by Ralf Wohlleben, which he handed over to the trio, but claiming to have been ignorant of the weapon’s purpose (Spiegel 2012). Gerlach had a very important function for the NSU, which can be seen by the fact that the group used his identity as one alias for Böhnhardt and therefore needed to check-up on recent developments in Gerlach’s life (e.g., girlfriend, job, interests) to maintain an accurate disguise. Consequently, the trio regularly contacted him, for example after the NSU’s holidays at the German Baltic Sea since 2007 and during several visits at his home (Schölermann 2012), intensely questioning Gerlach about his life and social environment. The trio even invited him to accompany the group during one of their holidays, paying for all the costs but demanding that Gerlach obey strict rules, for example, no cell phone use (Fuchs & Goetz 2012b: 219).

Holger Gerlach was arrested November 13, 2011 but released on May 25, 2012 because his involvement in the killings could not be proven (Diehl et al. 2011; Stern 2012). Nevertheless, he was charged with assisting a terrorist organization in three cases and is standing trial in

Munich together with Zschäpe and the other NSU supporters.

### *André Eminger*

André Eminger, another member of the NSU's close periphery and of the Skinhead group, Brigade Ost (Brigade East), was arrested on November 24, 2011. Owning a marketing and media company, Eminger allegedly helped the NSU to create the technically sophisticated video claiming responsibility and sarcastically mocking the attacks. The Federal Prosecutor General charged him later with assisting in one bombing in Cologne, for robbery and for the support of a terrorist organization. Eminger was a member of the Weiße Bruderschaft Erzgebirge (White Brotherhood Erzgebirge, WBE) – a subsection of Blood & Honour in Saxony. He had allegedly been supporting the trio since 2003, at the latest (Boos 2012). He and his wife had close contact with the NSU, regularly visiting Böhnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe, and spending time with them on vacations. Zschäpe even took care of the couple's children several times (Boos 2012). As the NSU was never completely clandestine and participated in the social life of their respective environments, they had to use different alias identities, for example to rent cars, buy Bahncards,<sup>6</sup> to check in on camping grounds during their vacations, to loan DVDs and to go to the doctor. The trio had been using Eminger's identity at least since 2005. André Eminger was the first person Zschäpe called after she had set fire to the group's apartment. She was picked up by him and was driven to the nearest train station (Fuchs & Goetz 2012a). On a hard disk recovered by the police in the debris of the apartment, personal files of Eminger were found (Boos 2012).

On December 11, 2011, Matthias Degner, an old friend of André Eminger's, was arrested. Degner also was a member of the Brigade Ost. He had allegedly rented two apartments for the NSU in Zwickau in March 2008 and May 2011 and Zschäpe had used his surname (Boos 2012). Degner was released on May 29, 2012 but is still thought to have been the NSU's most important contact point and supporter during their time in Zwickau.

### *Mandy Struck and Max Florian Burghard*

In addition to Holger Gerlach's identity for Böhnhardt, two more people supplied their names and personal details for the two other NSU members in order to establish and maintain alias personalities. Mandy Struck, who was also a WBE member, and her boyfriend Max Florian Burghard were the first contact points of the trio in Chemnitz and the terror cell lived in their apartment for almost six months. In February 1998, two Skinheads from the group '88er' asked Mandy Struck if she could help some "comrades" having problems (the trio was already

waiting in a car in front of her house). Struck offered the place of her boyfriend, who then moved in with her for some months (Fuchs & Goetz 2012b: 46).

Max Florian Burghard's identity was used by Mundlos, who even managed to get a passport issued on Burghard's name but using his own picture (Fuchs & Goetz 2012b: 181). Zschäpe used the name and identity of Mandy Struck. For the NSU, this first long-term hideout became an operation base, where they planned the first bank robberies, wrote articles for right-wing magazines, stored weapons and organized fake identities (Fuchs & Goetz 2012b: 181).

At least one other person, Kai Seidel – a friend of Mandy Struck's – had personal contact with the trio, which is proven by pictures showing them together. His role is yet unknown (Müller 2011).

## *Summary*

Shortly after the NSU's discovery, twelve individuals thought to have been in direct contact with the terrorist cell and providing assistance were arrested by the Federal Prosecutor General. All but one – Ralf Wohlleben – had to be released as either their involvement could not be proven or the crimes had become time-barred. The NSU's close periphery shows several important elements of the group's mode of operation and also explains its success in staying undercover for over a decade. Essential elements of clandestine terrorist operations (weapons, money, fake documents and personal alias identities, hideout places, communication) had been provided by the close periphery, not all of whom were personally known to the group before they went underground. What seems to be another essential function of this close circle around the NSU is the need for a permanent contact point between the group and the larger movement, not only for communicating back and forth and asking for assistance but also for providing the scene with stories and updates on the cell's operations. With the NSU becoming more successful in their bank robberies and thereby reaching a stage of financial self-sufficiency, the close periphery's role was reduced to communication and maintenance of the alias identities. Nevertheless, the NSU would have not been able to reach that stage without the initial 'kick-off' assistance by this small group of committed neo-Nazis, who pledged to support their comrades to remain underground. Surprisingly, the role of personal friendships was not too important but was definitely necessary to start something that can be called a 'snow ball' mechanism. The NSU relied on the help of the movement during their first years of underground activities and rewarded that assistance later on. In two proven instances, the terror cell donated money from their bank robberies to right-wing magazines (Gensing 2012d), which shows the unbroken commitment and connection to the movement and the political cause. In short, a small group of ideologically committed

supporters bound together not exclusively through personal relationships but also through a political cause, actively provided essential material and non-material assistance for the group to establish its underground life. However, this small and close periphery could not have provided the assistance without the support of numerous other members of the movement, who donated money, facilitated contacts and provided the ideological base in which the NSU was embedded.

## *The wider network*

### *Thüringer Heimatschutz, THS*

The Thüringer Heimatschutz (Thuringia Home Protection, THS) is an association of free comradeships (Kameradschaften) active in Thuringia which was founded in 1996/1997 as the successor organization to the Anti-Antifa-Ostthüringen. During its heyday, the group had approximately 160 members (Mut 2011) under the leadership of the high-ranking NPD member Tino Brandt, who was also an informant of the local intelligence service. The THS was the single most important network in which the later NSU members were most active and became indoctrinated with militant neo-Nazism. In addition, numerous later supporters of the NSU were active THS members as well (e.g., Ralf Wohlleben, André Kapke). Already in 1995 the local intelligence service were taking notice of debates within and outside this group regarding the founding of a right-wing terror network (Jüttner 2011d). Although intelligence services from different German states employed active informants in the THS (at least 40 informants were counted) and although the NSU cell remained in active contact with several THS members, no information regarding the whereabouts and operations of the group could be gathered by the authorities (Welt 2012) – a failure that points to the role of ideologically stable support groups, who managed to avoid repression through authorities by incorporating a certain level of cooperation, without giving away information about the core cell. However, the leader of the THS, Tino Brandt, was an informant for the intelligence at least between 1994 and 2001 and received more than 200,000 DM in revenue, which he claimed later to have used completely “for the movement” (R. Erb 2012).

Thomas Gerlach, another member and a co-founder of the THS, as well as being a member of the Hammerskins in Saxony, was a close friend of André Kapke, Ralf Wohlleben, Mandy Struck and Jan Werner. Together with Ralf Wohlleben he organized right-wing concerts in cooperation with Blood & Honour. He personally knew the aforementioned band, Gigi und die braunen Stadtmusikanten, which released their *Döner Killer* song in 2010 (Bildner 2012a).

Similar to other right-wing terrorist groups, the THS became something of an ‘incubator’ or

‘host’ for the terrorist cell, consisting of ideologically committed members who combined knowledge from different areas (explosives, weapons, clandestine operations, fund-raising, cover identities), as well as offering enough individuals willing to provide small elements of support (phone calls, courier services, money transfers), which is a core characteristic of right-wing terrorism. Out of these ‘incubator’ groups/networks, small cells split off, maintain stable but controlled contact to the former host, and act as autonomous entities.

### *Blood & Honour*

Blood & Honour (B&H) is a right-wing extremist music network, which evolved around the organization of right-wing rock concerts and the production as well as the sale of Far-Right music all over Europe. Having its roots in 1980s England, Ian Stuart Donaldson, the lead singer of the neo-Nazi-band Skrewdriver, founded the concept of “right-rock” and the B&H network, directly referring to the central slogan of the National Socialist Hitler Youth (“Blut und Ehre”) in its name (Netz-gegen-Nazis 2012a). B&H’s main role, besides raising funds and managing the right-wing extremist music industry, was and is the recruitment of new activists for the movement through music combined with politics. Having developed the character of a transnational organized crime syndicate, B&H also created an armed offspring: Combat 18 (C18), which became known as one of the most notorious and violent international right-wing terrorist organizations, with divisions in almost every European country (but most active in England and Scandinavia). B&H propagates an ideology based on the global dominance of the “white race” and its protection against racially “inferior” aggressors (Netz-gegen-Nazis 2012a). In 1993, the network started to build its first divisions in Germany and quickly grew to be one of the leading powers within the German movement, with over 500 members in the late 1990s (membership in B&H can be compared to motorcycle gangs or mafia type organizations, with strict hierarchies, initiation procedures and strict commitment to the group). Blood & Honour was prohibited in 2000 by the German Federal Minister of the Interior, together with its own youth organization “White Youth.” It was, however, an unsuccessful attempt to stop the network’s activities, which simply changed its name to “Division 28” and continued all operations (Netz-gegen-Nazis 2012a). With its internationally well elaborated network, strict hierarchies, connections to militant sub-groups and strategic discourse reflecting on the use of terrorist violence and structures, Blood & Honour was the most important support network for the NSU, which can be seen in the number of B&H members within the NSU’s close periphery. Support concerts, contacts, weapons, strategic concepts and manuals, money and a highly credible support base (within the right-wing movement) were facilitated by B&H structures. Although in every case individuals decided to provide certain elements for the NSU, it was the network behind them which made the support possible in the first place.



Bönnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe themselves were counted among the “core” of the Thuringia B&H scene (Schmidt 2012a) around the time the network internally discussed and propagated clandestine operations. Many other supporters of the NSU came directly from this environment, for example, Thomas Starke, Jan Werner and Antje Probst, whose houses were searched by the police on January 25, 2012. Two of them allegedly organized weapons and explosives for the NSU. All three, however, have aided the terror cell in different ways but were active members of the B&H division in Saxony (Dresden 2012).

Thomas Starke got to know the later NSU members in 1992 during a concert of the right-wing extremist band, Oithanasie. The trio visited him in prison, sent him letters and after his release between 1996 and April 1997, Thomas Starke seemed to have been in a romantic relationship with Zschäpe. During this time, he facilitated one kilogram of TNT for the cell and helped them to find their first hiding places underground (Infoblatt 2012). In November 1999, another B&H member offered him money for the trio during a concert, which Starke refused to take, arguing that the three would not need donations any longer, because they had “jobs” now – referring to their more and more successful bank robberies (Infoblatt 2012). Similar to Tino Brandt, Thomas Starke was an informant for the authorities but in his case for the State Criminal Police Office (Landeskriminalamt, LKA) Berlin between 2000 and 2011. After the NSU’s discovery, it became known that he actually provided the authorities with information about the trio’s hiding place – however, it is still unknown what happened with that information and why it was not used by the police (Tagesschau 2012).

Jan Werner, another important supporter of the NSU, was the leader of the B&H section in Saxony for some years and was the chief editor of the magazine *White Supremacy*, an internal B&H publication in Saxony, as well as the owner of Movement Records – a well-known label for neo-Nazi bands (Dresden 2012). Werner allegedly organized weapons for Bönnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe. During a concert in 1998 – monitored by the intelligence service – he claimed to have had direct contact with the trio, as well as to the Swiss scene, where the main murder weapon originated (Focus 2012). According to yet unproven reports, Werner himself was also an informant of State Criminal Police Berlin between 2001 and 2005. This was hinted at in a request by the Berlin authorities towards the Federal Criminal Police Office (Bundeskriminalamt, BKA) to inform the Berlin office if any judicial measures against Werner were to be executed (Förster & Decker 2012). Movement Records was responsible for the production and the sale of records from the band Landser, one of Germany’s most extreme and notorious right-wing music groups, calling itself “terrorists with e-guitars.” In 2005, the band made history by becoming the first music group to be banned as a “criminal organization” under the German criminal code. Shortly before that, their latest record had been produced and sold by Werner’s label with strong support from the Saxony B&H division (Dresden 2012). Thomas Starke was a business partner of Werner at that time, together with Mirko Hesse, who interestingly was not a B&H member but was the section leader of the no

less violent and notorious Hammerskin network in Saxony. It is very surprising to see practical cooperation between B&H and the Hammerskins on this level, as usually these two networks are competitors, struggling for a market share in the right-wing music industry. Similar to hostile motorcycle gangs, they typically see each other as enemies and rarely cooperate. Mirko Hesse was given the task of producing the record and layout for the booklet of the CD. Hesse too was an informant of the intelligence service (BfV) and has been charged with aiding a terrorist organization by the Federal Prosecutor General (Dresden 2012). After the record was produced, Jan Werner and Thomas Starke were charged and put on trial in 2000, during which both delivered extensive testimonies, which caused the movement to issue severe threats against him later (Netz-gegen-Nazis 2008). Both only received light sentences due to their statements and affirmations of having left the movement (Dresden 2012).

Antje Probst and her husband – both B&H members in Saxony – owned a shop selling Far-Right apparel, records and military gear. She offered her passport to Zschäpe and helped with the B&H's escape plan for the trio to leave Germany and hide in South Africa (Wetzel 2012). The connection to South Africa was made available through a well-known right-wing publisher, Claus Nordbruch, in the year 2000, who was living in Africa at that time and, through an advertisement in the Skinhead magazine, *Blood & Honour*, where he invited German neo-Nazis to visit him for weapons and survival training. According to unconfirmed reports by far-left activists, Böhnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe followed his invitation too (Antifa-Recherche-Team-Baden-Württemberg 2011). In 1999, the above-mentioned Ralf Wohlleben allegedly instructed André Kapke to buy three passports with the money received from a solidarity concert. Using these passports, the three terrorists were supposed to flee to South Africa. It is not clear however if the NSU went to Nordbruch's farm, but it has been proven that some Thuringia neo-Nazis did in 2000 (Antifa-Recherche-Team-Baden-Württemberg 2011). Nordbruch allegedly had extensive ties to the THS network and personally to the NSU supporters, André Kapke and Tino Brandt (Antifa-Recherche-Team-Baden-Württemberg 2011).

Support for the NSU was not limited to the Saxony B&H section however, but also stretched to the Thuringia division. One member, Marcel Degner – another informant of the intelligence service and a short-term leader of B&H in Thuringia – allegedly donated money to the trio via Thomas Starke during a concert in November 1999.

After the NSU's discovery, several contact lists were recovered in the debris of the apartment. One such list from Böhnhardt mentioned another member of the Thuringia B&H, Andreas Schulz, who allegedly helped to facilitate the main murder weapon and sold it to Ralf Wohlleben, who distributed it to the NSU via another contact (Diehl & Jüttner 2012). The initial charges against him as an accessory to the murder had to be dropped, as it could not be proven that he actually knew the purpose of the weapon (Diehl & Jüttner 2012).

In addition to the personal connections and material assistance provided by the members of

the B&H network, another essential element has to be discussed here. Internal publications since the early 1990s have analyzed and recommended certain strategies and tactics for successful armed resistance – or terrorism. These documents are well known within the right-wing scene and were circulated extensively in the mid-1990s. The German scene discussed these manuals and publications as well and after the NSU's discovery, investigators recognized numerous parallels in the tactical approaches of the NSU which had been previously suggested in several right-wing publications. The former leading strategist of Combat 18 in Great Britain, David Myatt, for example suggested in his *Practical Guide to The Strategy and Tactics of Revolution* to use of bicycles for robbing banks and killings, as well as a phase of about ten years' of killing only "soft-targets" (unprotected representatives of the target group) before slowly stepping up the "level" of targets. The goal for Myatt was the creation of a "revolutionary climate" among the "Aryan" population (Myatt, c.1996: 28). The original manual also contained detailed instructions on how to create nail-bombs, which was used by the neo-Nazi David Copeland for his three bomb attacks in London in April 1999 – a weapon used by the NSU in their June 2004 attack in Cologne as well. However, the construction of nail-bombs is fairly easy and cost-effective and has been used by numerous terrorist groups in the past. Other important publications circulated among B&H members are the infamous *Field Manual* and *The Way Forward* written by an author using the name Max Hammer (allegedly the former Norwegian B&H leader Erik Büchner/Tor Erik Nilsen). These two publications for example discussed the Swedish 'Laserman' attacks by John Ausonius between 1991 and 1992 and recommended certain tactical elements applied by Ausonius, which were later used by the NSU as well (e.g., the rental caravans and bicycles). This led the intelligence services to speculate that the NSU might have used the Laserman as a "blueprint" (Goetz & Schultz 2012). In addition, the German authorities suspected that the concept of 'leaderless resistance' – originating in the essay "Leaderless Resistance" by the American neo-Nazi Louis Beam in 1983 – and the formation of small, armed cells discussed and recommended by Myatt and Hammer might have influenced the NSU (Heinzle & Goetz 2012). Beyond speculations, however, nothing specific is known so far about the tactical and strategic concepts of the NSU and about how far the group was influenced by these publicly available manuals.

### *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD)*

The Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD) quickly released a press statement denying any connection to the NSU in December 2011, shortly after the terror group's discovery:

The NPD rejects any connection between our party, our goals, our program and our practical work and the alleged perpetrator group or other non-parliamentary associations, which see violence as a legitimate means to reach political

However, it became clear with the advancing investigations regarding the NSU's support structures that numerous NPD members were important and active aides for the cell.

Carsten Schultze, for example, played a key role in supplying the murder weapon to the NSU. He was the NPD section founder and short-term director in Jena, together with Ralf Wohlleben. In 2000, he chaired the NPD's youth organization, Junge Nationaldemokraten (JN), in Thuringia (R. Erb 2012). Schultze allegedly had close contact with the NSU, which he claimed during a JN meeting witnessed by an informant of the intelligence service. For an unspecified time, Schultze allegedly was the NSU's only contact point and had regular phone conversations with the trio, because Ralf Wohlleben was suspected of being under surveillance by the police (R. Erb 2012). Both however spoke in February 1999 to facilitate legal assistance for Zschäpe in form of a long-standing NPD lawyer. In March 1999, Schultze broke into Zschäpe's apartment in order to provide her with certain personal belongings but was interrupted (R. Erb 2012). As he confessed to have handed over the Česká murder weapon personally to Böhnhardt (together with the later used silencer), the Federal Prosecutor General charged him with complicity in nine cases of murder (Diehl & Jüttner 2012). Schultze himself claimed to not have known anything about the weapon's purpose and to have left the right-wing movement in 2000, but according to the Federal Prosecutor's office stayed in contact with scene members at least until 2003 (AIPD 2011).

It was speculated by journalists that the local NPD section in Jena was founded as a possible follow-up organization in case the THS was prohibited (Gensing 2012b), which is the reason for the high degree of personal overlapping between the two organizations.

The deputy NPD federal chairman and leader of the Thuringia section, Frank Schwerdt, did at least personally know Uwe Böhnhardt, whom he employed as his personal driver during the late 1990s, and Beate Zschäpe, whom he met during a rally in February 1998. Furthermore, an unknown NSU supporter allegedly asked Schwerdt for financial support during the time he was the Federal Executive Director of the NPD. Schwerdt, however, claims to have rejected the request, which nevertheless still shows a deep entanglement between NPD and NSU supporter structures (Zeit 2012).

The Thuringia intelligence service on the other hand noted a striking coincidence: Frank Schwerdt, together with a close friend, operated a caravan rental business – the exact same one the NSU trio used several times to rent cars in order to conduct reconnaissance around possible target locations and subsequently to use for bank robberies and the killings. Schwerdt was also suspected by the intelligence of having played a role in the plans to help the NSU escape to another country (Schäfer, Wache & Meiborg 2012).

Another close friend of Ralf Wohlleben's – the high-ranking NPD politician, Patrick

Wieschke – was suspected by the Federal Criminal Police of having aided Beate Zschäpe on the day she set fire to the NSU's apartment and left Zwickau (November 3, 2011), before turning herself in a few days later. Wieschke, who was sentenced to two years and nine months in prison in 2000, due to his involvement in a bomb attack on a Turkish diner, has a long record of right-wing extremist violent crimes. Although denying any contact with the NSU, K9 units of the Federal Police found traces of Zschäpe in his apartment (Brandstetter 2011).

The above-mentioned Thorsten Heise is another known, high-ranking NPD member, who allegedly had ties to the NSU. Heise definitely had close contacts to the THS and B&H – numerous members of both groups were guests at his wedding, during which he allegedly was asked to provide financial support to the NSU and he also was a close business associate of Stephan Günther's, who is thought to be the major organizational facilitator between the German and Scandinavian neo-Nazi movements. In 2007, investigators searching his home found tapes containing conversations between Heise and Brandt mentioning the trio's names (Niemann 2012).

### *Free comradeships*

The NSU had contacts to groups in almost every German state. A very important part of the German movement, next to the NPD and traditional international networks (e.g., B&H, Hammerskins, KKK), is the Free Comradeships (Freie Kamerdschaften) – loosely connected smaller groups of mostly young activists from different spectrums but also classic skinhead groups from a nationwide network called National Resistance (Nationaler Widerstand). The boundaries between these groups and networks are fluent, overlapping and changing constantly. What seems evident is that the NSU had close contacts to groups around their chosen places of attack – arguably to collect valuable information about the environment beforehand, to have a safe haven in case it was needed and to be sure of local support structures for any eventuality. One important example of this connection is David Petereit, the leader of the Kameradschaft Mecklenburgische Aktionsfront (Mecklenburg Action Front, MAF) until it was prohibited in 2009. He himself has been a member of the NPD since 2005 and was elected into the state parliament of Mecklenburg West-Pommerania in 2011. Petereit was the editor-in-chief of one of the Far-Right's most important theoretical magazines, *Der Weiße Wolf* (Netz-gegen-Nazis 2012b). In the foreword of one edition in 2002 – nine years before the NSU's discovery – he published a note thanking the NSU for their support, which is by now the first known public reference to the NSU within the movement: “Many thanks to the NSU, it was fruitful;-) The struggle will continue ...”<sup>8</sup>

Petereit himself denied any responsibility, claiming that his editorship started some editions

later. However, for that particular edition the editor used the pseudonym “Eihwaz,” commonly used by Petereit (Baumgärtner & Röbel 2012). Later on, investigators found a letter of the NSU to Petereit in his apartment, leading to the investigators’ suspicion that the NSU might have donated money from their bank robberies to certain right-wing publications (Förster 2012b; Gensing 2012a; Jansen 2012a).

This public note gives essential information about the NSU’s internal communication strategy. Obviously the cell planned to use internal publications to communicate with the movement. In the debris of the group’s apartment in Zwickau, investigators found the most important information about this communication strategy and the NSU’s self-perception on a digital file created in March 2002 (after the cell had already murdered four people and committed one bomb attack), which was titled “nsu.brief” (Baumgärtner & Röbel 2012). Parts of the letter have been published by newspapers:

The National Socialist Underground embodies the new political force in the struggle for the freedom of the German nation. [...]. Loyal to the motto “Victory or Death” there will be no reverse. [...] The NSU will never be contacted through an address, which does not mean however that it is unapproachable. Internet, Newspapers and Zines are excellent sources of information – even for the NSU.<sup>9</sup>

(Baumgärtner & Röbel 2012)

Bans continue to force nationalists like us to look for new ways in the resistance fight. Prosecution and punishments force us to act anonymously and incognito. [...] The tasks of the NSU are the resolute fight against the enemies of the German people [Volk] and to support comrades and national organizations as much as possible. [...] Consider: Attached aid does not imply any obligation.<sup>10</sup>

(Jansen 2012a)

There is no information of whether the letter was sent out at all, but the note published in the *Der Weißer Wolf* strongly suggests that the NSU not only used internal publications to communicate with the wider movement but also provided their own resources to support right-wing institutions in at least two cases (Gensing 2012a). In this way, the NSU was one of the rare terrorist organizations that was able to grow out of a stage of dependency into a support movement/network and become active and self-sustaining supporters of that movement/network.

### *European White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan*

After in-depth investigations of the NSU’s killing of the police officer Michèle Kiesewetter in 2007, it was revealed by the authorities that two colleagues of Kiesewetter’s, amongst them her superior officer, were members of a German Ku Klux Klan section (Zeit.online 2012) named the European White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan – Realm of Germany (EWKKK).

This German section of the EWKKK was active between 1998 and 2003 (Förster 2012a) and

counted approximately twenty members in the German states of Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Hesse, Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony, Thuringia, North Rhine-Westphalia and Mecklenburg-West Pomerania (Jansen 2012b).

The German Federal Prosecutor's Office did not see any connection between the murder of Kieseewetter and members from the EWKKK (Förster 2012a), but the group is nevertheless discussed here due to additional information provided by journalistic investigations.

The two mentioned police officers from Baden-Württemberg had been active EWKKK members in 2001/2002 for approximately six months. In reaction to a disciplinary action in 2004, the colleagues of Kieseewetter confessed their membership in the EWKKK and described the initiation rites (Schmidt 2012b), however, claiming that they had no idea about the organization's racist and anticonstitutional nature (Schmidt 2012b). It is known that these two were not the only police officers with contacts to the EWKKK. Thomas Richter, an informant of the BfV with the rank of a "Kleagle" (recruiter) for the EWKKK (Schmidt & Erb 2013), named at least three additional police officers in his report. The Ministry of the Interior in Baden-Württemberg confirmed to have investigated the cases in 2002 (Förster 2012a).

Richter was one of the co-founders and most important members of the EWKKK German section. In around 2000, he was also one of the leading neo-Nazis in Saxony-Anhalt with close connections to the militant right-wing scene in Thuringia and Baden-Württemberg, and was a member of the B&H-network. In addition, he was noted down on a contact list from Uwe Mundlos found in the NSU's last apartment in Zwickau (Förster 2012a). In summer 2012, old police files from 1996 were presented by the authorities showing pictures from Böhnhardt and Zschäpe during a cross-burning ceremony, together with Thomas Richter, the aforementioned close NSU supporter Ralf Wohlleben and the director of the youth club, Winzerclub, which was the main meeting point for Jena neo-Nazis during that time. The pictures were confiscated by the police in June 1996 from Zschäpe, who was questioned about the ceremony (Jüttner 2012).

The two colleagues of Kieseewetter's were punished with a reprehension, the lightest disciplinary punishment, for their membership in the EWKKK. The other three police officers were identified by the authorities but no disciplinary action was applied (Jüttner 2012).

The founder of the German EWKKK section was the right-wing extremist singer and songwriter Achim Schmid, also known as "The Mississippian." Schmid traveled to the United States in 2000 and was made a "Grand Dragon" of the Mississippi Klan. In the 1990s, he played with different Far-Right rock bands in skinhead concerts, which were also attended by Böhnhardt and Mundlos (Förster 2012a). In 2012, it was revealed that Achim Schmid was another informant of the intelligence service in Baden-Württemberg (Jansen 2012b). The federal BfV investigated Schmid but he managed to disappear before apprehension. It became known afterwards that Schmid was warned by a state official of the Thuringia intelligence service and investigations on the charges of treason were opened against that official (Jansen

2012b). In January 2016, the authorities in Baden-Württemberg discovered a hidden ammunition depot with 160 rounds for 9 mm pistols (stemming from the Chechnyan military) after an anonymous tip-off referring to internal Ku Klux Klan structures. It was therefore suspected that the material found belonged to the local KKK and was designated for future violent acts (Feyder & Ullenbruch 2016).

### *Connections to Scandinavia*

It was already mentioned above that the NSU might have used Scandinavian B&H manuals and the case of John Ausonius ('Laserman') as "blueprints" for their operations, which remains completely speculative. However, investigators found pictures of neo-Nazi rallies in Sweden on one of the NSU's hard disks in the debris of their apartment in Zwickau and a witness at the NSU trial in Munich reported that videos from there and other material from the Scandinavian neo-Nazi movement were exceptionally popular and regularly watched by members of the Kameradschaft Jena (Comradeship Jena) during the time the NSU trio formed (Friedrichsen 2015; Goetz & Schultz 2012). It is not known whether the trio ever went to Sweden at all. Nevertheless, some individuals of the wider NSU support network do have well-established connections to Swedish groups and individuals.

The most important individuals in this context are the German neo-Nazi Stephan Günther and the Dane Flemming Christiansen, who were both involved in B&H and in running the right-wing music mail order business "Celtic Moon" in Denmark. They were arrested in 2008 on charges brought forward by the German authorities, who suspected that "Celtic Moon" was responsible for the financing, production and sale of illegal music and bands in Germany, for example, Kommando Freisler – Geheime Reichssache (redok 2008).

Stephan Günther is also arguably the most important network facilitator between the German and Swedish movement, having founded the Nordische Hilfswerk (Nordic Assistance Network, NHW) – a Far-Right organization specializing in bringing together German and Swedish neo-Nazi groups and individuals. With extensive contacts in the most militant sections of both the German and Swedish scene, the NHW organizes concerts, rallies, partner programs, survival trainings and other events. Stephan Günther started his right-wing career in Dortmund and was part of the close periphery of a C18 cell (Oidoxie Streetfighting Crew) around Marco Gottschalk (Schraven 2012). Speculative reports connect the Dortmund group to the NSU through other individuals, mainly Matthias Fischer – a B&H member and leader of the "Free Comradeships" – whose contact details were found on a list written by Böhnhardt and who had close ties to the Dortmund scene but he himself lives in Nuremberg, where the NSU killed three people (Wetzel 2012). Another hint was found by different newspapers in the fact that the murder of Mehmet Kubasik on April 4, 2006 happened in close proximity to the



“Deutscher Hof” – a bar functioning as the unofficial headquarters of the neo-Nazis from Dortmund (Bildner 2012b). Although only very weak links connect the NSU with the Dortmund and Scandinavian scene, we do know that the trio had a specific interest in the Swedish movement, shown by the pictures found on their computer. The transnational nature of central right-wing networking events, for example, concerts and rallies, as well as the ideological background of the NSU close periphery (B&H) suggest at least sporadic international exchange.

## *Summary*

The above-mentioned groups, networks and individuals display only a small, visible part of the NSU’s support base. Of course the NSU received assistance in various forms from people who were not connected to a specific group but who were broadly members of the movement. In addition, there are obviously numerous connections yet unknown. Regarding the visible wide support network, the NSU was mostly carried – financially and logistically in the beginning – by the Blood & Honour network and NPD members. Multiple intertwined networks facilitated the essential elements for the NSU to go and stay underground. Personal friendships were important, but were not absolutely necessary. In most cases the network-based reputation of certain supporters was sufficient to guarantee a constant stream of assistance. Another characteristic feature of the NSU’s support structure seems to be the high degree of multiple group affiliations and identities of individuals within this network. Almost all NSU supporters were active members of several right-wing extremist groups – some even in usually hostile ones (e.g., Blood & Honour and Hammerskin Nation). This support network was far more sophisticated than comparable support structures of other terrorist groups, who either try to act completely autonomously or who only trust a few insiders of elitist circles. The NSU’s network was intertwined with numerous other groups and networks to an unusually high degree – including the untypical large diversification of assistance amongst a very high number of individuals. The positive effect – albeit most certainly not consciously built – was that hundreds of small acts of assistance provided a reliable flow of support, channeled to the trio through trusted aides. Most of these small acts were not directly traceable to the trio and did not put a very high risk on the supporters, as – without the concrete knowledge of the assistance’s purpose – many of these acts either did not pose a crime or would be impossible to prove. In addition, many acts of support to the group were so insignificant that they became timebarred after some years. Obviously the trio accepted the higher risk of infiltration or detection through the authorities in favor of a more reliable and diverse support base. On the other hand, the NSU case shows some indicators that this highly diverse and fragmented support base was one of the major factors for the success of the cell

and the increased the difficulties for intelligence and police to a level where even direct information capable of leading the authorities to the trio could not be effectively interpreted. The relation between luck and calculation in the NSU's success to stay underground for fourteen years will probably never be reconstructed completely. However, it is necessary to take a closer look at the security agencies to better understand the NSU and its impact on German society.

## Notes

- 1 Parts of this chapter are based on previously published work: Daniel Köhler. "The German 'National Socialist Underground (NSU)' and Anglo-American Networks. The Internationalization of Far-Right Terror," in Paul Jackson and Anton Shekhovtsov (Eds.), *The Postwar Anglo-American Far Right: A Special Relationship of Hate* (pp. 122–141). Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014. Reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan.
- 2 Diploma from the German secondary school qualifying for university admission or matriculation.
- 3 [www.generalbundesanwalt.de/de/showpress.php?newsid=460](http://www.generalbundesanwalt.de/de/showpress.php?newsid=460) (January 2013).
- 4 "Der offenbar die Schlüsselrolle im Kreis der Unterstützer eingenommen hat."
- 5 The surveillance of telecommunication and mail contacts.
- 6 A one-year contract based train travel card with picture identification that entitles the holder to a specified discount for traveling on German trains and is usually only used by frequent travellers.
- 7 "Die NPD weist jeden Zusammenhang zwischen unserer Partei, unseren Zielen, unserer Programmatik und unserer praktischen Arbeit mit der mutmaßlichen Tätergruppe oder anderen außerparteilichen Vereinigungen zurück, die Gewalt als legitimes Mittel zur Durchsetzung politischer Ziele betrachten."
- 8 "Vielen Dank an den NSU, es hat Früchte getragen;-) Der Kampf geht weiter ..."
- 9 Der Nationalsozialistische Untergrund verkörpert die neue politische Kraft im Ringen um die Freiheit der Deutschen Nation. [...] Getreu dem Motto "Sieg oder Tod" wird es kein Zurück geben. [...] Der NSU wird niemals durch eine Kontaktadresse oder Nummer erreichbar sein, was aber nicht bedeutet, dass er unerreichbar ist. Internet, Zeitungen und Zines sind gute Informationsquellen – auch für den NSU.
- 10 Verbote zwingen uns Nationalisten immer wieder nach neuen Wegen im Widerstandskampf zu suchen. Verfolgung und Strafen zwingen uns anonym und unerkannt zu agieren. [...] Die Aufgaben des NSU bestehen in der energischen Bekämpfung der Feinde des deutschen Volkes und der bestmöglichen Unterstützung von Kameraden und nationalen Organisationen [...] Beachte: Beiliegende Unterstützungen ziehen keinerlei Verpflichtungen nach sich.

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## Role of the intelligence and police agencies

The German authorities' failure to detect the National Socialist Underground or to investigate a potential right-wing motive behind the killings and bombings covering more than a decade has caused a severe crisis within the country's security agencies. The former Prosecutor General called the NSU murder series Germany's "September 11" (FAZ 2012b) and the series of reported misconduct or lack of professionalism involving numerous different agencies continues. The structure of the German security agencies contains two main types of organizations: first, the criminal police sections responsible for counter-terrorism and politically motivated crimes (the so-called Staatsschutzabteilungen – state protection divisions) with repressive or executive functions; and second, the intelligence departments called Offices for the Protection of the Constitution (Verfassungsschutzämter) with preventative and investigative functions. Both types can be found on the federal and state level (thirty-four agencies in total). On the federal level, the Federal Criminal Police Office (Bundeskriminalamt, BKA) with its responsible division for counter-terrorism represents the first type and the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, BfV) represents the second type. On the state level, the State Criminal Police Offices (Landeskriminalämter, LKA) have divisions for politically motivated crimes, and separate state offices for the protection of the constitution (Landesämter für Verfassungsschutz, LfV) exist. In seven German states (Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Bremen, Hamburg, Hesse, Saarland and Saxony) these LfVs are organized in their own states offices, while in the remaining nine states, the LfVs are sections of the respective ministries of the interior. In addition, Germany has one military intelligence service (Militärischer Abschirmdienst, MAD) and a foreign intelligence service (Bundesnachrichtendienst,). The structural separation between intelligence and the police was a consequence of the National Socialist secret polices in the Second World War. Legally very high barriers exist to prevent all these institutions from sharing too much personal information as part of the German data and privacy protection legislation. However, in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks a new joint anti-terrorism center was established to fight Islamic extremism and jihadist terrorism (Gemeinsames Terrorismusabwehrzentrum, GTAZ), which started to operate in December 2004. In this center, representatives of all security agencies exchange limited information on suspected terrorists. A similar center, the Gemeinsames Abwehrzentrum Rechtsextremismus (GAR) was established in November 2011

after the discovery of the NSU. In November 2012, the GAR was restructured and renamed the Gemeinsames Extremismusund Terrorismusabwehrzentrum (GETZ) to include left-wing extremism, immigrant extremism, espionage and proliferation.

One highly controversial aspect of the German intelligence services is the use of so-called “trusted people” (Vertrauenspersonen – V-Personen/V-Männer/V-Frauen). These individuals are paid informants and are different to undercover investigators as they are active members of the extremist or terrorist groups and are approached and – ideally – convinced to secretly work for the intelligence service and provide them with insider information. In return, these V-people receive monthly salaries and reimbursements of costs (e.g., membership fees, costs for cloths, music and travel). Numerous former informants are known who have actively participated in violent crimes or even terrorism and in addition it was argued by critics of that system that the funds paid by an agency of the democratic state directly support extremist and terrorist organizations. With the NSU case, a very high number of additional critical aspects regarding the V-person system has been made public, such as the unregulated and uncontrolled use of these informants, partially chaotic information handling, multiple payment of single informants by different agencies, exemption from punishment for crimes, and most importantly the lack of efficiency (Diehl, Röbel & Stark 2013). This last aspect became especially clear as almost all intelligence services had paid informants in the close periphery of the NSU but were not able to obtain any information leading to their whereabouts or take notice of their crimes. In addition, German criminal police agencies on the federal and state level never considered a right-wing motive behind the murders and continued to investigate into “organized crime of immigrants” (Pidd 2011a; Spiegel 2011a), which was one of two main reasons for this extraordinary failure found in the aftermath of the NSU discoveries: widespread racism and ignorance regarding the potential threat from the Far-Right. A second major reason was the total lack of communication between all these agencies regarding crimes, perpetrators, information from informants and so on (Högl & Weßnigk 2016). Although the German police, intelligence and military has traditionally struggled with right-wing extremist members and the institutional counter-measures are partially inadequate (e.g., see Koehler 2015), the various inquiry commissions could not find proof of institutional racism and organized support (or deliberate ignorance) for right-wing crimes (e.g., Högl & Weßnigk 2016).

Hundreds of files about the trio and the informants in their periphery were destroyed by the services immediately after the NSU’s discovery. Six heads of intelligence and police agencies had to step down in consequence and eight parliamentary inquiry commissions (two on the federal level and six on the state level) were initiated. It seems clear that a comprehensive reformation of the German security system is necessary and the first steps were taken in December 2011 with the new coordination center directed against Right-Wing Extremism.

The role of the security agencies needs to be discussed mainly for one specific reason: how

did the NSU and other right-wing terrorist organizations define their tactics towards the authorities according to their political aims and terrorist operations and how was it possible to avoid a modern and highly developed security apparatus for over a decade without interference? Looking at the NSU provides a detailed account of failed counter-terrorism strategies and terrorist tactics in modern Western societies. It will become clear that right-wing terrorism did not only perceive and treat security agencies as enemies and therefore tried to safeguard itself against them, but also the NSU and its wide support network entered a very specific and tactical relationship with these agencies. How this relationship worked and developed will be discussed in detail in this chapter. One main argument is that different agencies had contacts even to the closest NSU supporters and monitored the movement very closely but were still unable to formulate an accurate picture of the threats posed by the movement. The possibility of an internal strategic approach by the right-wing movement to influence this misperception has to be considered.

## 6.1 Federal Criminal Police Office (Bundeskriminalamt, BKA) and State Criminal Police Office (Landeskriminalamt, LKA)

One of the first high-ranking officials who had to step down due to widespread public critique against the conduct of his agency was Jörg Ziercke, the Executive Director of the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA). The BKA never investigated the possibility of a right-wing background and spent many resources following up the hypothesis that organized crime within the immigrant community in Germany was responsible for the murders (Pidd 2011a; Spiegel 2011a). In addition, the BKA did not share information and coordinate with other agencies (FAZ 2012a). However, the BKA did not pay informants within the Far-Right, as other criminal police services did. The Berlin LKA, for example, revealed almost a year after the NSU's discovery that they had paid the aforementioned Thomas Starke for information regarding a case not connected to the NSU. Nevertheless, Starke was one of the most important supporters for the cell, as he, for example, supplied the group with explosives. Between the late 1990s and the early 2000s, Starke, who was a leading Blood & Honour member, was described by the BKA as one of the most important and active figures of the Far-Right scene in Chemnitz (Heinzle & Goetz 2012). Since 1993, he has been charged and found guilty of numerous politically motivated crimes, including serious arson, possession of arms, violent attacks on immigrants and political opponents, as well as sedition and hate speech. While he was imprisoned, he intensified his contact with Böhnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe (with whom he was involved in a relationship between 1996–1997). He had met the three during concerts years earlier (Heinzle & Goetz 2012) and the trio in turn had visited him

in prison, and sent pictures and letters. This was facilitated by a now banned right-wing extremist organization specializing in providing support for incarcerated comrades – the Hilfsorganisation für Nationale Gefangene und deren Angehörige (Assistance Organization for National Prisoners and their Relatives, HNG). Thomas Starke also took part in the above-mentioned visit to the concentration camp memorial of Buchenwald in January 1996, together with Mundlos and Böhnhardt, during which the group was wearing uniforms resembling those of the SA. He facilitated hiding places, financial support and was in close personal contact with the trio almost during their entire time in the underground. Between 2000 and 2011, Starke was paid by the LKA Berlin for information about the Far-Right music industry (rbb-online 2012a) and allegedly provided a specific note about the NSU's hiding place in 2000, although he was not tasked with locating the trio and also referred to the above-mentioned Jan Werner (rbb-online 2012a). This information, however, was not used by the LKA officials or shared with other agencies (Tagesspiegel 2012). Jan Werner himself was paid by the same LKA between 2001 and 2005. Both Thomas Starke and Jan Werner were charged in 2005 because they were involved in the production of a music CD by the right-wing extreme band Landser, which was later banned as criminal organization. In that same year, Starke allegedly provided four additional notes regarding the NSU to the LKA, which were not used or shared either (Tagesspiegel 2012). Between 2008 and 2009, the federal domestic intelligence (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, BfV) provided a security screening about Thomas Starke to a corporation working for the government with classified documents. The corporation went on to employ Starke as no doubts about his integrity could be found by the intelligence. At that point Starke argued that he had left the Far-Right movement and the BfV claimed to not have had information regarding the fact the Starke was working for the LKA Berlin as an informant within the scene during that time. He was arrested January 25, 2012.

Shortly after the NSU's discovery, the Federal Criminal Police (BKA) sent two official inquiries regarding Starke's involvement to Berlin. The LKA denied any connection of Starke to the NSU and also did not inform the BKA of his informant contract with the agency (rbb-online 2012b). Again in March 2012, an inquiry was sent to the LKA, this time by the first federal parliamentary NSU inquiry commission. The commission asked federal agencies about their information regarding a list of possible NSU supporters, including Thomas Starke. The LKA Berlin still did not supply any information about him (rbb-online 2012a). It was not until the BKA sent another list of alleged NSU supporters, including pictures, to all LKA agencies, that an official at the LKA Berlin recognized Starke and informed his superiors, which initiated a widespread scandal (rbb-online 2012a). In September 2012, it was made public that Starke worked as an informant for the LKA Berlin. Personal files regarding his employment were either destroyed or "lost" by the LKA Berlin (Röbel 2013). Claudia Schmidt, the Executive Director of the Berlin intelligence service (Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz), resigned in late 2012, as it was revealed that important intelligence files regarding "Blood & Honour" had

been destroyed in disregard of the ongoing investigations after the NSU's discovery (Zeit 2012).

In September 2012, a special inquiry commission was initiated in Berlin to investigate the failures and lack of cooperation within the Berlin security landscape (Tagesspiegel 2012). The report did not find major failures in the intelligence service and criminal police but stated that Thomas Starke indeed should never have been recruited as an informant, as his known criminal involvement would have prohibited this engagement (Spiegel 2013a).

## 6.2 Domestic intelligence services (Verfassungsschutz)

The first major public critique against German intelligence services (on the federal level) followed quickly after the NSU's discovery in November 2011. After the German Prosecutor General took over the main investigations and demanded insight into the service's files, it was revealed that the BfV had destroyed hundreds of relevant files on several sessions as a reaction to the Prosecutors inquiry. These files contained extensive information about the Operation Rennsteig between 1997 and 2001 (Birkenstock 2012; Spiegel 2011b, 2012b), claiming that the inquiry had pointed the service to expired compulsory periods of record-keeping set by privacy regulations (Birkenstock 2012).

Operation Rennsteig was initiated and led by the BfV in cooperation with the state intelligence in Thuringia and the military intelligence (MAD). Between 1997 and 2003, the extensive intelligence operation targeted the Thüringischer Heimatschutz (THS), exactly during the time that this group was the main social environment for the NSU. During the operation, different intelligence services deployed almost forty informants in the THS (Jüttner 2012b; Welt 2012), which meant that during the group's membership peak of about 160 activists, every fourth one was paid by at least one intelligence service. The military intelligence's aim was the recruitment of informants in the German army and the Bavarian state intelligence was also included at least temporarily, as some THS members were stationed as soldiers in Bavaria (Schmidt 2012). Mundlos was part of a target person list of these agencies but went clandestine without any notice by the services (Schmidt 2012).

The mechanism of paid informants was subsequently heavily criticized both in public and internally by the Federal Criminal Police (Diehl et al. 2013). It was argued that the money paid by official institutions directly supported the NSU. The Thuringia state intelligence consciously tried to channel money to the cell through the informant Tino Brandt, who was supposed to hand over 2,000 Deutsche Mark (DM) to the trio in order to buy false identification documents and thereby lead the authorities to the group, which failed (Müller 2011). The same service allegedly paid two additional informants in the close periphery of the NSU (Spiegel 2011b).



Brandt alone is thought to have received more than 200,000 DM from the authorities – money, he today claims, that was almost completely used to support the right-wing movement (Hemmerling, Kendzia & Schmidt 2012). Between 1994 and 2000, the Thuringia intelligence service alone spent €1.5 million in wages for right-wing informants (Jüttner 2013). However, in March 1999, the investigators had made direct contact to the trio, which was not used or shared with other agencies (Jüttner 2013).

In late July 2012, the president of the BfV, Heinz Fromm, had to resign due to the strong public critique (Birkenstock 2012; Eddy 2012; Spiegel 2012a; Tagesschau 2012b) and called the NSU case an “extraordinary defeat of the German security agencies”<sup>1</sup> (Tagesschau 2012b). He was questioned later by the first federal parliamentary NSU inquiry commission as a witness.

Another former leading intelligence official questioned by the commission was Helmut Roewer, the retired president of the Thuringia intelligence between 1994 and 2000. Files regarding one of the most important informants in Germany, the leader of Blood & Honour Thuringia, Marcel Degner, had “disappeared” (Jüttner 2012a). Degner knew about the trio and how to contact them, as he offered to donate money to the group through Thomas Starke (Jüttner 2012a). Although he had weekly meetings with his contact official at the intelligence service, his files could not be located during the investigations (Jüttner 2012a). Additionally Peter Nocken, the service’s former vice-president, allegedly warned Degner about police house raids in 2000. Both Roewer and Nocken claimed to be unable to remember anything about these events when they were questioned by the inquiry commission (Jüttner 2012a). The Thuringia intelligence became a major focus of public critique as the NSU cell radicalized and vanished under the surveillance of this service. Witness statements of police investigators in 2013 showed how the intelligence service tried to block police investigations against the right-wing scene in Thuringia in 1998 (Zeit 2013). In 2004, investigators of the Thuringia service assumed that the trio was continuing to work clandestinely within the movement (dapd 2013). Due to the chaotic conditions within the intelligence service and the corruption charges against Roewer, he was suspended in 2000 (Förster 2008).

Another service with informants operating close to the NSU but which failed to use the information provided was the intelligence in Saxony. In 2000, the service initiated a telecommunication monitoring operation (G-10 operation) called “Terzett” and continued it until 2010. This G-10 was aimed at the three NSU members but also at the aforementioned Thomas Starke, Mandy Struck and Jan Werner. In the official explanatory statement, the service described Böhnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe as very dangerous:

The persons concerned are suspected to be members of an association with the aim to commit crimes against the democratic law and order and serious right-wing extremist crimes, as well as to support the three wanted persons in their illegality.<sup>2</sup>

(Bewader, Lutz & Müller 2012)



The investigators in Saxony renewed the G-10 several times until 2010 due to continued concerns about the group's activities. However, in 2009, the authorities stopped searching for the trio and claimed in 2009 that the time had passed without any noticed activity, which in turn would make the group's aim to commit crimes obsolete. Consequently, the close supporters of the cell were informed about the monitoring of their telecommunication after the operation was officially terminated (Bewader et al. 2012). This G-10 operation was not the only reason for critique against the intelligence service in Saxony. During an observation in summer 2000, investigators took pictures of the right-wing extreme organization Weiße Bruderschaft (White Brotherhood) in Johannegeorgenstadt and by coincidence captured the already wanted and clandestinely living Uwe Mundlos. It was not until eleven years later that these pictures were shared with the BKA (ZDF 2012). In addition, protocols of another wire-tapping operation against the early NSU in 1998 emerged in 2012 by coincidence. In 2006, the same intelligence service in Saxony monitored the movements of the close NSU supporter André Eminger for three days. During this time a water pipe in an apartment right above the trio's apartment had burst and Eminger went to the hideout to help the three terrorists to clean up. Three other people, including one woman, were mentioned in the observation report by the investigators: Böhnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe. Questioned later by the police, André Eminger appeared in the company of a woman at the police station. Introducing her as "his wife," investigators now believe that she in fact had been Beate Zschäpe. Neither the observation's information nor the later questioning led to any success in the intelligence service's efforts to find the trio (Spiegel 2013b). Especially noteworthy is the fact that Beate Zschäpe was using a false identity but had no fake official identification. If the police officers had asked to identify Zschäpe as a witness by checking her identification, the trio would most likely have been detected. The president of the intelligence service in Saxony, Reinhard Boos, resigned in July 2012 (Spiegel 2012c; ZDF 2012).

Another intelligence service heavily criticized was the Hessian LfV. On April 6, 2006, Halit Yozgat was shot in his Internet café by the NSU while an employee of the service (Andreas T.) was sitting only a few meters away in the café using a computer. Denying that he noticed the murder, he was using a VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) service to talk to a right-wing extremist during that very moment the killing happened (Förster 2012; Pidd 2011a, 2011b). In addition, he called one of his informants ('GP389') shortly before or after the murder, which caused some suspicion as the same informant was scheduled to be called during the exact times of two other NSU assassinations (Pidd 2011a). This official himself had a strong reputation for being a right-wing activist himself. Consequently after the murder, the police requested to interrogate the informants led by him, which was personally denied by Volker Bouffier, the Minister of the Interior at that time and the prime minister of Hesse today, who reasoned that the paid informants' privacy should be protected at all costs. These informants were debriefed by other intelligence officials but the police only received shortened transcripts

(Pidd 2011b). The presence of this official, who was shortly arrested in 2006 at the murder scene, and the role of Bouffier, who personally hindered police investigations, remains unclear. Andreas T. was called in as a witness during the NSU trial in Munich several times without providing more information.

In September 2012, another leading intelligence official, Volker Limburg, Executive Director of the intelligence service in Saxony-Anhalt, resigned. His agency received an official inquiry regarding any files about Uwe Mundlos by the military intelligence (MAD) in August, which they returned answering that no information about Mundlos existed. By coincidence a month later, interrogation protocols with Mundlos were found in the agency's archives (Hebestreit 2012).

### 6.3 Military intelligence (Militärischer Abschirmdienst, MAD)

Like the intelligence services above, the MAD was also heavily criticized after the NSU's discovery. In 1995, the MAD opened investigations against Uwe Mundlos because of his well-known Far-Right activities while serving in the military. Copies of this investigation file were sent to the intelligence services in Thuringia, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, as well as to the BfV, but they were withheld from the parliamentary inquiry commission (Gensing 2012). Only after some of commission's members had built up extensive public pressure was the file handed over in parts. However, other parts had already been destroyed by the MAD and could not be restored (Gensing 2012). None of the five authorities in possession of this file, which was deemed essential for the investigations, cooperated with the commission and handed over their copies. Even the federal government allegedly had known about the file since March 2012 but did not enforce cooperation among the institutions (Gensing 2012).

A major public outcry followed, however, after revelations that the MAD had tried to recruit Uwe Mundlos as an informant in 1995 to provide information about planned attacks against refugee homes, which he refused. The file reads:

At this point Mundlos, Uwe was asked if he could imagine reporting known dates of planned attacks against refugee homes to the police or Intelligence. This question was negated by Mundlos, Uwe. He [...] could not imagine to cooperate with the authorities.<sup>3</sup>

(Tagesschau 2012a)

Due to this event, the former Chief Executive Director of the MAD, Karl-Heinz Brüsselbach, was questioned by the parliamentary commission. The commission criticized numerous additional failures by the MAD, which had known about the trio's pathway to terrorism since 1999. Central questions could not be answered because of missing documents (Meyer 2012).

Brüsselbach admitted the failures of his agency and apologized publicly. Nevertheless, the

commission's members were worried about the handling of right-wing extremists within the armed forces. Mundlos, for example, was promoted twice in direct violation of the regulations (Gebauer 2012). He was arrested by the police on August 13, 1994 for possession of right-wing extremist propaganda material. His superior officer questioned Mundlos a few days later and noticed this about him: "that his foundational opinion is not to defend the democratic society" (Gebauer 2012). A military court later decided that the right-wing propaganda material found in Mundlos' flat would be protected by his privacy and that the ownership of this material would not be a reason for any punishment. On the contrary, a civil court convicted Mundlos because of that same material, giving him a fine of 600 DM some months later (Gebauer 2012).

## 6.4 Summary

Although the German intelligence and police services received a large amount of information and several direct tip-offs regarding the whereabouts of the trio, they never managed to apprehend the three wanted neo-Nazis or to connect them with the series of murders and bombings, despite having a large number of informants in the closest periphery of the cell. The chaotic circumstances within some security agencies, a lack of communication and coordination, as well as the overall belief among German authorities that the Far-Right movement was incapable of terrorism aided the NSU in their success in avoiding detection. These factors could not have been anticipated by the trio, however, and must be seen as 'luck' on their side. On the other hand, the Far-Right has always had an ambiguous relationship to the authorities. Of course as representatives of the democratic society and actors of repression, police officers, soldiers and intelligence personnel were and are regarded as the enemy and consequently have been attacked by right-wing extremists from the early years of right-wing terrorism onwards. Nevertheless, the police and army do embody values (e.g., strong hierarchies, order, discipline and command structures) and knowledge traditionally very attractive for the extreme right. Stemming to some degree from their own references to the German army of the Third Reich or the police as major tool against immigration and 'foreigner crime,' the Far-Right also sees the police and the army as an essential part of their worldview and the society they want to create. Historic examples show that a number of policemen, soldiers and officers have been involved in right-wing terrorism in every generation. This shows that although the right-wing movement is naturally suspicious and even hostile towards the authorities, they never seemed to have had problems integrating individuals from these institutions into their own ranks, despite the risk of infiltration. These individuals took essential information about the security system with them, which became an

integral part of Far-Right theories and strategies. It had to be expected by German authorities in consequence that right-wing extremists would adapt strategically to any form of targeted repression against them – a reason why the theoretical literature regarding tactical and strategic concepts among the German Far-Right is one of the most elaborate worldwide. In addition, East German activists could develop and test these strategies and tactics in confrontation with one of the most sophisticated and repressive intelligence systems in history: the East German Staatssicherheit (Stasi). Of course the relationship to the intelligence was and is by definition (with the Stasi being officially a socialist organization) the most difficult one. Nevertheless, German neo-Nazis have learned about the failures of the informant system (V-Männer/V-Frauen) and tried to use it to their advantage. Within the Far-Right movement clear rules of handling the attempted recruitment by the intelligence have been established, differing from group to group and mostly built on complete resistance. Other concepts, however, try to use the money and protection against prosecution. These informants constantly have to find the perfect balance between giving information valuable enough for the intelligence service to continue paying them on the one hand and holding back essential information that could endanger their groups or comrades on the other hand. The numerous informants in the NSU's close periphery mastered that strategy and kept being paid with their crimes being tolerated but without giving away the trio. This internal reflection upon the strategic use of the informant system became publicly known in 2013. The aforementioned Tino Brandt, arguably an important NSU supporter, was a high-ranking neo-Nazi in East Germany and a well-paid informant. He openly discussed the intelligence system's failures in 2007 with a comrade, Thorsten Heise, also a high-ranking right-wing extremist, who recorded the conversation without Brandt's knowledge. The recordings were found and analyzed by the police in 2009. Transcripts of Brandt's statements show a high degree of strategic reflection regarding his own involvement with the security system, the competition between different agencies and the advantages he gained. Brandt felt so secure that he did not hesitate to talk about his involvement with other right-wing extremists (Baumgärtner, Diehl & Jüttner 2013). Some right-wing groups (e.g., the THS) in fact could not have survived as an entity without money channeled to the organization indirectly through informants. In addition, the Far-Right is well aware that a high degree of informants protects large entities (e.g., the NPD) against a ban through the German constitutional court. In 2003, the first attempt to prohibit the NPD failed due to the widespread involvement of paid informants within the leading ranks of the party, which led the highest German court to argue that government presence (through informants) within the leading structure of a party would make it impossible not to influence the party's will and actions and therefore the determination of genuine evidence would be hindered.

In summary, the German Extreme Right managed a balance of open hostility towards the authorities – up to the degree of armed attacks against them – as well as the attempt to

integrate individuals of these institutions into their own ranks and essential strategic and tactical knowledge with them. The NSU's success in avoiding detection and apprehension was built to a degree on an intimate knowledge of Germany's internal security system, reflected in the strategic concepts developed, elaborated and used by large parts of the movement. This study does not suggest in any way that the German authorities directly aided the NSU terror or collaborated with the cell in a comprehensive way. Security agencies on every level sincerely tried to stop and arrest the perpetrators of the murders, bombings and bank robberies and the efforts applied were recommendable in many parts. Additionally, the large number of right-wing groups apprehended in the last decades before they could execute attacks gives credit to the German authorities. Ironically, one part of the security agencies looking for the killers and bombers did not investigate in the direction of a right-wing background and the other part – investigating the Extreme Right and looking for the trio – did not look for a terrorist cell and for connections to previous murders. Both parts failed to communicate and connect their findings.

Two structural factors contributed to the failure to detect the NSU however: the general and widespread underestimation of the Far-Right's strategic and tactical capabilities as well as its disposition to highly strategic violence (in contrast to spontaneous acts of street violence). These factors were a consequence of the academic and political neglect towards the Extreme Right and their visible structural radicalization since the late 1960s to some degree. A major part of German Right-Wing Extremism research has for decades focused either on right-wing youth subcultures (e.g., skinheads), parties or prison inmates in order to analyze the Far-Right and thereby established a certain set of paradigms which formed the academic and public view about the extreme right. These paradigms, which influenced German policy towards the Extreme Right on many levels, include for example the view of Right-Wing Extremism as a pathologic phenomenon attracting more or less socially disintegrated and frustrated young individuals with broken family backgrounds and deficiencies in education. Partly due to the methods and samples, a biased picture of the Far-Right and the threat imposed by it was developed, which led the authorities to claim that no serious danger from the Extreme Right would have existed for decades.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> “Das ist eine schwere Niederlage für die deutschen Sicherheitsbehörden.”

<sup>2</sup> “Die Betroffenen stehen im Verdacht, Mitglieder einer Vereinigung zum Begehen von Straftaten gegen die freiheitliche demokratische Grundordnung und schwerer rechtsextremistischer Straftaten zu sein und drei flüchtige Straftäter in der Illegalität zu unterstützen.”

- 3 Zu diesem Zeitpunkt wurde Mundlos, Uwe gefragt, ob er sich vorstellen könne, ihm bekanntgewordene Termine für Anschläge auf Asylantenheime der Polizei oder den Verfassungsschutzbehörden zu melden. Diese Frage wurde durch Mundlos, Uwe verneint. Er [...] könne sich jedoch nicht vorstellen, mit den zuständigen Behörden zu kooperieren.

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## The metrics of right-wing terrorism<sup>1</sup>

Giving an empirical picture of German right-wing terrorism's characteristics is important in order to understand how this form of political violence manifests itself. This chapter utilizes a reviewed and updated version of the DTG actors dataset's codes regarding group size, weapons type (tactics), lifetime, target groups and forms of communication. Thereby, it becomes possible for the first time to see how German right-wing terrorism has changed or kept certain core elements over the decades. Foiled and failed attacks have been included in the dataset, as well as plots by identified right-wing extremists. In contrast to the study from Perliger (2012), which included every act of right-wing violence, only actors and incidents classified as 'terrorist' according to the outlined definition from [Chapter 3](#) were used for the following analysis. Incidents of terrorist violence with unknown but suspected right-wing perpetrators (e.g., a large amount of the quantitative data from intelligence and police reports) were excluded.

Although of course the American and German right-wing extremist movements vastly differ in numerous elements, both provide uniquely detailed empirical accounts of their characteristics, which is why an initial comparison of these two violent Far-Right scenes offers some insights about possible parallels. It is important to note here that the DTG dataset is actor centric and qualitative in nature, while the study used to compare right-wing violence from Perliger (2012) is incident centric and quantitative in nature. Therefore, the comparison does only offer an indication of potential similarities and differences.

### 7.1 Group size

Research and political debates about right-wing extremist violence and terrorism has so often focused on either the impact of tactical concepts such as "leaderless resistance" (see Kaplan 1997) or on mass incited violence. So far, at least for the German scene, how group sizes of right-wing terrorist actors have developed or changed over time, if at all, was simply unknown. For this analysis, five actor types have been used to cluster the right-wing terrorist perpetrators: large associations with more than 100 members; large groups with ten to forty

members; small groups with four to nine members; small cells with two to three members; and lone actors. To determine the actual size of a certain right-wing terrorist actor, however, was not free from difficulties in several cases and sometimes it was even impossible. In eleven cases, no information about the group size was publicly available and in five cases only differing estimations about the group size (e.g., 40–100, “a minimum of six”) were available. In these cases, the lowest established number was used. In addition, almost all actors had no official membership status and thus there was a high degree of fluctuation over time. Members usually had different functions, which made it difficult to include some people in the terrorist plot. In regard to membership change over time, the known group size at the time of arrest, detection or disbandment was used. In some cases, the courts split up the group during investigation, trial and verdict into different categories or found only fewer individuals guilty than the initial group (e.g., a group of ten was arrested for a planned bombing attack, six people were charged, four people were convicted of explosive related crimes, and two were convicted of weapons related charges). In these cases, the number of identified individuals connected to the initial terrorist activity (including execution, planning and support) were counted. To complicate this matter even further, some lone actor cases are heavily debated as to whether no other person was involved (see section 4.2). For example, the deadliest terrorist attack after the Second World War in Germany is still the bombing of the Oktoberfest in Munich in 1980 causing thirteen casualties and 211 wounded, which was perpetrated by the extreme right-wing activist, Gundolf Köhler. Although he was a member of a large right-wing extremist organization (Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann), the courts and several investigations still claim that he acted alone, albeit some evidence has been discussed in the media and by lawyers that suggests otherwise, resulting in the reopening of the investigations by the Federal Prosecutor General in 2014. In these contested cases, the analysis follows the current official police or court statements, meaning that, for example, the Oktoberfest bombing is counted as a lone actor incident in the database due to the lack of specific and verifiable evidence.

After excluding all actors without information about size, a total of seventy-seven cases between 1963 and 2015 were used for the following overview:

- 6 large associations with more than 100 members
- 14 large groups with 10–40 members
- 24 small groups with 4–9 members
- 13 small cells with 2–3 members
- 18 lone actors

With 42.05 percent, small groups and small cells are by far the most common type for the size of right-wing terrorist actors in the database. Lone actors account for 20.46 percent of right-wing terrorist actors, meaning that 62.51 percent of all right-wing terrorist actors between

1963 and 2015 had only nine or less members.

Small unit sizes as a visible part of German Extreme Right terrorism can be dated back to 1963 at the earliest, when a group of eight German right-wing extremists tried to attack infrastructure (power plants) in South Tyrol (Austria) and to 1965, when a group of three neo-Nazis planned to assassinate the Federal Prosecutor General and execute a bomb attack on the German Office for the Prosecution of War Criminals in Ludwigsburg. However, for the general public small-scale right-wing terrorism started in 1973 with the Group Neumann (six members) and in 1978 with the Werewolf Group Stubbemann (three members). In fact, most of the more or less widely known and lethal terrorist groups have developed small group or cell structures (e.g., Group Ludwig: two members, killing fifteen people in nine attacks between 1977 and 1984; Deutsche Aktionsgruppen: German Action Groups, four members killing two people in nine attacks in 1980; Hepp-Kexel Group: six members executing four attacks; and Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund: National Socialist Underground, three members killing ten people). According to the time-frame segmented into four decades (1963–1979, 1980–1989, 1990–1999, 2000–2014) and the distribution of small units (small groups and cells) and lone actors, the following observations can be made:

- 1963–1979: eight small groups and cells, three lone actors
- 1980–1989: nine small groups and cells, six lone actors
- 1990–1999: five small groups and cells, two lone actors
- 2000–2014: fifteen small groups and cells, seven lone actors

Although this shows a clear peak of small units and lone actors since 2000, it has to be mentioned that most actors with unknown unit size are located in the early decades of the dataset. Broken down into percentages (including small groups, cells and lone actors) of all known right-wing terrorist actors per decade the numbers are as follows:

- 1968–1980: 42.3 percent
- 1980–1990: 75 percent
- 1990–2000: 50 percent
- 2000–2014: 78.57 percent

Thus it can be argued that after a first zenith of small-scale right-wing terrorism between 1980 and 1989, a clear orientation to small unit tactics by the Extreme Right terrorist milieu has been observable since 2000, even though these organizational patterns seem to have always been immensely popular for the post-Second World War German Far-Right. A similar observation can be made for the American violent Far-Right – at least since 1990. According to Perliger (2012: 121), who looked at 4,420 incidents between 1990 and 2012, 74 percent of the perpetrators were either lone actors or pairs of two. Unfortunately, Perliger's dataset does not

cover earlier decades. The exact reasons for this are not entirely clear. While a wave of government repression coupled with some highly publicized failing of organized large-scale right-wing terrorist groups in the early 1980s is most likely the cause of the popularity of small units tactics in that decade. After the German reunification in 1990, a wave of right-wing street violence swept across the country, leading to a similar nationwide increase of government repression, although with somewhat belated effects on the level of violence starting in 1993. Although all potential factors favoring the increase of small cell tactics (government repression, large number of individuals supporting violence, spaces of anomia in large parts of the former GDR, public contention about immigration, availability of weapons from former GDR sources and personnel skilled in avoiding intelligence and the use of firearms) the decade till 2000 saw a decrease in small cell tactics. It can however be argued, that during the early years of the unified Germany, a number of right-wing extremists went underground and their crimes were simply not detected. Government repression can also not be the reason behind the increase of these small cells after 2000 since the German authorities have for the most part not recognized any terrorist tendencies or even the capabilities within the German right-wing movement till the detection of the NSU in 2011. Except for the two cases in Munich in 2001 (Schutzgrupe) and in Brandenburg 2003 (Freikorps Havelland), the German authorities did not see the indications of organized right-wing terrorism. In addition, most intelligence and police resources in the area of counter-terrorism and politically motivated crimes were focused on Islamist extremism after the 9/11 attacks in the United States. Unlike for the US movement (Dobratz & Waldner 2012), no coherent information regarding the debate of leaderless resistance within the German extreme right-wing movement exists so far. Hence, it is not possible to evaluate the role of internal debates in regard to the increased use of small cell tactics. The early 2000s also saw the highest electoral success for the NPD party since its peak in the 1960s. Of course the widened availability of strategic concepts and lower costs of establishing contact with other violent extremists via the Internet might have contributed to the renewed popularity of leaderless resistance style tactics after 2000, however, the specific factors remain unknown, especially since those concepts were widely known within the movement before and small units dated back to the earliest years of German right-wing terrorism. One aspect which needs to be taken into account is the rise of new subcultural forms within the right-wing movement, such as the Autonomous Nationalists, which saw left-wing extremist groups as role models both in regard to style and tactics (Schedler & Häusler 2011).

## [7.2 Tactics/weapons](#)

The tactics or weapons used by right-wing terrorist actors include methods of coercive violence, most commonly explosives and arson attacks, targeted assassinations, hostage takings and kidnappings. Again, some remarks are due. In a number of cases, no specific tactics could be detected or became publicly known to the public. In these cases, investigators or courts spoke of “severe crimes planned against the security of the state,” “militant plans” against politicians and civilians or simply of “terrorist plans.” Naturally due to a lack of coherent definitions, standards and legal frameworks, these cases occurred more often in the early decades of the dataset. Moreover, groups that have been mostly active in supportive operations for other terrorist actors have not been included here. However, when a right-wing actor executed, prepared and planned an attack using one of the above-mentioned methods, the actor was included. In many cases, actors used a mix of terrorist methods either at the same time or in sequences. Each method executed or planned was counted. Thus the percentages below do not represent an absolute size of attacks in reality but rather show a distribution of tactics and weapons in regard to preferences by actors in theory and practice and exclude actors committing acts of support or without a known tactic.

[Table 7.1](#) Tactics of German right-wing terrorists (%)

<i>Decade</i>	<i>Targeted assassination</i>	<i>Explosive attacks</i>	<i>Arson attacks</i>	<i>Hostage taking, kidnapping</i>
1963– 1979	29.03	41.94	22.58	6.45
1980– 1989	19.05	47.62	28.57	4.76
1990– 1999	9.09	90.90	–	0
2000– 2014	19.23	61.54	19.23	0

[Table 7.1](#) shows that in the early decades within the dataset, a broad range of tactics and weapons was used by these actors, including hostage taking and kidnappings, which almost completely vanished after 1980. Still, between 1980 and 1990, right-wing terrorist actors relied on three tactics: explosive attacks (mostly), as well as arson attacks and targeted assassinations. It seems that a focus on explosive attacks between 1990 and 2000 was followed by another differentiation of tactics since 2000. Two special cases have been excluded but are worth mentioning:

- Between 1977 and 1978, the Wehrsportgruppe Rohwer/Werwolf (Military Sports



Group Rohwer/Werewolf) attacked Allied and German military installations, patrols and barracks in at least four cases in order to supply themselves with military weapons, explosives and ammunition. The attacks were carried out like armed robberies but with brutal force against the military personnel, who were seen as legitimate targets at the same time.

- In 2014, a young, right-wing extremist was discovered in Munich with an arsenal of weapons, extensive combat gear and explosives. While police attempted to enter his apartment, he tried to detonate several bombs and killed himself. It can be assumed due to several indicators that he might have planned to copy the Breivik attacks (mass shooting and bombing).

Armed robberies as a terrorist tactic are common of course amongst German violent Far-Rightists but mostly to finance their operations and not to attack a specific target group. It has to be mentioned here that this differentiation in many cases is blurred as many right-wing terrorists, for example, have deliberately robbed shops and banks owned or used by foreigners and thus have combined financing their operations with inflicting fear and damage to their designated opponents and enemies.

A special note is also necessary regarding the wave of right-wing arson attacks on asylum seeker homes in the early 1990s after the German reunification (1,499 incidents between 1991–1994). These attacks are part of the database's incidents part but could in most cases not been tied to a specific actor or to a specific strategy. Although it has been proven that in some instances right-wing groups publicly called for and advertised arson attacks against asylum facilities, it is unclear whether these attacks can be tied to these groups. The vast majority of these incidents were carried out spontaneously by large groups of usually intoxicated juveniles.

Perliger's (2012: 105) dataset shows a similar tendency to use arson and explosives in the American Extreme Right. Excluding the most common weapon of beatings (44 percent), firearms (15 percent), arson (14 percent) and explosives (9 percent) range directly behind cold weapons such as knives. Accounting for the inclusion of less severe forms of violence (e.g., beatings) in Perliger's dataset, the picture of weapons used seem to be almost identical to the German one.

## 7.3 Target groups

Regarding the targets of German right-wing terrorism, a number of cases had to be excluded because no specific information was available. In addition, this categorization aligns with the target typology used by the right-wing terrorist actors themselves as in many cases the only

evidence stems from statements or documents of these actors outlining for example planned attacks against “foreigners” – a highly controversial term in German context – without necessarily specifying it. This makes it difficult to analyze subcategories, such as right-wing terrorist violence against Muslims. Even most police and court documents do not differentiate the ethnic background of the target groups, but usually use the term “immigrants,” refugees or “people with an immigration background.” In consequence the category of “foreigners” as a target group mainly refers – in the eyes of the perpetrators – to individuals with non-German or non-Aryan ethnic background. Right-wing terrorists very rarely seem to focus on a specific group of foreigners or delineate what the category means exactly (e.g., Muslims born in Germany, mixed families). This might have changed to some degree since the outbreak of the latest wave of right-wing violence in Germany since 2011, targeting more specifically mosques and Muslims. However, as there are no adequate statistics and information available about most of the perpetrators, these targets have been subsumed under the “foreigner” and/or infrastructure category.

The numbers below represent proportions regarding the focus on specific target groups. Subsuming any representative of the government or state structure the “government” category includes targets such as police officers, judges, politicians, military personnel (German or other) and state prosecutors. “Infrastructure” includes mainly buildings such as party offices (e.g., from the Social Democratic Party), court houses, mosques, police stations, schools, but also railways, power supply networks, restaurants, shops and other installations. Of course it can be argued that an attack against a party office or a police station is an attack against the government but indeed many right-wing terrorists have differentiated between attacking people as representatives of the government or material infrastructure, which is why it seemed more feasible to subsume all attacks of this type under one category. As far as individuals or groups identified by the Extreme Right as “the left” (communists, anti-fascists, social democrats not being part of the government) have been targeted, they were subsumed under the category of “left-wing activists.”

[Table 7.2](#) Target groups of German right-wing terrorists (%)

<i>Decade</i>	<i>Jews</i>	<i>Foreigners</i>	<i>Government</i>	<i>Left-wing activists</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>
1963–1979	21.43	4.76	35.71	30.95	7.14
1980–1989	5.88	23.53	52.94	5.88	11.76
1990–1999	0	16.67	33.33	50	0
2000–2014	21.43	35.71	21.43	10.71	10.71

Compared with the American Far-Right, the German movement displays a much more diversified target scheme. While in the United States, at least since 1990, the vast majority of

targets for right-wing violence are minorities (55 percent), government and law enforcement have only very marginally been attacked (Perliger 2012: 106). On the other hand, attacking abortion related targets and gays is virtually absent from German right-wing terrorism, which does not mean that other forms of right-wing violence have not also attacked individuals on the basis of their sexuality.

Although the Oklahoma attack carried out by Timothy McVeigh on April 19, 1995 remains one of the most severe right-wing attacks against a democratic government, the American Far-Right has for the most part avoided targeting the government directly, in contrast to the German Extreme Right. In addition, the long-term presence of Allied and Russian military has effectively created another target fitting well into the ideology of liberating Germany from foreign military oppression. After the German reunification, a perceived weakness of especially the East German authorities might have again shifted the focus on government targets. After 2000, right-wing terrorists chose different target groups with a major focus on Jewish communities and people again. Only rarely have right-wing extremists targeted the general public indiscriminately or highly unusual victim groups.

Three examples would be the Group Ludwig, who killed fifteen people in nine attacks between 1977 and 1984 mainly targeting discotheques, prostitutes and Catholic priests. The group's agenda was to stop moral decay within the Christian-'Aryan' culture and society. As was previously mentioned, Gundolf Köhler, the perpetrator of the Oktoberfest bombing, killed thirteen people and wounded 211, making it most severe terrorist attack in post-Second World War Germany. Köhler planted the bomb at the main entry of the Oktoberfest, which prematurely detonated and killed Köhler. This is one of the very few right-wing terrorist acts that targeted the general public indiscriminately and was obviously designed to inflict mass casualties. In 1981, a group of five right-wing extremists founded Kommando Omega who targeted defectors ("traitors"), judges and lawyers with explosives and assassinations. These examples show that although targeting patterns of German right-wing terrorists have for the most part been focused on Jews, foreigners, government, left-wing activists and infrastructure, it does indeed happen that groups and individuals inspired by an extreme right-wing ideology shift to unusual methods and targets if they recognize a tactical or strategic value in this.

## [7.4 Lifetime/time of activity](#)

Another important aspect of right-wing terrorism is the lifetime or time-span of activity terrorist actors go through before they are detected or disbanded. To identify this lifetime is exceptionally problematic. On the one hand, in most cases it is simply impossible to determine when a group of individuals or lone actors have actually decided to form a terrorist cell or

started preparing for an attack, especially since this kind of activity typically is executed underground. Although some court documents and media reports state facts like “have been preparing since ...” or “formed a terrorist group in 2001 at the latest,” it is completely unclear which criteria have been used to define or recognize the starting point of a terrorist group or act. These time references can consequently only be seen as the latest identifiable point, when it was absolutely clear to the authorities that a group or lone actor had entered the planning and preparation stage for an attack. In addition, media reports, investigation files, court verdicts and other sources might all use different criteria and have different perspectives on when a group was formed, an act prepared or a radicalization process started. Lone actors might decide to strike relatively shortly before the attack but all of these perpetrators have been active in other groups, sometimes over years. Thus this overview of average time of activity before detection by authorities, arrest and/or disbandment should be used with caution and as a rough indication only; it does not offer insights into the time of radicalization necessary to reach the terrorist stage within the Far-Right.

The vast majority of right-wing terrorist actors remain active for no longer than a year (72.73 percent) before either being detected and arrested by the authorities or before disbandment (sometimes to avoid arrest). It seems, however, that if an actor ‘survives’ more than a year, the chances of long-term activity do significantly increase. In the dataset, 13.64 percent of all actors have been active either for between one and five years or for more than five years (also 13.64 percent). With fourteen years of activity, the Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund (National Socialist Underground, NSU) was the most successful German right-wing terrorist actor in terms of life-span.

## [7.5 Communication](#)

Arguably one of the most surprising characteristics of right-wing terrorism is the form of communication chosen by right-wing terrorist actors in combination with their attacks. Although terrorism, due to the propagandistic and psychological effects, can always be regarded as a form of communication in itself, some scholars have focused on media attention as a central goal of terrorists to gain a podium for their political or religious agenda (e.g., Nacos 1996; Soo Hoo, Goodman, & Greenberd 1997; Weimann & Winn 1994). Many (if not most) terrorist actors therefore use some form of publicly claiming responsibility after attacks to connect their group, ideology, brand or statement with the incident. In case of German right-wing terrorism, only a small minority of perpetrators claimed responsibility for the attack publicly afterwards (including leaving a note, statement or other form of ideological identification at the crime scene). As a result of the absence of a claim of responsibility, the

public and academia in Germany have discussed whether right-wing attacks should be counted as terrorism at all. While theoretically the psychological effect (terrorizing the target group) could be achieved without specific claiming statements (e.g., the bombing of a synagogue might be self-explanatory), the propagandistic effect would be much weaker, if present at all.

For this overview, only those right-wing terrorist actors who actually executed attacks (including failed ones) were used, which accounts for 44.32 percent of all actors in the dataset. Of those, only 23.08 percent used some form of publicly claiming responsibility (e.g., letters, statements at the crime scene, media communiqués) to identify themselves as the perpetrators and to spread their political or ideological agenda. As a special case, the Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund (National Socialist Underground, NSU) did produce a video statement claiming responsibility for the attacks but the last surviving group member sent the DVD to different media stations, politicians and civil society groups only after the group's detection in 2011. In general, public statements of right-wing terrorist actors only very rarely contain concrete political claims or programs. In most cases, swastikas or similar symbols were left at the crime scene or the victims and target groups were scorned through the statements.

## [7.6 Right-wing terrorism in an international context](#)

As the review of existing research on right-wing terrorism in [Chapter 2](#) has shown, this form of political violence has not been limited to Germany, although the extent of militant groups, plots, attacks and organizational capabilities in planning and executing acts of terrorism appears to be extraordinarily large compared with the known militant right-wing in other countries. This chapter provides an overview of other significant episodes of right-wing terrorism outside of Germany and compares the known characteristics of these violent acts and perpetrators with the lessons learned from the German case. Of course a detailed comparison needs to account for cultural, political, historical and practical differences between these varying right-wing groups and movements, which are very heterogeneous not only across the Atlantic but also within Europe. An indepth comparison of the extra-parliamentary violent Extreme Right in Europe and North America cannot be delivered here, however, but needs to be conducted in edited collections of detailed case studies in the future. The material presented in this study so far and the following examples of other incidents of right-wing terrorism nevertheless provide strong indications of characteristic similarities not only in tactical and strategical manifestations of right-wing terrorism but also regarding trends in historical development. Consequently, this chapter aims to provide evidence for the importance and necessity of additional future comparative research on the militant Far-Right.

Accounting for other significant episodes of right-wing terrorism in Europe and North America, it is obvious that the peak activity of larger and more or less sophisticated right-wing terrorist organizations so far was reached between the late 1970s and early 1990s. Many Western countries have experienced devastating right-wing terrorist attacks executed by underground organizations closely resembling tactics and strategies of left-wing or ethno-separatist terrorist groups. In the United States, for example, the Greensboro Massacre on November 3, 1979, during which five demonstrators at a Communist rally were shot and killed by Ku Klux Klan and American Nazi Party members (e.g., see Michael 2003: 96–97), initiated a decade of organized right-wing violence in the country. Although existing since the late 1960s, Posse Comitatus – a countrywide loosely organized network of chapters with close ties to the Christian Identity movement – unfolded the peak of their criminal and terrorist activities during the 1980s with multiple shoot-outs and killings. In addition, the United States witnessed the right-wing terror group, The Order – Brüder Schweigen (Silent Brotherhood) being active between 1983 and 1984. The group's multiple armed robberies, bombings and involvement in the killing of radio talk show host Alan Berg in 1984, made it one of the most notorious and best known terrorist organizations in the United States (e.g., see Michael 2003: 98–104). At the same time another organization with close ties to the Christian Identity Movement and The Order prepared for armed struggle against the government. Calling itself The Covenant, Sword and the Arm of the Lord (CSA), the group was active between 1971 and 1985 and aimed to overthrow the government. Having extensively trained its members and being organized in paramilitary units, one attempt to execute an explosive attack against a gas pipeline and one murder of a police officer by one CSA member led to the arrest of most members in 1985 (e.g., see Michael 2003: 104).

The 1970s and 1980s were also the peak of right-wing terrorist activities in other Western countries, such as Germany and Italy. The bombing of the Bologna train station in Italy on August 2, 1980 (BBC 1980), for instance, which killed eighty-five and wounded more than 200, was carried out by two members of Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari (NAR) – a splinter cell of the right-wing terrorist group, Ordine Nuovo (Hoffman 1982: 3–5). Having its roots in the neo-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), Ordine Nuovo was responsible for at least five bomb attacks between 1969 and 1974, causing dozens of casualties next to multiple other neo-fascist violent groups (cf. Weinberg 1995). NAR alone was a highly active militant underground organization which was attributed with twenty-five terrorist acts between 1977 and 1982 (cf. Hoffman 1982: 4). Germany, for example, witnessed the attack at the Oktoberfest in Munich in 1980, the Deutsche Aktionsgruppen (DA), the assassinations of Shlomo Levin and his partner and the Hepp-Kexel Cell, amongst other plots and militant groups in this period.

During the 1990s, many Western militant right-wing groups shifted their tactical approaches to 'leaderless resistance' methods – which can be seen as a reaction to mounting effective government counter-measures and the organizational incapability to operate in any other



way. These small disconnected cells (in theory) were supposed to act independently and only be bound together by a shared ideology. In practice, however, this label was used by right-wing groups to claim ideological ownership for lone actor attacks and other episodes of right-wing violence. The United States experienced a number of these lone actor (or small groups) attacks in the 1990s (e.g., see Michael 2003: 105–107) including of course the devastating attack on the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995, which remains one of the most lethal terrorist attacks in the history of the United States (cf. Shariat, Mallonee & Stidham Stephens 1998) and was carried out by Timothy McVeigh and two accomplices using a car bomb. In planning the attack, McVeigh was inspired by the explicitly racist and anti-Semitic *Turner Diaries*, which has been called “a bible of the extremist right” (Applebome 1995).

Other countries have seen a somewhat belated development to these tactics and the demise of large-scale organizations, although – as shown above – small cells and lone actors have always been a large part of right-wing violence and terrorism since the end of the Second World War. While in Sweden, for example, in the early 1990s, large disorganized crowds started to attack asylum seeker homes like in Germany and the so-called “Laser Man” shot eleven immigrants between 1991 and 1992 (cf. Bjørgo 1997: 77–78) in Norway smaller underground cell tactics by the Extreme Right became publicly known in 1997 when a group of five neo-Nazis was arrested and charged with planning to assassinate politicians and attack public institutions. Police confiscated explosives, weapons, money and target lists (cf. Bjørgo 1997: 83). In the same year, a small group of Danish neo-Nazis sent three mail bombs to left-wing activists, sports athletes and to a fake Combat 18 address in Britain (cf. Bjørgo 1997: 84). In the United States, a small six-person right-wing group calling itself the Aryan Republican Army was responsible for a series of twenty-two bank robberies. Although not active in (known) terrorist activities, connections to the Oklahoma City Bombing were speculated (cf. Michael 2003: 112–113).

Four years after the Oklahoma City attacks, in April 1999, the British neo-Nazi David Copeland orchestrated three nail bomb attacks in thirteen days in London, causing three casualties and wounding 137 (Andrew 2000). Copeland was a long-time member of several neo-Nazi organizations in England and targeted homosexuals and immigrants with his attacks. During the late 1990s, most right-wing terror attacks in the West were carried out by lone actors or small cells. Another (foiled) attempt of right-wing terrorism for example became public in the United Kingdom in 2009, when the neo-Nazi Ian Davison and his son (as part of the right-wing terrorist organization, Aryan Strike Force) planned attacks with chemical weapons, manufacturing a large amount of the poison ricin (Armstrong 2010). On August 5, 2011, the US neo-Nazi Wade Michael Page also fatally shot six and injured four people during an attack at a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin (Elias 2012) and in 2013 a nineteen-year-old active soldier of the British military was arrested in Paderborn (Germany) because he was



found in possession of a nail bomb. At his home in Manchester, authorities confiscated right-wing extremist literature (Coghlan 2013; Spiegel 2013).

In addition to a change in tactics and strategies, more recent incidents of right-wing terrorism have also increasingly targeted government representatives. On July 22, 2011, the Norwegian Anders Behring Breivik detonated a car bomb in Oslo city center and drove to the island of Utøya to continue his attack with a mass shooting (Lewis & Lyall 2012). Causing seventy-seven casualties in total, Breivik had previously published a manifesto explaining his ideology, which was based on Christian fundamentalism and cultural racism. Attempting to save Norway from a perceived attack by Islam, Breivik was trying to kill members of the Social Democratic Party – which he held responsible for Norway's growing multiculturalism and for undermining Norway's traditional 'culture' and 'race.' Directly influenced by Breivik, a Polish university researcher and two aides were arrested in 2012 for planning to detonate a four-ton bomb in front of the Polish parliament building in Warsaw (Spiegel 2012a). Motivated by nationalism and anti-Semitism, the small group was allegedly trying to copy Breivik's attack in Poland according to the press. Breivik's attacks and his person had also a much stronger impact on the Russian Far-Right compared with Western right-wing extremist movements. Due to a weaker social stigma of Right-Wing Extremism, higher levels of violence in the Russian society and a tradition of idolizing right-wing terrorists by Russian neo-Nazis, the social costs and potential reprisals of openly supporting Breivik and endorsing his actions were lower than in other (especially Western European) countries (Enstad 2015).

Although the age of large-scale hierarchical right-wing terrorist organizations seems to have passed, some examples have been known. In December 2012, for example, Italian authorities detected a countrywide militant neo-fascist network. Out of an estimated fifty neo-fascists, fourteen suspects were arrested and charged with planning to assassinate a number of politicians simultaneously, attack train stations, government buildings and the revenue service (ANSA 2012; Caporale 2012). Aiming to overthrow the democratic order in Italy, the group calling itself Eversione Nera (Black Upheaval) was active in at least eighteen Italian cities and reportedly used the name New Order (Ordine Nuovo) in social networks (Corriere 2012).

In addition, recent years have seen an increase in violent activities and the inclusion into mainstream political culture of the 'sovereign citizen' movement and their theories in the United States. This diverse and loose network of individuals and groups with the shared rejection of United States laws, taxation, currency and the government's legitimacy especially regarding firearms control has reached about 300,000 followers and developed a unique subculture (e.g., ADL 2010; FBI 2011; Fleishman 2004; Macnab 2016). With its roots in Christian Identity teachings and the right-wing terrorist Posse Comitatus group in the 1980s, a number of violent clashes with government authorities and killings of police officers since 2010 show the growing influence and radicalization of that movement (for a detailed discussion, see [Chapter 2](#)). It needs to be considered whether these loose networks focusing on

anti-government activism instead of racism, white supremacism and anti-Semitism (albeit common among sovereign citizens) can be a much more dangerous breeding ground for violent radicalization and recruitment into terrorist groups due to the special role of firearms regulation and a high potential for direct conflict with government authorities over taxation or other legal issues (for a detailed account, see for example: Macnab 2016). In consequence, the movement was labeled as 'domestic terrorism' through the FBI.

Compared with the empirical material regarding the German militant right-wing scene, these significant episodes of right-wing terrorism in other Western countries display some striking similarities. In many countries during the 1970s and 1980s, large-scale hierarchical paramilitary organizations were responsible for devastating terrorist attacks, aimed to positively influence election results for Far-Right parties or directly overthrow the government and to kill as well as intimidate their opponents. Increasing government repression and a lack of positive results might have led to the fragmentation of militant right-wing organizations into cells and lone actors during the late 1990s – a period during which many Western countries also experienced large-scale, collective right-wing 'hive' or 'cluster' terrorism: large crowds of people with mostly no organizational affiliation with right-wing groups, attacking refugees and immigrants with highly lethal and fear-generated distance-based tactics (e.g., arson). In addition, in almost all cases of right-wing terrorism presented above, no specific form of incident related communication was chosen by the perpetrators, except in the Italian case, with the aim of falsely framing left-wing groups in order to induce government repression against them.

In this sense – as lone actors and small cell tactics have always been a quite popular tactical choice within the militant Extreme Right – it is more plausible to see this development as an externally caused evolution. As many Western states have reacted with targeted repression against these hierarchical and large-scale, right-wing terrorist organizations, they were more or less eradicated from the tactical spectrum, leaving small cell and lone actor based modes of operation as the only viable option. It is therefore a misunderstanding that right-wing militants have 'invented' or shifted to these tactics as a direct reaction against government repression but it is mainly because other tactical alternatives have been made more or less unavailable. Research about right-wing terrorism has lacked a detailed comparative account of these tactics, strategies and connections between these actors and incidents across Western countries. Nevertheless, the examples presented here strongly support the main argument of this study that right-wing terrorism in fact is an own and very characteristic form of terrorism that needs to be studied and understood in its peculiarity in order to assess its threat and adequate counter-measures.

# Note

- <sup>1</sup> This chapter is an updated and expanded version of a previous article published under the title “German Right-Wing Terrorism in Historical Perspective. A First Quantitative Overview of the ‘Database on Terrorism in Germany (Right-Wing Extremism)’ – DTG rwx” Project. In *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 8(5), 48–58.

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## German right-wing terrorist and violent actors between 1963 and 2015

This chapter gives an encyclopedic account of all the identifiable right-wing violent and terrorist actors in Germany as part of the database used for this work between 1963 and 2015. The list includes the most important known characteristics of these actors, the quality of the information available and a short summary of the actor's history or attacks. As the majority of right-wing attackers were detected or intercepted before they could carry out their plans, this list covers plots and failed attacks as well. It is important to understand that even though this list is the most extensive ever compiled regarding German right-wing terrorism and violence, it is still only a fraction of the real extent of right-wing violence. As it lies within the nature of terrorism and clandestine violence, many if not most plans and plots have never become publicly known. Hundreds of arson attacks carried out in the early 1990s in Germany have not been attributed to identifiable actors for example. In addition, as the NSU case shows, murders and even bombings carried out by right-wing extremists can go unattributed for decades. Consequently, this list gives the first opportunity to understand and grasp the nature of the visible side of right-wing terrorism and violence in Germany after the Second World War.

<b>Name:</b>	1. Werwolf Jagdeinheit Senftenberg (1. Werewolf Hunting Unit Senftenberg)
<b>Size:</b>	12
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1990–1991
<b>Casualties:</b>	2
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassination, explosives, robberies, weapons trading
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Two homicides
<b>Target:</b>	Government
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., Opferperspektive 2015; Spiegel 1993; Zimmermann 1994)

## Summary

On December 12, 1992, members of this werewolf unit planned a robbery at a casino in Welzow in order to pay for weapons which the group had already received. Armed with machine pistols and rifles, they staged a broken car, aiming to steal another car for the escape. When they stopped twenty-seven-year-old Timo Kählke close to Cottbus and he refused to hand over his car, one neo-Nazi shot him in the face and pushed his body to the passenger's seat. As Kählke was still alive, he was shot two additional times. After the robbery, the group burned his body and the car in a wood nearby. All the members belonged to a group of twelve highly violent neo-Nazis training to overthrow the government and seeing itself as the elite of the new German Reich. The group – described as the most dangerous right-wing organization in Brandenburg by the prosecutor – was found in possession of 270 hand grenades, machine pistols, rifles, pistols and military combat gear. In addition, several improvised explosive devices were manufactured and tested by the group, which was also engaged in arms trading. The group was legally not classified as criminal organization and subsequently members were prosecuted for individual crimes in at least two lawsuits. The first one against four members involved in the killing of Timo Kählke and a second one against five other members charged with possession of illegal weapons and a different homicide, which the group had committed in order to acquire money.

<b>Name:</b>	Aktionsfront Nationaler Sozialisten/Nationale Aktivisten (Action Front of National Socialists/National Activists, ANS/NA)
<b>Size:</b>	Up to 300
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	November 1977–November 1983
<b>Casualties:</b>	1
<b>Tactics:</b>	Support of clandestine terrorist cells, violent riots, criminal assaults
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	The relationship between the ANS and several attacks/terrorist groups is not known
<b>Target:</b>	Government, Jews, foreigners
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (BMI 1979: 31, 35; Botsch 2012: 75–76; Horchem 1975; McGowan 2006: 258; Mecklenburg 1996: 149–150)

## Summary



In 1977, the former German army lieutenant Michael Kühnen (1955–1991), who became one of the leading theorists of the militant right in Germany, founded the Aktionsfront Nationaler Sozialisten/Nationale Aktivisten (Action Front of National Socialists/National Activists ANS/NA) under the direct influence of Gary Lauck and gathered around 300 members in over thirty sections across Germany until the ANS was prohibited in 1983. Similar to the WSG, VSBD and AW, the ANS functioned as a pool and socialization institution for other members and inspired them to form smaller sub-groups and become active. Directly leading to the formation of the first right-wing group legally classified as terrorist organization – the Wehrsportgruppe Rohwer (Military Sports Group Rohwer) – the ANS quickly rose to become the most militant umbrella organization of the Extreme Right after the WSG was prohibited. The Rohwer group's members were sentenced to prison on terrorism charges in 1979 as a result of the widely followed Bückeburger Prozess (Bückeburg trial) during which Gary Lauck was heard as a witness. Michael Kühnen was charged and found guilty of sedition; his involvement in the Wehrsportgruppe Rohwer could not be proven. In addition, the Gruppe Otte (Group Otte) was strongly influenced by the ANS and Kühnen with close ties and personal overlapping. A third terrorist group directly evolving out of the ANS was the Werwolfgruppe Stubbemann (Werewolf Group Stubbemann).

After the ANS/NA was prohibited, Kühnen quickly restructured the organization. The first step was to dissolve the ANS/NA into several smaller 'reading circles' which he later (in 1984) reunited in the Gesinnungsgemeinschaft der Neuen Front (Ethos-Community of the New Front, GdNF). In parallel, former members of the ANS/NA strategically infiltrated the Freiheitliche Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (Free German Workers Party, FAP), which was founded in 1979 but had no significance until 1983.

On May 29, 1981, ANS members stabbed to death fellow ANS comrade Johannes Bügner, who was previously outed as a homosexual.

<b>Name:</b>	Aktion Widerstand (Action Resistance, AW)
<b>Size:</b>	Up to 3,000
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1970–1971
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Arson, physical assault, demolition of property
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Numerous arson attacks, vandalism, criminal and violent assaults, riots
<b>Target:</b>	Communists, Social Democrats, Jews, government
<b>Quality of</b>	Good (e.g., BMI 1971: 10; 1972: 29; Botsch, 2012: 62; Neumann & Maes 1971:

## Summary

Between 1969 and 1970, the NPD experienced internal power struggles and off splitting by several more radical factions. To prevent the party from completely breaking apart, the Aktion Widerstand (Action Resistance, AW) was founded in October 1970. At the core of this initiative was an official association making it possible to rent rooms and organize large protests. The main goal of the association was to mobilize political opposition against treaties the German government had signed with Poland and the Soviet Union ceding former German territory to them. In addition to the official association, the AW was also a pool of multiple organizations, associations and free groups displaying the characteristics of a highly dynamic leaderless network. In 1970, an internal newsletter called for the creation of illegal local resistance cells avoiding any organizational structure (Neumann & Maes 1971: 40). The AW quickly turned violent and was officially disbanded by the NPD in 1971, as the organization was heavily criticized for its ‘SA’ like behavior. However, the Aktion Widerstand gathered over 3,000 militant Far-Right activists for a short time and accelerated the subsequent development within other parts of the movement, as well as inspiring later leading figures. During its short existence dozens of arson attacks, assaults and violent threats were committed across West Germany with notes and graffiti being left referring to the Aktion W. or simply Resistance.

<b>Name:</b>	Bachmann, Josef (1944–1970)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1968
<b>Casualties:</b>	0/1 (Rudi Dutschke survived the attack but died in 1979 due to remote injuries)
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassination, explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Assassination of Rudi Dutschke, bomb attacks on GDR border installations
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Assassination attempt of left-wing activist and students protest leader Rudi Dutschke, April 11, 1968
<b>Target:</b>	Communists
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., Chaussy 1983; Spiegel 2009)

## Summary

Josef Bachmann was born 1944 in the GDR into a dysfunctional family; he was mostly ignored by his father and was raised by his uncle. Bachmann was incarcerated in the GDR for his criticism of politicians and the family moved to West Germany in 1956. There Bachmann was not able to finish a school or job-related education and worked as assistant laborer, frequently changing the employer. He was also known to have committed a number of burglaries with friends. After an unsuccessful attempt to build a new life in France, he returned to Germany. Before he went to Berlin in April 1968 for his attack, he quit his current painter job. On April 11, 1968, Bachmann waited in front of the socialist student association's office in Berlin armed with two pistols. After recognizing Dutschke, he insulted him as "dirty communist pig" and fired three shots at him – two directly into Dutschke's head. During his interrogation, Bachmann expressed his remorse that Dutschke had survived, stating that he would have used a machine-gun if could have afforded it. He was also found in possession of a right-wing newspaper article about Dutschke calling for someone to "stop him." Bachmann had practiced shooting with a befriended NPD member, bought guns and ammunition from him and had known contacts to members of the Group Otte. However, he was not known to be a member of any right-wing group or to have coordinated the attack with anyone else, although he knowingly was well connected to militant neo-Nazis at that time and several times had attempted to attack GDR border installations. Bachmann committed suicide in prison in 1970.

<b>Name:</b>	Bamberger Gruppe (Bamberg Group)
<b>Size:</b>	13
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	January 2014–October 2014
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Two bomb attacks against refugee homes and left-wing activists
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Refugees/foreigners, left-wing activists
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., dpa 2015b, 2015c; SZ 2015)

## Summary

Since January, German authorities had surveilled a thirteen-member neo-Nazi group in the area of Bamberg (Bavaria), which has gradually become more and more violent. In October 2015, the authorities arrested the eleven men and two women aged between twenty-one and thirty-six years. According to the authorities, the group had planned two bomb attacks against

refugee homes and left-wing activists, and was found in possession of two fully functional bombs, weapons and extensive right-wing propaganda material. Members of the group had already committed violent crimes during the time of surveillance.

<b>Name:</b>	Behrendt, Uwe (1952–1981)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1980
<b>Casualties:</b>	2
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassination
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Assassination of Shlomo Levin and Frieda Poeschke
<b>Target:</b>	Journalists, Jews
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., BMI 1981: 28; Maegerle, Röpke & Speit 2013: 51; Rosen 1989: 57–58; Sternsdorff 1984)

## *Summary*

Uwe Behrendt was born 1952 in the GDR and successfully completed his Abitur in 1970. In 1973, he failed to flee to West Germany and was imprisoned for eleven months. He was then deported to West Germany in 1974. Afterwards he studied theology, medicine and German philology during which time he also traveled to South Africa and Rhodesia. Behrendt was an active member of Far-Right university organizations and fraternities such as the Hochschulring Tübinger Studenten (University Circle of Students in Tübingen, HTS), through which he got in touch with Karl-Heinz Hoffmann and his WSG, for which Behrendt became a deputy leader. He shot and killed the Jewish publisher Shlomo Levin and his partner Frieda Poeschke with a machine-gun in their home on December 19, 1980 after the WSG was prohibited. Levin had published critical articles about the WSG on several occasions. After the assassination, Behrendt met with the former head of the WSG, Karl-Heinz Hoffmann, and reported the murder. Hoffmann helped Behrendt to hide and flee to Lebanon. He committed suicide in September 1981. Hoffmann's involvement in the crime could not be proven. Behrendt was hence thought to have acted out of his own motive, although he was involved with the WSG's foreign division in Lebanon and received financial and practical support before and after the attack.

<b>Name:</b>	Berger, Michael (1969–2000)
<b>Size:</b>	1

<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2000
<b>Casualties:</b>	3
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassination
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	One shooting spree targeting police officers
<b>Target:</b>	Police
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (e.g., Diehl 2011)

## *Summary*

On June 14, 2000, the thirty-one-year-old neo-Nazi Michael Berger was stopped in his car by a police patrol in Dortmund. He opened fire on the officers killing one and severely wounding the second. He fled the scene, approached another police car and shot two additional police officers. Later Berger was found dead after he had committed suicide. In his home, police found hand grenades, rifles, pistols, revolvers and an AK47 assault rifle. Berger was well integrated into the German neo-Nazi movement, a member of the NPD and several other organizations. He was not previously convicted, however, and his motivations remain unclear.

<b>Name:</b>	Bundeswehrzelle (German Army Cell)
<b>Size:</b>	Unknown
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1997
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (Klußmann 1997)

## *Summary*

In December 1997, Bavarian police found several right-wing extremist soldiers in possession of bomb manufacturing manuals, chemicals, ammunition, weapons, detonators and the launch pad of a Milan anti-tank rocket.

<b>Name:</b>	Chladek, André
<b>Size:</b>	1

<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2000
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassination
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Assassination of German army officers, journalists and politicians
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Government, press, military
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BfV 2004: 24; Gensing 2012: 54)

## *Summary*

In the year 2000, the twenty-two-year-old André Chladek – who had left active service as a soldier in the German army’s elite special operations unit (Kommando Spezial Kräfte, KSK) in April that year – attacked a German army unit training with weapons and live ammunition in June. He stole six pistols and 1,550 rounds of ammunition. Afterwards he avoided the subsequent manhunt for six weeks before he turned himself in to the authorities. His plans included to assassinate leading politicians, army officers, media and civil society representatives. Chladek was not previously known to the military intelligence as a right-wing extremist but displayed a clear right-wing ideology during his investigation. He was sentenced to seven years in prison in 2001. His training in guerrilla warfare, special operations tactics, as well as weapons and explosives handling make his case one of the most dangerous regarding the threat posed by right-wing terrorism. It is not known if Chladek provided other right-wing extremists with knowledge or training during his time in the underground.

<b>Name:</b>	Deutsche Aktionsgruppen (German Action Groups, DA)
<b>Size:</b>	4
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1980
<b>Casualties:</b>	2
<b>Tactics:</b>	Arson, explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Five bomb and two arson attacks
<b>Target:</b>	Refugees, government, schools
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Excellent (e.g., BMI 1981: 44–46; Hoffman 1982: 7; 1986: 3; Horchem 1982: 33; Maegerle et al., 2013: 46–48; McGowan 2006: 258–259; Mecklenburg 1996: 156;

## Summary

In 1980, the lawyer Manfred Roeder (1929–2014) founded the Deutsche Aktionsgruppen (German Action Groups, DA). Although detected and arrested by the authorities in the same year, the group managed to execute five bomb and two arson attacks against buildings connected to the government (district offices) or civil society (schools and refugee homes) resulting in at least two casualties. Roeder, who was sentenced to thirteen years in prison for founding and leading a terrorist organization and was released early in 1990, had become publicly known as a notorious and militant neo-Nazi since the 1970s. Six years after his release, he was charged again after disturbing an exhibition about the war crimes of the German Wehrmacht and in the following trial two members of the future National Socialist Underground (Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Böhnhardt) observed the proceedings as visitors (Sundermeyer 2012: 39). The other three members of the DA group, among them the medical doctor Heinz Colditz, were sentenced to life in prison. Roeder had intensive international contacts, for example, with the Ku Klux Klan and Palestinian groups (Horchem 1982: 37; Spiegel 1981d). As an indication to the DA's commitment and future attack plans, the armory acquired in this short amount of time consisted of 156 kilograms of TNT, 230 explosive devices, fifty rocket-propelled grenades, 258 hand grenades, automatic weapons and 13,520 rounds of ammunition (Rosen 1989: 64). Some of the major goals of the group were to force the German government or the Allied Forces in Germany to release the imprisoned Rudolf Heß, to deport all foreigners and to expel the US Army from Germany – demands which the group stated in letters claiming responsibility for their attacks. The main trial of the DA members was observed and strategically analyzed by Odfried Hepp, a former WSG member and a highly radical neo-Nazi, who drew several conclusions for his own future operations out of the DA's detection.

<b>Name:</b>	Deutscher Hochleistungskampfkunstverband (German High Performance Martial Arts Alliance, DHKKV)
<b>Size:</b>	c.350
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1991–1993
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Specialized combat training for right-wing terrorists
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed</b>	The relationship between the DHKKV and the attack in Solingen is



<b>attacks:</b>	unknown
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (Mecklenburg 1996: 297; Spiegel 1994a)

## *Summary*

Shortly before the Nationalist Front (NF) from Meinolf Schönborn was prohibited and the Federal Prosecutor General opened an investigation against Schönborn because of his discourse regarding the National Task Forces (NEK), the practical side of this concept was transferred to a new martial arts alliance hosted by karate and special forces combat expert Bernd Schmitt, who had started his own martial arts training facility in 1987. This new alliance was named Deutscher Hochleistungskampfkunstverband (German High Performance Martial Arts Alliance, DHKKV) and included about 350 members in its heyday. The aim of the DHKKV was to combine physical combat training with ideological indoctrination. Consequently, collaborations with other more ideological right-wing extreme organizations were facilitated, which offered political seminars at the DHKKV. Three of the four right-wing extremists committing the arson attack in Solingen on May 29, 1993 causing five casualties had been trained by Schmitt's DHKKV. Bernd Schmitt was later revealed as an informant of the intelligence service in North Rhine-Westphalia.

<b>Name:</b>	Deutsche Widerstandsbewegung (German Resistance Movement, DWB)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	August 2014–July 2015
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Arson
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Eight arson attacks against government buildings in Berlin
<b>Target:</b>	Government
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (Röbel 2015; Spiegel 2015b)

## *Summary*

Calling itself the Deutsche Widerstandsbewegung (German Resistance Movement, DWB), which in fact seemed to have consisted only of a forty-eight-year-old music teacher, eight arson attacks against government buildings in Berlin were carried out under this name between August 2014 and July 2015. After every attack, the DWB left notes claiming responsibility and accusing the German government of consciously fostering the “balkanization” (Spiegel 2015b) of the German people. It is not known if actually a group existed or if the perpetrator invented the DWB himself.

<b>Name:</b>	Diesner, Kay (b. 1972)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1997
<b>Casualties:</b>	1
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassination
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Assassination attempt of a left-wing bookseller and assassination of a police officer
<b>Target:</b>	Left-wing activists, police
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., BfV 2004: 13; Spiegel 1999)

## *Summary*

When Kay Diesner, who was born in 1972 in East Berlin, fled from the GDR in 1989 he immediately got in contact with militant right-wing organizations in West Berlin. After the reunification, he was a member of the National Alternative (NA) where he was further indoctrinated and trained in violent tactics. He also took part in violent clashes with the police, led by Arnulf Priem. Pre-dating Diesner’s attack on February 19, 1997, the NPD’s youth organization failed to conduct a rally on February 15, due to massive counter-rallies and blamed the left-wing PDS party for this, which was the governing party in the city district in question at that time. On February 19, Diesner went to the district headquarters of the PDS armed with a shot gun and opened fire on a left-wing bookseller, whose shop was located in the same building. After having wounded him severely, Diesner fled the scene and was stopped by a police control three days later. Diesner immediately opened fire and killed one police officer before he was arrested. Diesner was sentenced to life in prison and the prosecutor called him a “one-man terror cell.”

<b>Name:</b>	Epplen, Dieter (1957–?)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	May 1976
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Attack against infrastructure
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Bomb attack against radio station AFN of the Allied Forces
<b>Target:</b>	Allied Forces, infrastructure
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (e.g., Spiegel 1976)

### *Summary*

In May, 1976, the nineteen-year-old German army private, Dieter Epplen, attempted to execute a bomb attack on the radio station of the Allied Forces AFN in Munich. The bomb detonated too early, leaving Epplen severely injured. It was reported that he was an admirer of Karl-Heinz Hoffmann and his military sports group, albeit not an active member.

<b>Name:</b>	Europäische Befreiungsfront (European Liberation Front)
<b>Size:</b>	c.30–35
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1969–1970
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassination, arson
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Attack against electricity infrastructure during a meeting between German Chancellor Willy Brandt and GDR Head of State Willi Stoph on May 30, 1970, kidnappings of politicians and journalists, provocation of an armed conflict at the border between the Federal Republic and the GDR
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Fourteen members arrested before attack could be executed
<b>Target:</b>	Communists, West German government
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., Bewerunge 1972; Maegerle et al. 2013: 26; Neumann & Maes 1971: 55–59, 88–91; Rosen 1989: 51; Schneider 1981: 58–60; Spiegel 1970g)

### *Summary*

The Europäische Befreiungsfront (European Liberation Front, EBF) was founded in 1969 during the Aktion Widerstand by the NPD members Helmut Blatzheim and Hartwig Neumann, the former foreign legionnaire Johannes Brodka, and the informant of the intelligence Helmut Krahberg. Seeing itself as a “combat group against communism,” the EBF planned to establish a military hierarchy including a division for propaganda, diplomatic affairs and special operations. Sections of the group were located for example in Duisburg, Düsseldorf, Köln, Minden and Trier. Active connections were established to the French OAS and former Belgian SS officers. Confiscated weapons included one sub-machine gun, fifteen pistols, three revolvers and one rifle. After the trial against nine members, five were sentenced to prison terms of between six and twelve months. According to testimonies given by the former EBF member Ekkehard Weil, the organization contained some kind of ‘special operations unit’ called Odalgruppe (Odal Group) with military personnel and weapons experts as members. The Odal Group carried out a bomb attack against an office of the German Communist Party’s newspaper in Hamburg on January 2, 1971 after the EBF’s core group was already arrested.

<b>Name:</b>	Europäische Werwolfzelle (European Werewolf Cell)
<b>Size:</b>	6
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2013
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Bomb attack to destabilize the German government
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (Röbel & Schindler 2013a, 2013b)

## *Summary*

In 2013, police raids across Germany were directed against a European Werewolf Cell consisting of six members from Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. The group allegedly planned bomb attacks in Germany and had created its own encrypted communication software to coordinate. However, the German Federal Prosecutor General dropped the charges due to insufficient proof of specific attack plans.

<b>Name:</b>	F., Fabian (b. 1980)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2013

<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (Rost 2013)

## *Summary*

In June 2013, police arrested a thirty-three-year-old man, who was a previously convicted right-wing extremist in Munich. He was found in possession of a fully functional nail bomb. Specific attack plans could not be determined by the authorities.

<b>Name:</b>	Freies Deutschland (Free Germany)
<b>Size:</b>	Unknown
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1987
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Arson
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Arson attack against refugee home in Gronau
<b>Target:</b>	Refugees, immigrants
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (BMI 1988: 125)

## *Summary*

A group calling itself Freies Deutschland claimed responsibility for an arson attack against a refugee home in Gronau on January 6, 1987.

<b>Name:</b>	Freiheitliche Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (Free German Workers Party, FAP)
<b>Size:</b>	Between 500 and 1,000
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1979–February 24, 1995
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Aggressive propaganda, violent riots, criminal and violent assault, support of clandestine groups
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown

<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Target:</b>	Government, foreigners
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (Mecklenburg 1996: 258–260; Spiegel 1994b)

## *Summary*

The Free German Workers Party (FAP) was a small political party founded in 1979, which remained insignificant until members of the prohibited ANS/NA started to strategically infiltrate it in 1983. Afterwards, the party turned to aggressive racism, anti-Semitism and nationalism. Numerous FAP members were found guilty and imprisoned for violent crimes and the party was infamous for violent clashes with opponents and criminal assaults, mostly on foreigners. In the 1980s, the FAP actively recruited right-wing hooligans and skinheads and actively supported Croatian paramilitary groups in the Bosnian War by sending volunteers to participate in the fighting in 1994. The FAP was an elitist neo-Nazi cadre organization and many current militant right-wing leaders were trained and socialized in it.

<b>Name:</b>	Freikorps Havelland (Free Corps Havelland)
<b>Size:</b>	12
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2003–2004
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Arson
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Ten arson attacks against immigrants' shops
<b>Target:</b>	Immigrants
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (Heinemann 2005; Pfahl-Traughber 2012a, 2012b; Verfassungschutz 2005: 56)

## *Summary*

In 2003, a small right-wing extremist group of twelve gathered in the state of Brandenburg. Founded by an eighteen-year-old high-school graduate, the Freikorps Havelland (Free Corps Havelland, FH) aimed to drive out shopkeepers and merchants with an immigrant background by the means of arson attacks against their shops and homes. Until their arrest in 2004, the group committed ten arson attacks. The group was charged and found guilty of being a

terrorist organization by the Brandenburg high court which was reaffirmed by the Federal Constitutional Court.

<b>Name:</b>	Fuchs, Franz (1949–2000)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1993–1995
<b>Casualties:</b>	4
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	27 explosive attacks
<b>Target:</b>	Press, immigrants, politicians
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BfV 2004)

## *Summary*

One of the most active and violent right-wing terrorist lone actors was the Austrian Franz Fuchs (1949–2000), who was responsible for several series of mail bombs and booby traps using explosive devices in Austria and Germany between 1993 and 1995, killing four and injuring nine people. Fuchs mainly targeted politicians, foreigners and media representatives. Franz Fuchs grew up in Southern Austria and displayed technical skills from an early age. In school, he excelled in mathematics and physics. He started to study theoretical physics at the University of Graz in order to become a nuclear physicist but he left the university – in his own account because of a girlfriend at that time, which was doubted by the court’s psychologist – and went to Germany to work in car manufacturing. After returning to Austria in 1976, he committed his first suicide attempt and spent two months in a psychiatric clinic. He worked as a land surveyor between 1977 and 1988 before he was let off. Before Fuchs started his first bomb series in 1993, he had radicalized in his own account due to the opening of a school in Klagenfurt for Slovenians and the Austrian foreign policy at that time. In several waves, Franz Fuchs sent out mail bombs, placed pipe bombs and built booby traps with explosives until 1996, causing four casualties and injuring fifteen people. During his arrest in 1997, he attempted to commit suicide by detonating a bomb, which severed both of his hands. Fuchs claimed to be the leader of a Bajuwarische Befreiungsarmee (Bavarian Liberation Army, BBA) but in the following investigations, no other members or accomplices could be detected. The fifty-one-year-old Fuchs committed suicide in prison in 2000.

<b>Name:</b>	Gruppe Otte (Group Otte, GO) Braunschweiger Gruppe (Braunschweig Group)
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<b>Size:</b>	5
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1977
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Attacks against criminal proceedings against comrades and synagogues
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Two bomb attacks against courthouses in Flensburg and Hannover
<b>Target:</b>	Government (courts, judges, prosecutors), Jews
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., Maegerle et al. 2013: 35–36; Rosen, 1989: 59–60; Spiegel 1979a, 1984c; Zeit 1980)

## *Summary*

Paul Otte – a former NPD member and machinist – led a group of five members together with the former NPD member, Hans Dieter Lepzien, who shortly before the first attacks had met with Gary Lauck in Copenhagen. The Group Otte operated in close proximity of Kühnen’s ANS. Another member, Wolfgang Sachse, was the supervisor of a local shooting range and became the group’s bomb manufacturer. Explosives were bought in Switzerland and put to use against court proceedings involving comrades. The first bomb attack was executed on September 2, 1977 on a courthouse in Flensburg at which, in June that year, charges against Manfred Roeder had been opened. The second attack happened on October 21, 1977 at a courthouse in Hannover. Paul Otte was arrested November 30, 1977 and another operational bomb was found in his possession for a planned attack on a synagogue. During the trial in 1981, it was revealed the Hans Dieter Lepzien was an informant of the intelligence (LfV Lower Saxony). Nevertheless, he was sentenced to over three years in prison because he had played an active and crucial role in providing the explosives and executing the attacks.

<b>Name:</b>	Gruppe Ulrich (Group Ulrich)
<b>Size:</b>	4
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	June 1994–1996
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Police, military, border police
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BfV 2004: 10–11)

## Summary

Led by the former member of the Wikingjugend (Viking Youth, WJ), Gerd Ulrich, a group of four neo-Nazis prepared for bomb attacks, possibly against police, military or border police installations as they had monitored and done reconnaissance at various sites belonging to those three categories. Ulrich also had close contact with Peter Naumann. The charges by the Federal Prosecutor General for forming a terrorist organization were dropped and the involvement of Naumann could not be proven. In addition, the origin of some of the explosives could not be determined by the authorities. Three group members were prosecuted separately for violations of explosives and weapons laws.

<b>Name:</b>	Gruppe um Anton Pfahler (Group around Anton Pfahler)
<b>Size:</b>	5
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1998
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Unknown
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BfV 2004: 7)

## Summary

Long-time right-wing activist and neo-Nazi Anton Pfahler (b. 1946) was a leading member of the WSG Hoffmann, for which he was responsible for the procurement of military vehicles. He was also a member of several additional right-wing organizations such as the NPD and other parties. Together with four well-known militant neo-Nazis, Pfahler started to collect weapons and explosives in around 1997 and allegedly also was actively trading in arms to finance his operations. In June 1998, police searched his home and secured eleven machine pistols (different types), five hand grenades, one shotgun, two pistols and ammunition. The authorities could not prove specific attack plans, however, and the members were prosecuted individually for violations of weapons and explosives laws. One member, Alexander Larrass, was sentenced to prison and wrote a theoretical pamphlet in 2001 about the plan to assassinate informants, undercover agents and their families.

<b>Name:</b>	Gruppe um Dr. Burger (Group around Dr. Burger)
<b>Size:</b>	8

<b>Time of known activity:</b>	January 1963–May 1964
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Planned to gain public attention through bomb attacks against various infrastructure in South Tyrol
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Two attempted bomb attacks against electricity pylons in Italy in 1963
<b>Target:</b>	Italian government, infrastructure
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (e.g., BGH 1965)

## *Summary*

Dr. Norbert Burger (1929–1992) – a high-ranking member of the Austrian Befreiungsausschuss Südtirol (Liberation Committee South Tyrol, BAS) – was actively engaged in the violent struggle against the Italian government over the autonomy of South Tyrol. After being arrested in 1961, Burger fled to Germany and built another clandestine group for terrorists operations out of Augsburg and Munich. In Munich, he gathered two Austrian students and five German supporters (one of which was a physician) and planned and prepared explosive attacks against bridges, railroads and electricity pylons. These attacks could not be carried out, partially because members of the group were arrested during the attempt or because it proved too difficult to reach the determined target. The group’s aim was to “shake up” the world through spectacular terrorist attacks and gain international attention for the South Tyrol conflict. Burger and his group were arrested in 1963 and found guilty of forming a clandestine and criminal organization preparing for explosive attacks. Burger was extradited to Austria and continued his terrorist career.

<b>Name:</b>	Gruppe Ludwig (Group Ludwig)
<b>Size:</b>	2
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1977–1984
<b>Casualties:</b>	15
<b>Tactics:</b>	Arson, assassination
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	One foiled arson attack against a discotheque
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Nine attacks on discotheques, brothels and priests
<b>Target:</b>	Prostitutes, clerics, homosexuals, drug addicts, general public
<b>Quality of</b>	Good (BMI 1985: 167; Brunner 1986; Maegerle et al. 2013: 40–41;

## Summary

The Group Ludwig consisted of two members: Dr. Wolfgang Abel, a mathematician born in Düsseldorf, Germany in 1959 and a PhD candidate in chemistry Marco Furlan, born in 1960 in Padua, Italy. At least nine attacks in Germany and Italy by the group are known to the authorities causing a total of fifteen casualties. Between 1977 and 1984 the two right-wing extremists assassinated homosexuals and drug addicts using knives, axes and arson. In many cases, notes claiming responsibility for the homicide were found, blaming the moral degeneration and destruction of the pure race for the necessity of the attacks. In addition, the group carried out arson attacks against discotheques and erotic cinemas and assassinated a seventy-one-year-old Catholic priest because he had sexually abused children. On March 4, 1984, the two terrorists tried to carry out an arson attack against a carnival party at a discotheque but were arrested before the building caught fire. The group's ideology was an amalgam of National Socialism, mystic Catholicism and paganism. During the trial in Italy, the motives for the killings could entirely be determined. Both members were sentenced to twenty-seven years in prison and unsuccessfully tried to commit suicide several times. Furlan was able to escape from prison but was rearrested in 1995 and released in 2009.

<b>Name:</b>	Gruppe Naumann (Group Naumann)
<b>Size:</b>	4
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1978–1987
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Bomb attacks against military prison in Berlin Spandau (where Rudolf Heß was incarcerated), television and electricity pylons (e.g., in South Tyrol), concentration camp memorial sites and border installations of the GDR
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Bomb attack at a memorial site in Rome in August 1978, bomb attacks against television pylons in 1978 to prevent the transmission of the documentary, <i>Holocaust</i>
<b>Target:</b>	Government, communists
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BMI 1988: 126; 1989: 141; Rosen 1989: 69; Spiegel 1995)

## Summary

Led by chemical engineer Peter Naumann (b. 1952) – a notorious militant neo-Nazi since the early 1970s and explosives expert – a group of four right-wing extremists was arrested in October 1987 and found in possession of extensive chemicals, explosives, pictures of attack locations, detonators and maps of television pylons, as well as GDR border installations. The group was suspected of having carried out numerous attacks previously, including bomb attacks against the GDR border and television pylons in 1979. Peter Naumann's affinity with explosives had been well-known to the authorities since 1974, the latest when he suffered severe injuries in an accident involving self-made bombs. Naumann had close contacts to the NPD, VSBD, GdNF and NF. He had also planned to liberate Rudolf Heß from prison together with Odfried Hepp and Walter Kexel, two later right-wing terrorists. In close cooperation with the militant neo-Nazi Heinz Lembke (1937–1981), the two built numerous hidden weapon depots across Germany. By coincidence, one was discovered in 1981 and when interrogated afterwards, Lembke disclosed the location of thirty-three additional depots containing fully automatic weapons, 13,520 rounds of ammunition, fifty rocket-propelled grenades, 156 kg of explosives and 258 hand grenades. It was suspected that the bomb used in the Oktoberfest attack in 1980 was supplied by one of Lembke's depots. Lembke committed suicide in prison before he could give a statement about the origin and planned use of the armory. Regarding Naumann, his involvement in a number of terrorist acts could not be sufficiently proven in court. However, Naumann was found guilty of a bomb attack in Rome on August 30, 1978 at a memorial site, violations of laws regarding explosives and the attempted formation of a terrorist organization. In 1995, police again found explosives (two pipe bombs) during a house search. Afterwards, he disclosed to the police the location of thirteen additional weapon depots containing 27 kg of TNT.

<b>Name:</b>	Gruppe Neumann (Group Neumann)
<b>Size:</b>	Minimum of six
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1973
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Arson, kidnapping
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Kidnapping of Simon Wiesenthal
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	One arson attack against a left-wing bookstore in Göttingen
<b>Target:</b>	Left-wing activists, Jews
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., Rosen 1989: 58; Spiegel 1974, 1976)

## Summary

Founded and led by the former officer candidate and police officer in training, Hans-Joachim Neumann, the group consisted of at least six known members, including the non-commissioned officer Willie Wegner and the customs officer Ralf Ollmann. Neumann had founded militant right-wing organizations previously and aimed to gather militant activists in order to protect the “body of the people” (Volkskörper), roughly meaning the German race. Neumann wrote down his goals in a book manuscript titled *The Fourth Reich*. The group planned to kidnap Simon Wiesenthal for his active commitment to prosecute war criminals. As the group only existed for about four months, one arson attack, weapons theft and the desecration of a Jewish cemetery are the only actions it could execute. Nevertheless, the group around Neumann had gathered an extensive armory of eight sub-machine guns, rifles, pistols and ammunition. After the group’s detection through the authorities, Neumann fled to South Africa. He was convicted in 1976. The court did not find him guilty of founding a criminal organization and consequently the sentences were very low. Ollmann became later known as the founder of an NSDAP cell in West Berlin.

<b>Name:</b>	Gruppe Uhl (Group Uhl); Kommando Omega (Commando Omega)
<b>Size:</b>	5
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1981
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives, assassination, bank robberies
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Destruction of a highway bridge, assassinations of judges, prison personnel and defectors from the right-wing movement
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Government, defectors, infrastructure
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (BMI 1982: 26–27; Chaussy 1984; Hoffman 1986: 5; Maegerle et al. 2013: 53–54; Rosen 1989: 66–67; Spiegel 1981c, 1983)

## Summary

The five, who were led by VSBD members Klaus Ludwig Uhl (twenty-four) and Kurt Eduard Wolfgram (twenty-one), were intercepted by the police in October 1981 on their way to a bank robbery. One of members of the group threw a hand grenade at the police who returned fire. In the subsequent shoot-out Uhl and Wolfgram were killed. The group had left from the home of VSBD leader Friedhelm Busse and were observed by the police. Uhl – a former

NSDAP/AO member – had started to build a terrorist group in 1981. At sixteen years of age, he was first noticed by the authorities through right-wing graffiti. When he was supposed to stand trial in 1979, he fled to France and went underground supported by the French right-wing extreme group, FANE (Fédération d’Action Nationale et Européenne). One French neo-Nazi (Pascal Coletta) was also a member of the group intercepted by the police. Wolfgram was a long-time member of the NPD’s youth organization and was shortly arrested because he allegedly had planned attacks together with Paul Otte (see Group Otte). In the car intercepted by the police, the group had carried seven hand grenades, three sub-machine guns, rifles, revolvers and ammunition. Explosives were found in Busse’s garage. A few days later, two ANS members (Klaus Dieter and Christine Hewicker) were arrested in Belgium. The two had committed one bank robbery with the group Uhl and had participated in a terrorist attack in Antwerp. Internally the Group Uhl called itself Kommando Omega and had planned to target judges, prosecutors and defectors from the right-wing movement as well.

<b>Name:</b>	H., Dominic (1982–2014)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2014
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassination, explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (Rieber 2015)

## ***Summary***

Presumably inspired by the attacks of Anders Breivik in 2011, the thirty-two-year-old Dominic H. had gathered an extensive collection of weapons, explosives and combat gear closely resembling the equipment used by Breivik. When the police tried to enter his apartment in Munich in April 2014, he unsuccessfully tried to detonate several improvised explosive devices and then shot himself. The authorities later reported that they had found copies of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* and extensive literature about the Oklahoma bombing in 1995. However, no connections to other right-wing extremists or organizations could be found, nor any specific attack plans.

<b>Name:</b>	Hepp-Kexel Gruppe (Hepp-Kexel Group)
<b>Size:</b>	6



<b>Time of known activity:</b>	October–December 1982
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Arson, explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	At least five armed robberies and three explosive attacks on US Army personal vehicles
<b>Target:</b>	US Military
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Excellent (e.g., Botsch 2012: 86; Hoffman 1986: 15–22; Jesse 2012; Maegerle et al. 2013: 56–57; Rosen 1989: 67–68; Winterberg & Peter 2004)

## *Summary*

Together with the former VSBD section leader Walter Kexel (1961–1985), Odfried Hepp (b. 1958) – who already had a career in militant Right-Wing Extremism behind him – formed the Hepp-Kexel Gruppe (Hepp-Kexel group) in 1982 and gathered four other activists. Strategically following the German left-wing Red Army Faction’s concepts and specifically targeting members of United States Armed Forces in Germany, the small group carried out three car bombings against vehicles of US military personnel and several bank robberies in December 1982. The group quickly gained special attention among the German population and authorities as it was and still is the only right-wing terrorist group that has produced and published a theoretical pamphlet about their goals and ideas for a wide audience, trying to ideologically unite left-wing and right-wing ideas for a combined struggle against American “imperialism.” Odfried Hepp had been working for the GDR Ministry of State Security (Stasi) as well since 1981. After the the group was discovered and arrested, Hepp fled to the GDR and subsequently to the Middle East. In 1984, he became a member of the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF) and was arrested 1985 in France while trying to build a West European PLF cell. Kexel committed suicide in prison in 1985. Hepp was imprisoned between 1987 and 1993.

<b>Name:</b>	Kameradschaft Aachener Land (Comradeship Aachener Land, KAL)
<b>Size:</b>	15–20
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2001–2012
<b>Casualties:</b>	1
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassination, Threat of Chemical Weapons

<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Fake anthrax letter sent to the Jewish community in 2001, one assassination
<b>Target:</b>	Jews, immigrants
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., Jung 2011; W. Schmidt 2010)

## *Summary*

The Kameradschaft Aachener Land (Comradeship Aachener Land, KAL) developed in 2001 out of the NPD chapter in Aachen and was prohibited in 2012 by the Minister of the Interior in North Rhine-Westphalia. In 2001, members of the group sent a fake anthrax letter to the Jewish community in Aachen. With contacts to Belgian and Dutch neo-Nazi groups, KAL members were responsible for numerous violent crimes, such as assault, hostage taking and homicide. On October 24, 2010, one KAL member was involved in the killing of the nineteen-year-old Iraqi refugee, Kamal Kilade, who was stabbed to death by the perpetrators.

<b>Name:</b>	Kameradschaft Treptow (Comradeship Treptow)
<b>Size:</b>	30
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1995–1997
<b>Casualties:</b>	2
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Bomb attack against left-wing politician
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Assassination of two other neo-Nazis
<b>Target:</b>	Left-wing activists, refugees
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (Klußmann 1997)

## *Summary*

Founded in 1995, the Kameradschaft Treptow (Comradeship Treptow) was the largest neo-Nazi organization in Berlin at that time. One of the leading members was the former FAP cadre, Detlef Nolde. During house searches in 1997, the group was found in possession of weapons and chemicals for the manufacturing of explosives and unfinished pipe bombs. Two members of the comradeship were also involved in the Kampfgruppe Schörner (Combat Group Schörner). In April 1997, two members (including Nolde) stabbed and killed two neo-Nazis from another organization for unknown reasons. It was suspected that ideological

differences or the criminal activities of one group played a role.

<b>Name:</b>	Kampfgemeinschaft Nationaler Sozialisten (Combat Alliance of National Socialists)
<b>Size:</b>	Unknown
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1980–1981
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Arson
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	One arson attack
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (BMI 1982: 28)

## *Summary*

A small group of right-wing extremists in Emden were arrested during an attempted arson attack in 1981. The group members were charged with forming a terrorist organization. It later became known that one member, Joachim Apel who was responsible for propaganda and the procurement of weapons, was also an informant of the intelligence. He actively participated in the attempted arson attack.

<b>Name:</b>	Kampfgruppe Priem (Combat Group Priem)
<b>Size:</b>	Unknown
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	January 1974–1984
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Attack on socialist party bureau, GDR military personnel, border installations and GDR travel agency
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Communists, socialists
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (Fromm 1998: 182–187; Schröder 1997; Spiegel 1984b)

## Summary

Long-time right-wing extremist Arnulf Priem founded the military sports group in January 1974 together with two NPD members (Wolfgang Rahl, Alexander Hensel). All three had been previously convicted of violent crimes in the GDR and were deported to West Germany. The group practiced shooting and combat training in Southern Germany and was known as highly violent. In at least one instance, members of the group attacked a group of Antifa-activists with chains. In addition, active ties to Manfred Roeder (DA) and the Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann (WSG) helped to foster the paramilitary and violent nature of the group. At least one member of the Combat Group Priem was involved in Group Uhl and was wounded in the shooting with the police during which Uhl and Wolfgram died. In addition, several VSBD members participated in exercises by Priem's group. In 1982, two members of the group committed an arson attack on a house inhabited by refugees in Berlin. After continued trials against Priem, the group dissolved itself in 1984.

<b>Name:</b>	Kampfgruppe Schörner (Combat Group Schörner)
<b>Size:</b>	4
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1997
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Bomb attack against a left-wing politician
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Left-wing activists and politicians
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BfV 2004: 14–15)

## Summary

In October 1997, the two militant neo-Nazis Carsten Müller and Patrick Demmig founded the Kampfgruppe Schörner (Combat Group Schörner) and planned to commit a bomb attack on the left-wing politician, Gil Kowski. For that purpose, they unsuccessfully tested a pipe bomb which was bearing the signature “KG Schörner.” The two neo-Nazis planned to have a maximum of four members but were arrested shortly after their failed bomb test.

<b>Name:</b>	Koch, Wolfgang (1930–?) and W., Andreas
<b>Size:</b>	2
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1983
<b>Casualties:</b>	0

<b>Tactics:</b>	Unknown
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Bank robberies
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (BMI 1984: 158; Spiegel 1981b)

## *Summary*

In February 1982, the neo-Nazi Andreas W. committed a bank robbery and was arrested before he could leave Germany and go underground. He was sentenced to two years in prison in the same year. W. was arrested together with the well-known militant neo-Nazi Wolfgang Koch. Koch was thought to have requested this and a previous (1982) bank robbery in order to finance militant clandestine operations. Koch was also previously convicted of arson and of illegal possession of weapons and was classified by the authorities as a fanatical and violence right-wing extremist.

<b>Name:</b>	Kommando 88 (Commando 88)
<b>Size:</b>	Unknown
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1978
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassination
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Communists, socialists
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (e.g., Virchow 2011)

## *Summary*

In 1978, police in Hanau detected a group of neo-Nazis planning to assassinate an unknown number of victims. The group had a list of 500 potential targets.

<b>Name:</b>	Köhler, Gundolf (1959–1980)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1980
<b>Casualties:</b>	13

<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Bomb attack at the Munich Oktoberfest 1980
<b>Target:</b>	General public
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., BMI 1981: 44; Chaussy 2014; Fromm 1998: 336–342; Spiegel 1985, 2011; Von Heymann & Wensierski 2011)

## *Summary*

Gundolf Köhler, born in 1959 in West Germany, executed the most lethal terrorist attack in Germany after the Second World War: the bombing of the Munich Oktoberfest on September 26, 1980, which caused thirteen casualties and more than 200 injuries. Köhler had participated in NPD events since he was fourteen years old, had collected National Socialist memorabilia and was a member of the Wikingjugend (Viking Youth, WJ), an extreme right-wing youth organization prohibited in 1994. Since 1975, Köhler had been especially interested in paramilitary activities, established contact with the WSG Hoffmann and started to experiment with chemicals. In 1975, an accidental explosion severely injured his face. After his Abitur in 1978, he served for two years in the German army, voluntarily extending his mandatory service where he tried to be trained as explosives expert. After the military had denied him this career plan, he started to study geology in Tübingen in 1979, where he also became a sporadic participant at right-wing fraternities' events. Already in 1976 he had participated in violent clashes led by the WSG Hoffmann. Nevertheless, Köhler was not socially isolated at his university, where he played in a student's band for example.

When the bomb planted by Köhler exploded prematurely, he was instantly killed. The fact that he, for example, opened up a building loan contract shortly before the attack indicates that Köhler had indeed planned to survive the attack unrecognized. The authorities' theory of Köhler being the lone actor behind the attack remains highly contested and numerous additional or ignored evidence forced the Prosecutor General to reopen the investigations in 2014. Some of the many questions unanswered through the lone actor thesis are the highly complicated construction of the bomb, the origin of the explosives, a severed hand that could not be attributed to either Köhler or one of the victims, and concordant witness statements describing Köhler shortly before the attack in the company of several other men.

Statements from Köhler before the attack suggest that he might have planned to frame left-wing extremist groups in order to influence the ongoing election.

<b>Name:</b>	Modler, Alexander (?)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2003
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BfV 2004: 32)

## *Summary*

In 2003, police searched the home of the right-wing extremist Alexander Modler and found eleven operational improvised explosive devices (IEDs), ammunition and weapons. Although investigators found material (T-Shirts, propaganda material) of the local Kameradschaft München (Comradeship Munich), suggesting contacts to the above-mentioned Kameradschaft Süd KS, no active connections could be proven in court.

<b>Name:</b>	Nationale Deutsche Befreiungsbewegung (National German Liberation Movement, NDBB)
<b>Size:</b>	Unknown
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1970–1978
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Attack on socialist party bureau, GDR military personnel, border installations and GDR travel agency
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Communists, socialists
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (BMI 1972: 32; Rosen 1989: 53; Schneider 1981: 60; Spiegel 1971a, 1971c)

## *Summary*

Still during the AW's active time in 1970, the well-known right-wing extremist Horst Tabbert founded the Nationale Deutsche Befreiungsbewegung (National German Liberation

Movement, NDBB) which sought to attack GDR and Soviet institutions in West Germany and border installations on the 10th anniversary of the building of the Berlin wall on August 13, 1971, with the ultimate goal to become the new NSDAP. The group carried out a number of violent attacks on left-wing bars but was detected and most members were arrested on August 12, 1971.

<b>Name:</b>	Nationale Bewegung (National Movement, NB)
<b>Size:</b>	Unknown
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2000–2001
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Arson
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Four arson attacks
<b>Target:</b>	Jews, Turkish immigrants
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BfV 2004: 25)

### *Summary*

Between 2000 and 2001 a group calling itself the Nationale Bewegung (National Movement, NB) committed four arson attacks against Turkish and Jewish shops and always left notes claiming its responsibility. The group stopped all activities in around January 2001 for unknown reason and was never arrested by the authorities.

<b>Name:</b>	Nationalistische Front (Nationalist Front, NF)
<b>Size:</b>	Up to 800
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1985–1992
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	One bomb attack
<b>Target:</b>	Government, justice system, Allied Forces
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., Bittner 2002; BMI 1992: 100–102; Botsch 2012: 96–98; Mecklenburg 1996: 295–297)

### *Summary*



Shortly after the VSBD was officially prohibited and its leader Friedhelm Busse imprisoned, former members founded the Nationale Front/Bund Sozialrevolutionärer Nationalisten (National Front/Covenant of Social-revolutionary Nationalists, NF/BSN) in Munich in 1983. The group was renamed the Nationalistische Front (Nationalist Front, NF ) in 1984 and turned into a nationwide political party in 1985, but it never received any significant election results. The NF saw itself as a National Socialist elite cadre training network and included numerous publication series, a publishing service and training facilities. Since 1986 and until the group's prohibition in 1992 on the basis of its "anti-constitutional nature," the NF's leader was the former German army sergeant Meinolf Schönborn (b. 1955), who was expelled from the NPD because of his outspoken xenophobic agitation. Shortly before the NF was prohibited, Schönborn started an internal discourse about the establishment of terrorist cells, which he called the Nationale Einsatzkommandos (National Task Forces, NEK), targeting the federal government, the justice system and the Allied Forces. The concept consciously combined methods of the RAF and the Freikorps (Free Corps) of the Weimar Republic and aimed to create a short (for just one to two days) but nationwide wave of terrorist attacks by hundreds of these task forces to cripple the national executive infrastructure (Bittner 2002). Initial investigations against Schönborn by the Federal Prosecutor General suspecting the formation of a terrorist organization in 1991 were dropped, because it could not be proven that he actually had left the theoretical stage and moved on to preparation. Schönborn himself continued the NF after it had been banned and was subsequently imprisoned in 1996. The theoretical concept of the NEK was continued in the Deutsche Hochleistungskampfkunstverband (German High Performance Martial Arts Union, DHKKV).

In December 1988, nineteen-year-old Josef Saller committed an arson attack against refugees causing four casualties. Some sources claim that Saller was an active NF member, although this is not proven.

<b>Name:</b>	Nationalsozialistische Kampfgruppe Großdeutschland (National Socialist Combat Group Greater Germany, NSKG)
<b>Size:</b>	25
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	April 1972–October 11, 1972
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives, kidnapping
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Not specified
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Communists, government, Jews

<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., BMI 1973: 12; Rosen 1989; Spiegel 1976: 52–53)
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Summary

The Nationalsozialistische Kampfgruppe Großdeutschland (National Socialist Combat Group Greater Germany, NSKG) was founded in April 1972 by lumberman Wilhelm Knauber and included twenty-five members from Bavaria and North Rhine-Westphalia. The group was directly influenced by the American neo-Nazi Gary Lauck and saw itself as the executor of Adolf Hitler’s last will. At least three members of the German army (one soldier and two sergeants) were active members of the NSKG, which published an internal newsletter titled “The National Socialist: Combat Organ for the Liberation of Germany from Opression.” Several NSKG members were previously active with the NPD. According to the group’s own testimonies, the NSKG had active ties to American and Palestinian (PLO) terrorists and the ultimate goal was the armed struggle against the government, including several bomb attacks and kidnappings. Quickly discovered (after seven months) by the German authorities however, the NSKG was found in possession of three heavy machine-guns, five sub-machine guns, rifles, explosives, rocked-propelled grenades, hand grenades and manuals for hostage tacking. Found to be guilty of forming a criminal organization, the six members were sentenced to several years in prison.

<b>Name:</b>	Nationalsozialistische Kampfgruppe Westfalen-Lippe (National Socialist Combat Group Westfalen-Lippe)
<b>Size:</b>	8
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1979
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	One bomb attack
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (Maegerle et al. 2013: 41–42; Spiegel 1979a)

Summary

In January 1979, the authorities detected a ‘National Socialist combat group’ around the twenty-seven-year-old television repairman, Rolf Gebser. The group had carried out burglaries and one bomb attack according to press reports. The group had collected five sub-machine guns, five rifles, 600 rounds of ammunition and seven kilograms of explosives.

<b>Name:</b>	National Revolutionäre Zelle (National Revolutionary Cell)
<b>Size:</b>	7
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2000
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Bomb attack against left-wing activists
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Left-wing activists
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (BfV 2004: 20–21; Greger 2005: 64–64)

## *Summary*

In March 2000, Carsten Szczepanski, who was later revealed to be a paid informant of the Brandenburg intelligence service, founded a Combat 18 cell in Brandenburg. He had already established another German Ku Klux Klan section with his extensive international contacts in 1992 and was sentenced to eight years in prison on homicide charges in 1995. After his early release in 1999, he gathered six more ‘comrades’ and organized the cell, calling itself National Revolutionäre Zelle (National Revolutionary Cell). The group built at least one functional bomb and acquired a sniper rifle with 300 rounds of ammunition. Szczepanski tried to persuade the group to use the bomb and the rifle to attack left-wing activists. In June 2000, the group members were arrested and the bomb was secured. All the members were sentenced to several years in prison but no terrorism charges were put forward by the Federal Prosecutor General. Szczepanski was revealed as an informant during the trial and put into witness protection.

<b>Name:</b>	Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund (National Socialist Underground, NSU)
<b>Size:</b>	3
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1998–2011
<b>Casualties:</b>	10
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives, assassination

<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Ten murders, allegedly five bomb attacks, 12–14 armed robberies
<b>Target:</b>	Immigrants, police, general public
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Excellent (e.g., Baumgärtner & Böttcher 2012; Fuchs 2012; Gensing 2012; Koehler 2014; McGowan 2014; Moulson 2012; Pidd 2011)

## *Summary*

The National Socialist Underground (NSU) was a group of three core members (Uwe Mundlos, Uwe Böhnhardt and Beate Zschäpe) who were active in the underground between 1998 and 2011. The group was detected by coincidence after a failed bank robbery in November 2011 after which Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Böhnhardt killed each other. The last member – Beate Zschäpe – learned somehow about the incident and immediately set fire to the group’s apartment, left the building and sent out via mail fifteen copies of a DVD produced by the group claiming responsibility for some of the attacks committed on journalists, as well as political, religious and cultural organizations. Zschäpe turned herself in to the authorities a couple of days later.

The trial against Beate Zschäpe and four supporters started in May 2013 and will most likely be the longest and most extensive terrorist trial in post-Second World War Germany.

The NSU committed a series of terrorist crimes, such as the targeted assassination of nine immigrants, one police officer, five bomb attacks and 12–14 armed robberies. Some of these crimes however are not yet proven NSU crimes but are suspected to be so by the authorities.

The NSU case has caused the most significant crisis within the German security authorities after the Second World War, leading to the stepping-down of a number of police and intelligence directors and large-scale reforms of the German police and intelligence system.

<b>Name:</b>	Neue Ordnung (New Order, NO)
<b>Size:</b>	5
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2012
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Unknown
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (Röbel & Wassermann 2012)

## *Summary*

In March 2012, police in the state of Brandenburg were called to the hotel “Weißes Haus” (White House) where a body had been found. During the investigation, the dead person – a known neo-Nazi who had died most likely from a stroke – was found in possession of numerous weapons and ammunition. The owner of the hotel was the wife of the former head of the prohibited Nationalistische Front (Nationalist Front, NF) Meinolf Schönborn and investigators believe that he planned to build a new training facility for militant right-wing extremists around this site. The Federal Prosecutor General opened investigations against a group of five neo-Nazis around Schönborn on the suspicion of forming a terrorist organization. The investigations were dropped later as no specific attack plans could be found.

<b>Name:</b>	Objekt 21 (Object 21)
<b>Size:</b>	30
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2010–2013
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives, arson, organized crime
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Armed robberies, arson, hostage-taking, extortion
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (Baumgärtner & Born 2013; Brecht 2013; Reuters 2013)

## *Summary*

This Austrian-German group calling itself Objekt 21 was active between 2010 and 2013 and developed structures similar to mafia organizations with about thirty core members and almost 200 supporters. Object 21 controlled large parts of the redlight districts close to the German–Austrian border. During the arrest, police found ten kilograms of TNT, heavy machine-guns and €3.5 million. Founded in May 2010 by Austrian Blood & Honour members, the organization quickly developed ties with Bavarian motorcycle gangs and Thuringian militant neo-Nazis. In addition, the building used as a headquarters saw numerous neo-Nazi concerts, bringing in bands and other groups from different European countries. Crimes committed by Object 21 members include arson, armed robberies, extortion, assault, hostagetaking, arms and drug dealing. Seven Austrian and two German members were sentenced to prison terms because of multiple crimes committed by them. Investigators also assumed that these “heavily armed networks” play a central role in financing and providing arms to other neo-Nazi cells, which focus on terrorist action.

<b>Name:</b>	Oidoxie Streetfighting Crew; Combat 18 Cell
<b>Size:</b>	5
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2003–2006
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives, assassination
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Immigrants, politicians
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., Schraven 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d)

### *Summary*

Around the neo-Nazi band Oidoxie in Dortmund and within the band’s own comradeship, Oidoxie Streetfighting Crew, a small cell of five people began training for armed attacks against immigrants and left-wing politicians in 2003. Deeply embedded in the Blood & Honour movement and with close ties to a Belgian right-wing terrorist organization (Bloed, Bodem, Eer & Trouw), the group started to acquire weapons and used the *Turner Diaries* as an organizational blueprint. Before any attacks could be carried out, the group dissolved itself in 2006 due to internal rivalries. Just a couple of months after, two former members shot a Tunisian immigrant during a robbery using one of the weapons of the “Streetfighting Crew.”

<b>Name:</b>	Oldschool Society (OSS)
<b>Size:</b>	10
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	November 2014–May 2015
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Bomb attacks against mosques, Salafists and refugees
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Moslems, immigrants
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., Baumgärtner, Diehl & Röbel 2015; Götschenberg 2015; Rietzschel 2015; Spiegel 2015a, 2016; Zeit 2015)

### *Summary*

In May 2015, the authorities detected a group of ten neo-Nazis calling itself Oldschool Society (OSS) and arrested them shortly before they could execute bomb attacks with the explosives which they had already acquired. Targeting mosques, Salafists and refugee homes, the group's deputy leader was a former member of the Kameradschaft Aachener Land (Comradeship Aachener Land, KAL) which was prohibited in 2012. Therefore, the OSS had access to extensive personal experiences in violent tactics, including homicide and the faked use of chemical weapons. In January 2016, the German Federal Prosecutor General charged the four core members of the OSS with membership of a terrorist organization. These four had formed what they called a "secret council" within the OSS and had planned the attacks.

<b>Name:</b>	Oxner, Helmut (1956–1982)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1982
<b>Casualties:</b>	3
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassination
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Mass shooting at discotheque
<b>Target:</b>	US military personnel, refugees, immigrants
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BMI 1983: 122–124; Spiegel 1982a)

## *Summary*

Another lone actor with loose ties to right-wing organizations – Helmut Oxner, a twenty-six-year-old roofer – committed a mass shooting at a discotheque known for its popularity among American servicemen and Afro-Americans on June 24, 1981 in Nuremberg. Oxner, who opened fire at the cashier's office, killed three and wounded two others. During the shoot-out with the police, Oxner was hit and shot himself in the heart and lungs to commit suicide. In his pockets, articles from the American NSDAP/AO and Gerry Lauck were found. Just the day before he carried out his attack, he was found guilty in court of having threatened "foreigners" and having applied neo-Nazi graffiti together with a friend. Oxner was facing the continuation of the trial in fall. Clearly Oxner was inspired by right-wing propaganda and highly ideologized but the involvement of any other person in the attack is not known.

<b>Name:</b>	Saller, Josef (1969–?)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1989
<b>Casualties:</b>	4

<b>Tactics:</b>	Arson
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Arson attack against a house inhabited by Turkish immigrants
<b>Target:</b>	Immigrants, foreigners, communists
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (Spiegel 1989)

## *Summary*

The nineteen-year-old Josef Saller committed an arson attack in Schwandorf on December 17, 1988. The house torched by Saller was inhabited by a Turkish family and members of the German Communist Party. The fire caused four casualties (three Turkish, one German). Saller had a record of right-wing motivated crimes, for example, an attack against a boy in a wheelchair because he was deemed an “unworthy life” by Saller. He also distributed flyers directed against Communism. At least two court proceedings based on politically motivated crimes were pending when Saller committed the arson attack. He also traveled to right-wing gatherings across West Germany and was known to be close to the NPD and Nationalist Front.

<b>Name:</b>	Schubert, Frank (1957–1980)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1980
<b>Casualties:</b>	2
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassination
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Assassination of two Swiss border police officers during an attempt to smuggle weapons to Germany
<b>Target:</b>	Government
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., BMI 1981: 46; Hoffman 1986: 6; Rosen 1989: 65; C. Schmidt 1981; Spiegel 1981b, 1981d)

## *Summary*

Born in 1957 in the GDR, Frank Schubert – a trained cook – fled to West Germany in March 1977 and was a long-time and well-known member of militant right-wing groups. He had close ties to Walter Kexel and was an active member of the VSBD, for example. Schubert was



detected by Swiss border police during his attempt to smuggle weapons and ammunition across the border to Germany in December 1980; he killed two border policemen in the subsequent shoot-out and committed suicide shortly after. The background of Schubert's activities could not be established by the authorities. Schubert was well known to the authorities for his right-wing motivated violent outbursts and crimes and he was facing trial in 1981 for several crimes he committed during a political rally (C. Schmidt 1981).

<b>Name:</b>	Schutzgruppe (Protection Group)
<b>Size:</b>	9
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2001–2003
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Bomb attack against Jewish community center construction site
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Jews
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., BfV 2004: 32–35; BMI 2004; Jesse 2012; Spiegel 2005)

## *Summary*

Led by the notorious and violent neo-Nazi Martin Wiese (born in 1976 in the GDR), the terrorist organization under the umbrella of the Kameradschaft Süd (Comradeship South, KS) was founded in Munich with an estimated twenty-five members seeing itself as the successor of the WSG (calling itself the “Schutzgruppe,” Protection Group). In September 2003, nine members of the group were charged by the German Federal Prosecutor General with forming a terrorist organization, among them the leader of the KS, after arrests had led to the discovery of explosives, weapons and precise plans to detonate a bomb during the foundation ceremony for a new Jewish community center in Munich in the same year. Wiese and his followers were found guilty of forming a terrorist organization and planning a bomb attack. As the leader of the group, Wiese was sentenced to seven years in prison.

<b>Name:</b>	Skinheads Sächsische Schweiz
<b>Size:</b>	100–200
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1997–2001
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Large-scale intimidation, physical assault, explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown

<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Target:</b>	Left-wing activists, refugees
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., Backes, Mletzko & Stoye 2010: 140–148; Brenner 2011; FAZ 2002a, 2002b)

## Summary

In April 2001, one of the largest (100–120 members) and most violent neo-Nazi skinhead organizations (the Skinheads Sächsische Schweiz, SSS) was prohibited and several members were arrested. Founded in 1997 by former Wikingjugend (Viking Youth) members, the SSS was personally and logistically intertwined with the NPD Saxony. The SSS operated as protection detail for NPD events, appeared in uniforms, and saw itself as the elite of militant neo-Nazism. The group acted singularly brutal and violent aiming to “liberate” the region Sächsische Schweiz from foreigners and left-wing activists through systematic intimidation and terror.

Among other weapons, two kilograms of TNT, anti-tank rockets and rocket-propelled grenades were secured by the police (Maegerle 2002: 156). During the trial the judges determined that the group systematically established a climate of fear and insecurity in their area. The SSS was legally classified as a criminal organization but as the individual roles and crimes of its members could not be clearly proven, most of the defendants received only light sentences.

<b>Name:</b>	Steffen, Frank (born 1971)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2015
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassination
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Knife attack against Cologne mayoral candidate
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Knife attack against Cologne mayoral candidate on October 17, 2015
<b>Target:</b>	Government
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., Diehl 2015; dpa 2015)

## Summary

The forty-four-year-old unemployed Frank Steffen – who was a member of the FAP party in the early 1990s and at that time also of many other right-wing organizations – executed a knife attack against Henriette Reker (mayoral candidate in Cologne, who at the time of the attack was responsible for social and refugee affairs). Steffen had prepared for the attack and deleted or removed all personal files and items from his apartment beforehand. He also expressed clear right-wing motives during the following investigation (e.g., to protect the German children against refugees) and his goal to kill Reker, who survived the attack. Activities to right-wing organizations before the attack are not known but the Federal Prosecutor General (being responsible for acts of terrorism) took over the investigations in October 2015.

<b>Name:</b>	Sturm 34 (Storm 34)
<b>Size:</b>	25–50
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	March 2006–August 2008
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Coordinated massive street violence to create a zone of fear
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Numerous violent attacks against left-wing activists, immigrants, politicians and bystanders
<b>Target:</b>	Immigrants, left-wing activists, general Public
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., Uhlmann 2010; Wittrock 2008)

## *Summary*

Founded in March 2006 with 30–40 neo-Nazis in Mittweida (Saxony) Sturm 34 (Storm 34) was named after an SA brigade stationed in the region during the Second World War. With supporters, this comradeship was estimated to be about 175 people strong (25–50 core members). The group had close ties with the NPD and provided security services for multiple party events during which Storm 34 members regularly committed violent crimes against left-wing activists. The group’s declared goal was to create a “national liberated zone” in the Mittweida region through fear and terror. Violent raids by uniformed Storm 34 members against left-wing politicians’ bureaus, restaurants owned by immigrants, spontaneous attacks against foreigners during “patrols,” and many additional crimes were attributed to the organization. It was also reported that group members attacked victims not fitting their usual ‘enemy’ spectrum simply to show their power. In April 2007, the group was prohibited. In the subsequent trials, five leading members were found guilty of forming a criminal organization

and were sentenced to prison.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (1)
<b>Size:</b>	Unknown
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1979
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassination
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Planned assassination of prosecutor Robert Kemper and journalist/author Eugen Kogon
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Government, journalists
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (Spiegel 1979a)

## *Summary*

A group around the thirty-two-year-old waiter Jürgen Pospieszinsky planned to assassinate the prosecutor at the war crime trials in Nuremberg, Robert Kemper, and the journalist and author, Eugen Kogon, who wrote a well-known book about the SS and the systematic terror in the Third Reich.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (2)
<b>Size:</b>	Unknown
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1979
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives, Arson
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Target:</b>	American Military
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (Spiegel 1979a, 1979b)

## *Summary*

The Federal Prosecutor General investigated a group of German soldiers around the officer candidate and paratrooper Manfred Heidenfelder because they had planned arson and

explosive attacks. Heidenfelder published a short manifesto out of prison in 1979 calling for arson and bomb attacks mainly against American occupation forces in order to “wake up” the German population. He also expressively saw the left-wing Red Army Faction (RAF) as a role model.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (3)
<b>Size:</b>	4
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1982
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (Arndt 1984: 288)

### *Summary*

A group of four adolescent right-wing extremists in Kassel were sentenced to prison in 1982 because they had committed bomb attacks.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (4)
<b>Size:</b>	6
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1984
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (MfS 1984)

### *Summary*

In September 1984, the GDR’s Ministry for State Security (Stasi) reported the existence of an armed group of six neo-Nazis in Thuringia. The group was in possession of weapons and chemicals and reportedly detonated test bombs twelve times. Seeing themselves as an SS commando, the group admired the WSG Hoffmann and tried to build an armed military

sports group in the GDR.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (5)
<b>Size:</b>	2
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1984
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Bank robberies
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (BMI 1985: 168)

### *Summary*

In November 1984, the authorities tried to arrest two violent and notorious neo-Nazis who had committed a series of bank robberies and burglaries in weapons stores since September. During the attempted arrest, the group opened fire and wounded one police officer. The group was found in possession of numerous weapons, maps, military radios and money. Authorities suspected that the cell was planning terrorist acts.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (6)
<b>Size:</b>	5
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1984
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (BMI 1985: 168)

### *Summary*

During house searches in October and November 1984 by the police on the suspicion of explosive related crimes of a group with five members, the authorities found ten rifles, German army assault rifles, twenty-five pistols, 10,000 rounds of ammunition and three kilograms of TNT. None of the group members were previously known to be right-wing

extremists. Nevertheless, extensive neo-Nazi propaganda material was secured as well. The group was suspected to have planned terrorist acts.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (7)
<b>Size:</b>	2
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1987
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	One attempted bomb attack at Frankfurt Main central station
<b>Target:</b>	General public
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (BMI 1988: 125)

### *Summary*

On August 20, 1987, two neo-Nazis were arrested after they had placed materials for a combined explosive and arson device in a locker at Frankfurt Main central station.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (8)
<b>Size:</b>	6
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1997
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BfV 2004: 14)

### *Summary*

In October 1997, police in Saxony detected and arrested a group of six neo-Nazis, who were found in possession of fully automatic weapons, explosives and at least one fully functional bomb. Specific attack plans could not be proven by the authorities.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (9)
<b>Size:</b>	4

<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1998
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Target:</b>	Left-wing activists
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BfV 2004: 18)

### *Summary*

In 1998, the former FAP member Uwe Buder gathered three comrades who were active and high-ranking NPD members to form a clandestine cell. In 1999, the Federal Prosecutor General opened investigations against the group, suspecting the formation of a terrorist organization. During house searches, several members were found in possession of chemicals and manuals to manufacture improvised explosive devices. The criminal police determined that the group was still in the early preparation phase of possible attacks against left-wing activists. As no specific attack plans could be proven, the charges were dropped and the group members were prosecuted individually for different crimes.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (10)
<b>Size:</b>	3
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2000
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Bomb attack against a Turkish restaurant
<b>Target:</b>	Immigrants
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BfV 2004: 22)

### *Summary*

On August 10, 2000, three neo-Nazis (Patrick Wieschke, Robert Hochhaus, Danny Pfotenhauer) committed a bomb attack on a Turkish restaurant in Eisenach, which was closed at the time of the attack. All three perpetrators received very light sentences.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (11)
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<b>Size:</b>	3
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2000
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Arson
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Arson attack against a synagogue in Erfurt
<b>Target:</b>	Jews
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BfV 2004: 21; Spiegel 2000)

### *Summary*

Three neo-Nazis committed an arson attack against the synagogue in Erfurt on April 20, 2000. All three perpetrators were between 17–18 years old and left a notice claiming responsibility at the crime scene, explaining the attack with anti-Semitism as motive. The group had planned to celebrate Hitler’s birthday by destroying the synagogue.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (12)
<b>Size:</b>	2
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2000
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Bomb attack against refugee home
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Immigrants
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BfV 2004: 22)

### *Summary*

In August 2000, police found chemicals, pipes and bomb manufacturing manuals at the home of the previously convicted neo-Nazi Falk von Lübke. He was supported by another comrade who supplied the pipes for him. The two had planned a bomb attack against a refugee home in Bremen.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (13)
<b>Size:</b>	4
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2001

<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Bomb attacks against Jewish and Turkish buildings
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Immigrants, Jews
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BfV 2004: 28)

## *Summary*

Between June and August 2011, police learned about a group of four neo-Nazis around the Berlin skinhead Paul Stuart Barrington, who were debating the use of explosives against Jewish and Turkish buildings. Although no specific plans and preparations could be proven by the police, house searches yielded bomb-making manuals and lists of possible targets.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (14)
<b>Size:</b>	5
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2002
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Arson
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Arson attack against an Asian shop in Jessnitz
<b>Target:</b>	Jews
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (Maul 2002)

## *Summary*

In June 2001, five neo-Nazis between 17–22 years old committed an arson attack against an Asian shop in Jessnitz. The shop owner’s family was sleeping in building and the eight people – including two children – only narrowly escaped death. In January 2001, the Federal Prosecutor General opened charges against the group for collective attempted murder and arson. According to the prosecutor, the attack was able to threaten the German internal security and had the sole purpose of implementing the perpetrators’ ideology.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (15)
<b>Size:</b>	2
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2012

<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Unknown
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (Jüttner 2012)

## *Summary*

In June 2012, the two violent and well-known neo-Nazis Marco Z. (thirty-four) and Steffen R. (twenty-eight) were arrested after extensive house searches by the police on the charges of having planned and prepared a crime threatening the state. The two had contact with NSU supporters Ralf Wohlleben and André Kapke as well as with Karl-Heinz Hoffmann. No further information was revealed by the authorities.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (16)
<b>Size:</b>	4
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2013
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Left-wing activists
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (Rüskamp 2015; ulz/AFP/dpa 2013)

## *Summary*

In September 2013, police arrested four right-wing extremists who had planned to use model planes to fly a bomb into a left-wing rally. During house searches the authorities found chemicals, model planes and an improvised explosive device. The group had already detonated a small IED in August 2013 during a right-wing rally used against counter-demonstrators. The explosion injured a police officer and several other people. Three members of the group faced trial in October 2015 and were sentenced to prison, with sentences on parole and monetary fines (baden.fm 2015).

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (17)
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<b>Size:</b>	3
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2014
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (taz 2014; Volksfreund 2014)

### *Summary*

In June 2014, police searched the home of a thirty-three-year-old previously convicted right-wing extremist suspecting him of selling drugs. In his home, the authorities found a fully functional nail bomb. Together with him, two other people were arrested with unknown ties to the right-wing movement. Authorities also suspected that the group had not manufactured the bomb themselves. Its origins could not be determined.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (18)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2013
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	Unknown
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (Sabinsky-Wolf 2013)

### *Summary*

In August 2013, police arrested a forty-year-old lawyer in Munich who was found in possession of weapons and chemicals to create explosives. In the lawyer's apartment, the authorities also found a large amount of neo-Nazi propaganda material, pictures of Adolf Hitler and copies of *Mein Kampf*. As psychologists saw him posing a concrete threat, he was transferred to a psychiatric ward.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (19)
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<b>Size:</b>	14
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	2000
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Attempted bomb attack against Turkish restaurant
<b>Target:</b>	Immigrants, foreigners
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (BfV 2004: 23)

## Summary

In October 2000, a group of fourteen neo-Nazi skinheads tried to forcefully enter a Turkish restaurant after some of the right-wing extremists had fought with the restaurant's owner previously. Police found the group in possession of a fully functional pipe bomb which could have inflicted heavy damage or death. The possessor of the bomb was sentenced to only light juvenile arrest because it could not be proven in court that the neo-Nazi in fact did plan to use the bomb and not just to threaten the restaurant's owner.

<b>Name:</b>	Unknown (20)
<b>Size:</b>	4
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	October–November 2015
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Explosive attack against inhabited refugee home, explosive and butyric acid attack against a left-wing housing project
<b>Target:</b>	Foreigners (refugees, immigrants), left-wing activists
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (e.g., dpa 2015d; Gathmann & Reimann 2015; Schlottmann & Schawe 2015)

## Summary

On November 5, 2015, a group of four neo-Nazis was arrested in Dresden and Freital because the three men and one woman between 24–28 years old had allegedly committed one

explosive attack on an inhabited refugee home in November and another bomb attack as well as a butyric acid attack on a left-wing housing project in October 2015. The four right-wing extremists belonged to a larger group of seven activists calling themselves vigilantes and FTL/360. Police searched nine apartments in total and found additional explosives, chemicals, firebombs, as well as swastika flags and other extreme right-wing propaganda material. The location of the group (Freital) had received nationwide public attention because of numerous right-wing extremist riots, arson attacks on refugee homes and clashes with the police.

<b>Name:</b>	Volkssozialistische Bewegung Deutschlands/Partei der Arbeit (The People's Socialist Movement of Germany/Workers Party, VSBD/PdA)
<b>Size:</b>	40–120
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1971–1982
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Support of smaller terrorist cells and lone actors
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	The specific relationship between the VSBD and various members who committed terrorist acts is unknown
<b>Target:</b>	Communists, socialists, government, Jews, foreigners
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (Chaussy 1984; Hoffman 1986: 3; Horchem 1982: 30; Jesse 2012; McGowan 2006: 295; 2014: 200; C. Schmidt 1981; Spiegel 1981d)

## *Summary*

In 1971, one of the leading German neo-Nazis in Germany at that time – Friedhelm Busse, DRP and NPD member, active supporter of South Tyrol terrorist groups and co-founder of the AW “Action Resistance” – who was already sentenced to a short prison term because of explosives related offenses in 1963, founded the Partei der Arbeit/Deutsche Sozialisten (Workers Party/German Socialists, PdA/DS), which turned into the Volkssozialistische Bewegung Deutschlands/Partei der Arbeit (The People's Socialist Movement of Germany/Workers Party, VSBD) in 1975 and was banned as anti-constitutional in 1982. The VSBD gathered former AW members, militant neo-Nazis and active terrorists and acted – similarly to the AW – as a network to raise funds, distribute training and equipment, and provide the opportunity to find like-minded activists. Several terrorist groups and lone actors came out of the VSBD, for example, Frank Schubert. In 1981, five other VSBD members were

intercepted by the police on their way to a bank robbery and used hand grenades and machine-guns in an attempt to avoid arrest. In the subsequent shooting, two of the right-wing extremists were killed. One person involved was Klaus-Ludwig Uhl, who was a former member of the French Fédération d'action nationale et européenne (FANE). In addition to French groups, the VSBD maintained ties to Belgian terrorist groups (Spiegel 1981c). Four other VSBD members were arrested in 1982 in Belgium for bank robberies and for membership of a terrorist organization. They were sent to Germany and put on trial (Horchem 1982: 30).

<b>Name:</b>	Volkswille (Will of the People); Kommando Werwolf (Commando Werewolf)
<b>Size:</b>	40
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	January–December 1992
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives, assassination
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Assassination of a left-wing activist
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Target:</b>	Left-wing activists, refugees
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (indymedia 2008; Spiegel 1993)

## *Summary*

The group Volkswille (Will of the People), which also used the name Kommando Werwolf (Commando Werewolf) was a group of approximately forty members training with automatic weapons and explosives. During their arrests, the group was found in possession of chemicals for manufacturing explosives. The group had sabotaged the cars of left-wing activists and directly threatened members of the Antifa. The group also reportedly attacked refugee homes. No specific attack plans could be proven.

<b>Name:</b>	Wagner, Stefan (1961–1982)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1982
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Hostage-taking, mass shooting
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	One mass shooting and hostage-taking

<b>Target:</b>	Police, general public
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (BMI 1983: 124; Spiegel 1985; Von Heymann & Wensierski 2011; Winterberg & Peter 2004: 185)

## Summary

In the night between August 2/3, 1982, the twenty-one-year-old neo-Nazi Stefan Wagner – a trained information technology assistant – started shooting at pedestrians from his apartment without actually hitting anyone. Afterwards he took several neighbors hostage and committed suicide when the police arrived at the scene. Wagner was an active member of the WSG Hoffmann and previously convicted for violent crimes at least three times. In front of his hostages, Wagner said that he was involved in the Oktoberfest attack, which could not be proven.

<b>Name:</b>	Weil, Ekkehard (1949–?)
<b>Size:</b>	1
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1970–?
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassinations, explosives, arson
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	One assassination attempt, one bomb attack
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Assassination attempt of a Soviet soldier, arson attack on an office of the SPD, bomb attacks on Jewish shops and restaurants
<b>Target:</b>	Communists, Social Democrats, Jews
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., BfV 2004; Moor 1971; Neumann & Maes 1971: 88–92; Spiegel 1970b, 1970c, 1970f, 1981a)

## Summary

Ekkehard Weil – a former EBF member – used a sniper rifle in 1970 in an attempt to shoot a Soviet soldier and committed an arson attack in 1979 on a bureau of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei West-Berlin (Socialist Unity Party West Berlin). Weil's right-wing radicalization might be rooted in the fact that his father died when he was two years old and his surrogate father displayed right-wing radical tendencies. Weil was an early member of the right-wing



Gemeinschaft Deutscher Jugend (Alliance of Germany Youths, GDJ), which was the nucleus of right-wing extremist adolescents in West Berlin from 1964–1966. After the GDJ's decay, Weil served in the German army and had contact with various right-wing organizations. After he was released from active service early Weil tried unsuccessfully to make a secondary school diploma. Between 1969 and 1970, he finished his education as an assistant nurse. After Weil's attack and arrest, he escaped from prison in 1979 and fled to Austria, where he committed bomb attacks on Jewish shops and homes together with two other neo-Nazis in 1982. He was sentenced to prison again in 1998 as investigators found explosives and material for the construction of bombs in his home, together with extensive right-wing extremist propaganda material. Weil again escaped arrest and was incarcerated again 2000 in Bochum. He was released in 2005 and German intelligence expects him to return to violent action.

<b>Name:</b>	Wehrsportgruppe EK1 (Military Sports Group EK1); Nationale Sport und Sicherheitskameradschaft EK (National Sports and Security Comradeship EK); Gemeinschaft Eisernes Kreuz EK (Community of the Iron Cross)
<b>Size:</b>	10
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	October 1986–December 1986
<b>Casualties:</b>	1
<b>Tactics:</b>	Arson, robberies, assassination
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Arson attacks on police station, refugee homes, and shops owned by immigrants
<b>Target:</b>	Government, police, foreigners, defectors
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (blogsport 1986; Spiegel 1987)

## *Summary*

In September/October 1986, ten members of the FAP left the party because they were dissatisfied with the lack of positive election results, internal power struggles, and because the politics was deemed too “soft” by the defectors. Led by the highly violent and previously convicted Bernd Futter, other FAP cadres like Jörg Rokahr were involved as well. Although the group only existed for three months until police arrested most of the members in December 1986, at least fifteen highly violent crimes were attributed to the EK1 group including armed robberies (also in weapon stores), arson attacks on police stations, refugee

homes, shops owned by immigrants, burglaries and attacks on the homes of two FAP leaders. After the group was disbanded and several members were imprisoned, seventeen-year-old Roger Bornemann – an EK1 member – went back to the FAP and gave witness statements to the police about some of still free former EK1 comrades. On February 3, 1987, he was tortured and killed for this “treason” by other former EK1 members. The EK1 group was not classified as a criminal or political organization by the authorities.

<b>Name:</b>	Wehrsportgruppe Hengst (Military Sports Group Hengst), Hengst Bande (Hengst Gang)
<b>Size:</b>	18
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1968–1997
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassination, explosives
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Attack on office of the Social Democratic Party, railway installations, ammunition depot of the German army, bank robberies
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Attack on an office of the German Communist Party 1968
<b>Target:</b>	Communists, Social Democrats
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., see Neumann & Maes 1971: 108–109; Rosen 1989: 52; Spiegel 1971b)

## *Summary*

Named after its leader Bernd Hengst – a member of the NPD – the group developed out of the dissolved NPD security squad (Ordnerdienst). All nineteen members were actively involved in the operations of the Aktion Widerstand including violent clashes in front of the Soviet embassy. After the arrest of Bernd Hengst in February 1971 during a routine traffic control because a machine-gun was found in his car, a weapons and ammunitions depot was detected in Hengst’s apartment, which led to a series of subsequent house searches. Bernd Hengst was previously convicted in 1963 on terrorism charges in the German Democratic Republic; he was released early in 1966 and fled to the Federal Republic. He became a NPD member in 1967 and executed an attack on the office of the German Communist Party in Bonn in 1968 during which he shot at the building with a semi-automatic rifle. Hengst was also employed as a security guard in the Social Democrats headquarters for a short time. One member of the group – Werner Wolf, also a NPD member – was employed by the Federal

<b>Name:</b>	Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann (Military Sports Group Hoffmann, WSG)
<b>Size:</b>	c.440
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1973–1980
<b>Casualties:</b>	1
<b>Tactics:</b>	Guerrilla warfare, preparation of insurgency
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Relationship to several terrorist attacks unclear
<b>Target:</b>	Communists, government, Jews
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Excellent (Fromm 1998; Hoffman 1982: 6; 1986: 3–4, 6; Horchem 1982: 30, 33; Jesse 2012; McGowan 2006: 259; Müller 1984; Rath 2011; Rosen 1989: 53–58; Spiegel 1976; Sternsdorff 1984)

## *Summary*

The Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann (Military Sports Group Hoffmann, WSG) was established in 1973 by the trained graphic designer Karl-Heinz Hoffmann and banned as a militant anti-constitutional organization in 1980. The WSG was arguably the most influential organization for the militant Extreme Right in Germany, ranking even before the VSBD, as almost all the later leading militant members of the Far-Right (e.g., Michael Kühnen, Odfried Hepp, Arndt Marx) were trained and socialized within the WSG. In addition, the group is connected (albeit rarely legally proven) with a high number of individual acts of violence (killings, bombing attacks and arson). After the groups' prohibition for example, the WSG-member Gundolf Köhler committed the most severe terrorist attack in post-Second World War Germany: the bombing of the Munich Oktoberfest in 1980, causing thirteen casualties and wounding 211 others. Also in 1980, another WSG-member, Uwe Behrendt, assassinated the Jewish publisher Shlomo Levin and his wife with a weapon stemming from the WSG arsenal. With about 440 members, divisions all over Germany, a military infrastructure and hierarchy (including uniforms, ranks and insignia) and members extensively trained in guerrilla warfare, including the handling of explosives, insurgent tactics and raids on military targets, the WSG was the right-wing group getting closest to becoming a fully armed and active insurgent or guerrilla movement so far since the end of the Second World War. Contacts to other international terror

organizations of that time (i.e., Fatah) provided Hoffmann with the opportunity to establish a training camp in Lebanon and a “foreign division” with fifteen members committing raids and attacks on Israeli checkpoints and US oil refineries. The international network of the WSG included seventy-eight contacts in nine countries in its heyday (Müller 1984). Like many other extreme right-wing organizations, the WSG published its own newspaper named *Kommando – Zeitung für den Europäischen Freiwilligen* (Commando – Newspaper for the European Volunteer). The WSG regularly acted as a security force for right-wing extreme events during which WSG members violently clashed with opponents or the police on multiple occasions. Its ideology was based on a militant rejection of democracy rooted in neo-Nazism and a portrayal of being the spearhead of the right-wing revolution.

<b>Name:</b>	Wehrsportgruppe Udo Jürgens (Military Sports Group Udo Jürgens); Nothilfe Technische Übungs- und Bereitschaftsstaffel (Technical Emergency Assistance Training and Standby Platoon, NÜB)
<b>Size:</b>	150–200
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	September 9, 1978–1991
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Preparation for insurgency warfare
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Target:</b>	Government
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (Bundestag 1984; revista 2009)

## Summary

Founded by Dr. Udo Jürgens, this military sports group operated mainly in the state of Lower Saxony and had extensive ties to Kühnen’s ANS/NA. Jürgens was heard as a witness in the Bückeburg trial against the group around Uwe Rohwer, Michael Kühnen and Lothar Schulte (Werewolf Group Rohwer). It was also suspected that Jürgens had contacts with the Group Ludwig, which could not be proven however. The NÜB was one of the largest military sports groups of that time and had gathered an extensive fleet of at least twenty-four military vehicles used for “training patrols” at which high-ranking ANS/NA members took part. The group was also attacked by militant left-wing groups and a number of vehicles were

destroyed through arson. The NÜB belonged to the important logistical and technical support base for smaller militant and clandestine groups, providing training and equipment.

<b>Name:</b>	Werwölfe (Werewolves)
<b>Size:</b>	Unknown
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1987
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives, arson
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Unknown
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Arson attack against US military vehicles at US Army barracks
<b>Target:</b>	US military
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Poor (BMI 1988: 125)

## Summary

A group calling itself Werwölfe (Werewolves) claimed responsibility for an arson attack on US military vehicles at US Army barracks on August 18, 1984. The attack was seen as a retaliation against the alleged assassination of Rudolf Heß through the Allied Forces by the group.

<b>Name:</b>	Werwolfgruppe (Werewolf Group)
<b>Size:</b>	3
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	January 1965–April 1966
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Assassinations, explosives, arson
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Assassination of the Federal Prosecutor General Dr. Bauer and arson attack on the Central Office for the Prosecution of National Socialist Crimes in Ludwigsburg (Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Aufklärung der nationalsozialistischen Verbrechen)
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None
<b>Target:</b>	West German government, infrastructure
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Sufficient (e.g., BGH 1966)

## Summary

Two of the group's members grew up in the United States of America after their families had emigrated from Austria in 1952 and from Germany before the Second World War. Both formed their positive opinions about National Socialism in the United States becoming convinced that a global Jewish conspiracy was responsible for unjustified claims regarding the crimes committed by the National Socialists. After initial contact with the Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party, they decided to move to Germany and to establish contacts with like-minded individuals eventually aiming to re-establish National Socialism in Germany and stop the war crime trials. Planning to build an organization inspired by the Ku Klux Klan or the Mafia, in 1964, they met the third member during a meeting of the Deutsche Reichspartei (German Reich Party). Between 1964 and 1965, the trio agreed that only illegal means would be adequate to advance their goals. They planned to assassinate the Federal Prosecutor General and carry out an arson attack against the Central Office for the Prosecution of National Socialist Crimes in Ludwigsburg, but were arrested during reconnaissance activities in 1966. The court recognized that the three members had formed a clandestine and criminal organization with anti-constitutional intentions as the German criminal code did not include the concept of terrorism at that time.

<b>Name:</b>	Werwolfgruppe Rohwer (Werewolf Group Rohwer)
<b>Size:</b>	7
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	November 1977–February 1978
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Armed robberies
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Kidnapping of Serge and Beate Klarsfeld, liberation of Rudolf Heß, attacks on border installations, bomb attack on Bergen Belsen concentration camp memorial
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	Seven armed robberies and attacks against German and Dutch military personnel, weapon depots, and banks
<b>Target:</b>	Journalists, government (especially military), Jews, communists
<b>Quality of information:</b>	Good (e.g., BMI 1979: 31; Maegerle et al. 2013: 43–45; Rosen 1989: 61–62; Spiegel 1979a)

## Summary

The Werewolf Group Rohwer – named after the group's leader Uwe Rohwer – was formed

by seven members who were either active ANS/NA members or had close relationship to that organization in late 1977. The group executed a number of armed robberies and assaults on German and Dutch military personnel and installations, as well as bank robberies. One member dominating the group was Lothar Schulte, a former paratrooper trained in survival and guerrilla warfare. Schulte was dismissed from the German army because he had physically abused subordinates. The group had close contact with Michael Kühnen and planned to gather weapons and funds to induce a nationwide coup of nationalist forces through the execution of numerous spectacular acts of terrorism, including the liberation of Rudolf Heß from prison, the kidnapping of journalists Serge and Beate Klarsfeld and a bomb attack on the Bergen Belsen concentration camp memorial.

The group carried out a number of armed robberies and assaults in a very short amount of time:

- November 22, 1977: armed assault on a non-commissioned officer of the German army to steal his assault rifle
- December 1, 1977: attempted robbery at a restaurant
- December 2, 1977: robbery at a construction company
- December 11, 1977: robbery at a Germany army ammunition depot and theft of 1,000 rounds
- December 19, 1977: bank robbery
- January 31, 1978: attempted assault on a German army patrol
- February 2, 1978: assault on a Dutch army unit and theft of four machineguns and six magazines

The Werewolf Group Rohwer was the first right-wing group to be classified as a terrorist organization according to §129a of the German criminal code by a court after the Second World War. Although Michael Kühnen was involved to some degree, it could not be proven in court that he had previous knowledge about the attacks or had ordered them.

<b>Name:</b>	Werwolfgruppe Stubbemann (Werewolf Group Stubbemann)
<b>Size:</b>	3
<b>Time of known activity:</b>	1978
<b>Casualties:</b>	0
<b>Tactics:</b>	Explosives, assassination
<b>Planned attacks:</b>	Assassination Schleswig-Holstein Prime Minister Stoltenberg, bomb attacks
<b>Executed attacks:</b>	None

Target:	Government, communists
Quality of information:	(BMI 1979: 35; Maegerle et al. 2013: 42–43; Rosen 1989: 62–63; Spiegel 1979a)

Summary

In May 1978, ANS/NA section leader and student of mineralogy gathered two comrades and planned to execute a bomb attack on a communist party bureau and a robbery at a theatre. However, the group was detected very early and all members received very low sentences as the court dropped the terrorism charges.

8.1 Chronological list of right-wing terrorist and violent actors

In the following chart all violent and terrorist right-wing actors presented in detail above are displayed in chronological order in order to allow for time-specific identification. All names given in the chart are identical to those used for the alphabetical and detailed description in the first part of this chapter.

Table 8.1 Chronological list of right-wing terrorist actors

<i>Actor name</i>	<i>Known time of activity</i>
Gruppe um Dr. Burger (Group around Dr. Burger)	January 1963–May 1964
Werwolfgruppe (Werewolf Group)	January 1965–April 1966
Wehrsportgruppe Hengst (Military Sports Group Hengst)	1968–1971
Bachmann, Josef	1968
Europäische Befreiungsfront (European Liberation Front)	1969–1970
Weil, Ekkehard	1970–?
Aktion Widerstand (Action Resistance, AW)	1970–1971
Nationale Deutsche Befreiungsbewegung (National German Liberation	1970–1978



# Movement, NDBB)

Volkssozialistische Bewegung Deutschlands/Partei der Arbeit (The People's Socialist Movement of Germany/Workers Party, VSBD/PdA)	1971–1982
Nationalsozialistische Kampfgruppe Großdeutschland (National Socialist Combat Group Greater Germany, NSKG)	April 1972–October 11, 1972
Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann (Military Sports Group Hoffmann, WSG)	1973–1980
Gruppe Neumann (Group Neumann)	1973
Kampfgruppe Priem (Combat Group Priem)	1974–1984
Epplen, Dieter	May 76
Gruppe Otte (Group Otte, GO)/Braunschweiger Gruppe (Braunschweig Group)	1977
Aktionsfront Nationaler Sozialisten/Nationale Aktivisten (Action Front of National Socialists/National Activists, ANS/NA)	November 1977–November 1983
Freiheitliche Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (Free German Workers Party, FAP)	1979–February 24, 1995
Werwolf Gruppe Rohwer (Werewolf Group Rohwer)	November 1977–February 1978
Gruppe Ludwig (Group Ludwig)	1977–1984
Werwolfgruppe Stubbemann (Werewolf Group Stubbemann)	1978
Kommando 88 (Commando 88)	1978
Wehrsportgruppe Udo Jürgens (Military Sports Group Udo Jürgens); Nothilfe Technische Übungs- und Bereitschaftsstaffel (Technical Emergency Assistance Training and Standby Platoon, NÜB)	1978–1991
Gruppe Naumann (Group Naumann)	1978–1987
Unknown 1	1979
Unknown 2	1979
Nationalsozialistische Kampfgruppe Westfalen-Lippe (National Socialist Combat Group Westfalen-Lippe)	1979
Deutsche Aktionsgruppen (German Action Groups, DA)	1980
Schubert, Frank	1980
Kampfgemeinschaft Nationaler Sozialisten (Combat Alliance of National Socialists)	1980
Behrendt, Uwe	1980

Köhler, Gundolf	1980
Gruppe Uhl (Group Uhl); Kommando Omega (Commando Omega)	1981
Oxner, Helmut	June 25, 1982
Hepp-Kexel Gruppe (Hepp-Kexel Group)	October–December 1982
Unknown 3	1982
Wagner, Stefan	August 2, 1982
Koch, Wolfgang and W., Andreas	1983
Unknown 4	1984
Unknown 5	1984
Unknown 6	1984
Nationalistische Front (Nationalist Front, NF)	1985–1992
Wehrsportgruppe EK1 (Military Sports Group EK1); Nationale Sport und Sicherheitskameradschaft EK (National Sports and Security Comradeship EK); Gemeinschaft Eisernes Kreuz EK (Community of the Iron Cross)	October 1986–December 1986
Freies Deutschland (Free Germany)	1987
Werwölfe (Werewolves)	1987
Unknown 7	1987
Saller, Josef	1989
1. Werwolf Jagdeinheit Senftenberg (1. Werewolf Hunting Unit Senftenberg)	1990–1991
Deutscher Hochleistungskampfkunstverband (German High Performance Martial Arts Alliance, DHKKV)	1991–1993
Volkswille (Will of the People); Kommando Werwolf (Commando Werewolf)	January–December 1992
Fuchs, Franz	1993–1995
Gruppe Ulrich (Group Ulrich)	1994–1996
Gruppe um Anton Pfahler (Group around Anton Pfahler)	1998
Diesner, Kay	1997
Bundeswehrzelle (German Army Cell)	1997
Kameradschaft Treptow (Comradeship Treptow)	1997
Kampfgruppe Schörner (Combat Group Schörner)	1997

Unknown 8	1997
Skinheads Sächsische Schweiz	1997–2001
Unknown 9	1998
Chladek, André	2000
Berger, Michael	2000
Unknown 10	2000
Unknown 11	2000
Unknown 12	2000
Unknown 19	2000
National Revolutionäre Zelle (National Revolutionary Cell)	2000
Nationale Bewegung (National Movement, NB)	2000–2001
Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund (National Socialist Underground, NSU)	2000–2011
Unknown 13	2001
Schutzgruppe (Protection Group)	2001–2003
Kameradschaft Aachener Land (Comradeship Aachener Land, KAL)	2001–2012
Unknown 14	2002
Modler, Alexander	2003
Freikorps Havelland (Free Corps Havelland)	2003–2004
Oidoxie Streetfighting Crew; Combat 18 Cell	2003–2006
	March 2006– August 2008
Sturm 34 (Storm 34)	
Objekt 21 (Object 21)	2010–2013
Neue Ordnung (New Order, NO)	2012
Unknown 15	2012
Europäische Werwolfzelle (European Werewolf Cell)	2013
Unknown 16	2013
F., Fabian	July 13
Unknown 18	August 13
H., Dominic	April 14
Unknown 17	2014
	August 2014–July 2015
Deutsche Widerstandsbewegung (German Resistance Movement, DWB)	
	November 2014–May
Oldschool Society (OSS)	

	5, 2015
Steffen, Frank	October 15
Bamberger Gruppe (Bamberg Group)	January 2014– October 22, 2015
Unknown 20	October– November 2015

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## Conclusions and lessons learned

This chapter offers some concluding remarks and a summary about the lessons learned regarding right-wing terrorism from this study. Based on the most extensive empirical database on right-wing terrorist actors and incidents in Germany so far, the primary material available for international right-wing terrorism research was substantially enlarged. Consequently, it is possible to assess some previously existing theories and concepts about right-wing terrorism and to formulate new ones. In this way, the present study has added a highly important collection of data and analytical deliverables to the study of organized right-wing violence and the nature as well as characteristics of right-wing terrorism to the academic study of political and clandestine violence. Right-wing extremists and terrorists have consistently proved to be a sincere threat to Western societies' internal security and have caused bloodshed and fear over many decades since the end of the Second World War. Compared with the threat posed by the Extreme Right, the risks posed by other forms of terrorism such as anarchist, jihadi or left-wing terrorism partially remain limited and sporadic, although of course the impact of single incidents such as the 9/11 attacks have caused a much more severe number of casualties and damage at a single point in time and influenced global political conflicts, policy changes and economic instability. This is something right-wing terrorist have not yet achieved, although in the 1980s many Western countries (e.g., Germany, Italy, the United States) saw themselves challenged by widespread and organized right-wing terrorism with some exceptionally violent attacks being committed. Right-wing terrorism, in contrast to other forms of political violence, seems to be a long-term and consistent threat being rooted in political cultures, conflicts, socio-demographic changes and many additional aspects of the affected countries. While this study does not suggest reprioritizing the assessment and grading of which form of political violence and terrorism constitutes the most severe and imminent threat for Western countries, it is nevertheless suggested that the common public, political and security agencies' perception of right-wing terrorism has been underestimated and has inadequately addressed the threat from the Extreme Right. With the material presented in this study, it becomes clear that right-wing extremist groups and actors are embedded in a radical contrast society (see Koehler 2015) based on an ideology in which violence has an essential function for the individual and collective identity. This 'contrast society' was defined by Koehler as:



mechanisms involved within the social system (including infrastructure and ideology) of interaction between Radical Social Movements and their surrounding societies. This mechanism starts with the Radical Social Movement's goal to redirect the Target Society towards the (ideologically) desired direction and change it into the ideologically purified version of the Target Society. This includes the alternative societal environments created as well as the ideological niches within the positive Target Society already influenced. Thus, these Contrast Societies are the habitats of ideologies incompatible with their Target Societies' dominant ideologies.

(Koehler 2015: 30–31)

In consequence, right-wing terrorist groups can be seen as one possible developmental end stage of these mechanisms of interaction as they have constantly thought to systematically destabilize and eventually destroy democratic and pluralistic forms of government over time with multiple types of weapons and tactics. They have done so out of an ideologically inherent drive to combat pluralism and democracy as their enemies, which is almost akin to a guerrilla style warfare against an oppressing foreign power. Unfortunately far too often terror from the Extreme Right has been classified as juvenile violence based on intoxication, group pressure, frustration and disintegration and thereby been degraded as something 'less serious' in the public and political perception. Because in the overwhelming number of right-wing terrorist cases in Western countries, elaborated incident related communication (claiming and explaining) was missing, and many times no sophisticated long-term strategy or coordination was visible (since the 1990s), many observers have concluded that right-wing terrorism does not equal the 'quality' displayed by jihadi, ethno-separatist or anarchist terrorists in the past and present and have subsequently re-labeled this form of political violence as 'hate crime' or another type of crime. Right-wing terrorism, however, is embedded in wider social and political movements with differing degrees of support for violence but based on a shared fundamental understanding of human inequality and the rejection of democratic principles.

One of the most extensively quoted and used theories regarding the development of right-wing terrorism was and still is Ehud Sprinzak's splitdeligitimization theory (Sprinzak 1995). Sprinzak claims that for right-wing terrorist groups the conflict with government would be "secondary" to "private wars against hostile ethnic communities" (Sprinzak 1995: 17) creating a tension which would drive the evolution of right-wing terrorism from targeting the outsider (e.g., foreigners) to targeting the state itself, which gradually is identified as the true cause for the outsider threat (Sprinzak 1995: 20–22). Using the material of this study regarding the German militant right, Sprinzak's theory does not hold explanatory value. German right-wing terrorists and violent activists have always seen a strong enemy in the democratic government and its representatives since the end of the Second World War. For German militant right-wing extremists, the government holds its own quality of hostility because of its ideologically contrariness and not because of its immigration policies. While foreigners, ethnic minorities and refugees pose another enemy group, the connection between these two is only rarely made, albeit increasingly since the current refugee crisis in Germany starting in 2014. Sprinzak's concept is therefore too focused on the racist aspect of right-wing ideologies and

violence and ignores the political sphere of anti-pluralism and anti-democracy as a driving force behind terrorist violence.

Willhelm Heitmeyer's (2005: 149) concept of right-wing terrorism being based on a mixed feeling of superiority towards ethnic minorities and inferiority towards "relevant" others (e.g., their own ethnic group), which in his concept would push the escalation towards violence and terrorism, does not find any empirical backing in the material presented here as well. Right-wing terrorists have come from many different socio-economic backgrounds and there is nothing to suggest that a feeling of inferiority towards their own ethnic group would have played any role in their radicalization. Although it would require in-depth qualitative approaches to verify that claim, it is – based on court verdicts, press reports, and right-wing terrorists' own statements and publication – reasonable to assume that militant right-wing activists in fact feel a sense of superiority towards their surrounding environment as well. Many times driven by the urge to 'liberate,' 'protect,' or 'enlighten' their fellow Germans or Aryans and of course to destroy a political regime that is portrayed and seen as 'weak,' 'corrupt,' and deliberately trying to destroy the German culture and race.

Another perspective on right-wing terrorism – labeled as "racial terrorism" – developed by Kathleen Blee (2005) identified two types of right-wing terrorism and differentiates between "strategic" and "narrative" versions. While the strategic racial violence aims to exterminate specified enemies, narrative violence would – according to Blee – be carried out largely because of the violence itself. Indeed this study has found some indications to support Blee's general notion of different forms of right-wing violence perpetrated out of different motives. As pointed out in [Chapter 3](#), violence as such has a very central function within extreme right-wing ideologies and in many cases a violent act as a manifestation of the perpetrator's ideological beliefs (i.e., to commit violent acts because of the violence itself) overlaps with higher political or strategic goals. Right-wing terrorism almost always includes the 'side effect' of attacking and potentially killing a specified enemy while in other forms of terrorism the identity of the victims can become completely irrelevant. Nevertheless, much more research is needed to explore the characteristics of these different types of right-wing violence.

The role of lone actors for Far-Right terrorism has been supported through this study as well. Although not as central as for example in the North American context, German right-wing terrorism does display a significant proportion of lone actor and small cell tactics. As shown in [Chapter 7](#), 42.05 percent of all identified right-wing terrorist actors are small groups and small cells. Lone actors account for 20.46 percent of right-wing terrorist actors, meaning that 62.51 percent of all right-wing terrorist actors between 1963 and 2015 had only nine or less members. In addition to the importance of small unit tactics and lone actors, it needs to be stressed that in almost no case these cells or lone actors were completely isolated from their environment and especially not from other right-wing groups and milieus. Even the most isolated right-wing lone actors have participated in right-wing events and activities sometimes



very shortly before their attacks. To be part of this radical contrast society (Koehler 2015) in its varying forms and manifestations seems to be highly important both to small cells and lone actors in verifying their course of action and motivating them to attack. This participation in radical right-wing contrast societies does not necessarily need to be based on organizational links but rather loose exchange and emersion in these contrast society's elements (e.g., concerts, rallies, merchandise and clothes).

## 9.1 Lessons learned

1. Right-wing terrorist actors mostly operate as lone actors or relatively small cells typically using arson, explosives, assassinations targeting mainly government representatives (e.g., police, military and politicians) and ethnically defined enemies. These small cells and lone actors are for the most part relatively disconnected from larger movements, albeit not totally isolated. During the radicalization process of these actors, the role of larger 'incubation' movements and organizations is essential for their later violent actions, choice of tactics and target groups, as well as modes of operation. In this way, larger right-wing organizations – although they may not be involved in illegal activities on their own – play the role of providing a fertile ground, networks, knowledge and most importantly, ideological legitimization for violence. In most cases, however, this process seems not to be consciously steered according to the 'leaderless resistance' strategy but an inherent characteristic of extreme right-wing organizations and movements. As part of right-wing ideologies are conspiracy theories, hate and paranoid mistrust against government institutions of any kind, as well as the constant state of mind to be part of an eternal natural struggle of the strong against the weak, the decision to gradually isolate and go underground is a direct consequence of these assumptions.
2. While other forms of political violence and terrorism are based on ideologies which at least require some sort of explanation for the use of force (e.g., left-wing violence against capitalist and imperialist governments, jihadi violence as religiously justified defence against the global struggle against Islam) right-wing terrorism is the simple manifestation of extreme right-wing ideologies and rarely uses forms of public communication and claiming responsibility for an attack. This should not be misunderstood as a lack of political goals and 'terrorist quality' but as a combination of direct attack against an enemy and the ideologically determined 'liberation' of violence as normal political tool from liberal and democratic constraints and restoration to its presumed natural role in societies. With these acts of violence in

their varying forms, Right-Wing Extremism and terrorism fundamentally challenge and reject democratic governments, pluralistic societies and non-violent forms of politics. To create fear in a target group beyond the victims of an attack is equally developed as a motivation for the violent act of right-wing extremists as is the aim to destabilize the societies and government with more or less specific visions of alternative politics. In this way, right-wing terrorism does indeed display core elements of terrorist violence even without the immediate or direct form of communication attached to the attacks.

3. Right-wing terrorist groups and actors display a highly dynamic understanding of organizational affiliation. Most of the actors known have either been active members in multiple organizations at the same time or shortly after another. In many cases, these affiliations ranged across stereotypical delineations (e.g., between right-wing populist and extreme parties and/or extra-parliamentary groups) and played a tactical role. Nevertheless, the influence of these networks and organizations during the radicalization processes of individual and collective terrorist actors was highly important in almost every documented case. Terrorist actors usually reached a stage of institutional or organizational independence in the sense that they felt their underground struggle was benefiting the 'whole movement' and beyond internal struggles between different groups and organizations.
4. Right-wing terrorists are indeed overwhelmingly oriented towards a long-term and low-threshold strategy of violence. Attacks aiming to cause a maximum of undifferentiated casualties have been rare and isolated incidents. Although terrorist acts such as the Oklahoma bombing, the Oktoberfest attack, or the Bologna train station bombing have received wide attention and caused significant loss of life, these incidents are in fact not representative for right-wing terrorism and have remained isolated. It would be a misunderstanding the nature of right-wing terrorism if the lack of single high-impact attacks is to be seen as indication for either the demise or the innocuousness of right-wing terrorism since the 1980s.

## 9.2 Directions for future research

Right-wing terrorism is one of the most under-researched fields in the academic study of terrorism and political violence and consequently one of the least understood. Even though right-wing terrorist attacks have not received as much public attention compared with other forms of terrorism, the continuous threat and death toll in Western countries caused by right-wing extremists over the decades has been significant. In addition, the potentially destabilizing

effects in regard to the successful integration of refugees and immigrants as well as the population's trust in their governments through right-wing terrorism has not been analyzed so far. As this study shows, right-wing terrorism displays some very specific and unique characteristics even across countries but a number of essential issues need to be addressed by future research to advance the way governments, the public and researchers understand why, when, how and where right-wing terrorists might attack or become a security threat and most importantly how to prevent this from happening.

A much more detailed comparative account of organized right-wing violence and terrorism is needed across Western countries and the genesis, tactics, ideological backgrounds and links between these actors need to be studied in order to explore the typology of right-wing terrorist violence and its potential cultural differences as well as similarities further. As the material presented in this study indicates, right-wing terrorist actors and incidents share many common tactical and strategic similarities across Western countries even in regard to their historical development. This in turn would support the arguments in this study about the links between right-wing extremist ideologies and the use of violence and terrorism.

Connected to this lack of qualitative and quantitative research about right-wing terrorism is the widespread ignorance of individual and collective radicalization processes leading to terroristic violence within the extreme right. Most theories and approaches to explain individual involvement in right-wing extremist groups and the use of violence are heavily influenced by stereotypes and assumed general knowledge about right-wing extremists rarely drawing on empirical or evidence-based research. The differences between varying forms of right-wing violence (for a typology, see [Chapter 3](#)) especially needs to be studied in regard to potential motivational and socio-biographic differences among the actors for each type of violence and crime. This helps to understand when, why, who and how a group of right-wing activists proceeds towards an escalation of violence to the use of clandestine and terroristic tactics. In consequence, the study of the careers of well-known right-wing terrorists provides evidence to formulate new perspectives and accounts of the threat posed by the Far-Right.

Another aspect of right-wing violence and terrorism which so far has not been well explored is the nature of collective right-wing violence and the dynamic relationship between right-wing terrorists and the larger population, as well as other right-wing communities and movements. It became clear in this study that larger right-wing associations and movements as well as the local population's attitudes towards certain issues and current political issues do influence the decision to use violence and act. Many right-wing terrorist actors have felt and expressed the notion to act out on popular wishes and saw themselves as some kind of 'vanguard' for the silent minority. In addition, the socialization and ideologicalization in specific right-wing organizations has been very influential for most right-wing terrorists. However, the extent of these influences and the mechanisms behind it are so far more or less unknown when it comes to the escalation of violence towards terrorism. As the case of the

Bavarian PEGIDA franchise shows, right-wing terrorists have sought the close contact to large crowds of anti-immigration protestors thereby creating a direct but non-institutional link between organized and militant neo-Nazis and a non-hierarchical and largely unorganized group of individuals from various backgrounds but with no previous affiliation with the right-wing movement.

Finally, in-depth studies of right-wing terrorism need to inform comparative research with other forms of terrorism, most importantly jihadi, left-wing and ethno-separatist terrorism. In this way the differences and similarities between varying forms of terrorist violence become visible and in turn help to correct potential misunderstandings of these other forms as well. Because the majority of terrorism research has focused on jihadi terrorism, a potentially distorting bias about the nature of terrorism can only be corrected if other forms of political violence are studied and compared with each other.

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