

# The Far Right in Europe and Beyond

Class 2: Far-right ideology: from transnational traits to local idiosyncracies

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- reminders:
  - presentation groups:
    - 16 May: Isabelle Riedel, Chiara Kloos: **TBA**
  - any lingering course questions? registration issues?
  - are you thinking about your report data?
    - today's barrage of data, unpacking the far-right in Germany, offers some ideas (not just for Germany, similar data elsewhere)

1 Items from the news

2 Opening notes

3 A few minutes to form presentation groups

4 Ideology and emotions

5 Far-right organisational forms

6 Active research: FR movement leadership

## Section 1

Items from the news

- Björn Höcke, AfD leader in Thüringen, currently on trial for using a Nazi/SA slogan: “*Alles für Deutschland*”  
<https://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/deutschland/hoecke-prozess-landgericht-110.html>
  - Multiple connections to course topics:
    - party activity: how will this affect the AfD in Thüringen and more broadly
    - responses to far-right activity (both state-based—here, the judiciary—and non-state—i.e., the protesters outside the court in Halle)
  - also highlights another **abundant source of data**: judicial records
- UK government proscribes online network ‘**Terrorgram**’  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/terrorgram-added-to-list-of-proscribed-terrorist-organisations>)
  - a new development in proscription/banning? (EU is watching)
  - another source of data: **laws regulating right-wing extremism and their application**

## Section 2

### Opening notes

Far right	
Radical right	Extreme right
illiberal but democratic	anti-democratic, anti-system

*nationalism* - political doctrine that strives for the congruence of the cultural and the political unit, i.e. the nation and the state

*exclusionism* - e.g. antisemitism, ethnopluralism (all ethnicities are equal, but should be kept separate)

*xenophobia* - antipathy towards people from other countries or perceived as 'other'

*nativism* (nationalism and xenophobia) - states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ("the nation") and that nonnative elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening

*authoritarianism* - belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely

*populism* - thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite," and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people

- revolutionary ultra-nationalism - thin consensus definition
- locked into a specific epoch? Today's right-wing extremism is 'essentially different' to interwar predecessors

Stanley Payne (1995): (1) **negations**, such as anti-Marxism, anti-liberalism and anti-conservatism; (2) **ideology and programme**, such as nationalism, a positive evaluation of war, imperialism, and corporatism; (3) **style**, such as the organised party-mass movement, and extensive use of symbolism.

Roger Eatwell (2007): ideology that strives to forge social rebirth based on a **holistic-national radical Third Way**, though in practice fascism has tended to stress style, especially action and the charismatic leader, more than detailed programme, and to engage in a Manichaean demonisation of its enemies.

Some scholarship applies the 'fascist' label to... British National Party, Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands, Golden Dawn, Jobbik, Mi Hazánk, CasaPound, Fratelli d'Italia, Kotleba - People's Party Our Slovakia

## Section 3

A few minutes to form presentation groups

## Section 4

Ideology and emotions

Pilkington, Omelchenko, and Perasović (2018, 124): “... activists attached both rational and emotional meanings to their activism... the rational and the emotional may be entwined in social movement participation rather than constituting alternative explanations of motivation to engage”

for more on *emotions* in social movements, see Jasper (2018)

# Ideology and emotions

Virchow (2007, 156): ... an integrative approach that considers ideology production, dissemination, and learning on the one hand and the way that protagonists of movements perform and act on the other hand

- in other words... examining 'theory and practice' of FR

Rational actors with ideological convictions, or...



Virchow (2007, 160, *emphasis added*): why people join and stay in political movements cannot be explained by *cognitive* processes alone. Rather, *emotional* and *practical* dimensions also are relevant to political recruitment and socialization.

- Hints at the various modes of radicalisation (Class 11): true believers, material gain, network/peer-to-peer socialisation, etc.
- Ideology is important—but not to the exclusion of other considerations

Virchow (2007) key concept: emotional collective

- thoughts on this concept:
  - what does it mean?
  - what are its causes and/or effects?
  - other ways to identify/categorise/measure it? Or only possible through ethnography?

Demonstrations as sites of instilling ideology and of creating emotion

- create 'emotional collective' and stabilise *collective identity* (cf. Polletta and Jasper 2001)
  - racial pride, rage/grievance about immigrants, distrust of state, amusement or aggression towards counter-protesters
- recruit new followers
- promote new leaders
- 'shape an ideological worldview and attitudes'
- asserting FR's right to participate in public sphere
- occupy a public space, as show of power

Pilkington, Omelchenko, and Perasović (2018) - looking at youth radical right activists in Croatia (football fans), England (EDL), Russia (jogging club)



Plate 6.3 Torcida placing a wreath at the Ovčara memorial site before the Hajduk match in Osijek, 24 November 2012

Pilkington, Omelchenko, and Perasović (2018, 128): bonds are formed, partially, through the ‘buzz’ of participation (at demonstrations, mass jogging events, or football matches) but also through the warmth, affection and sense of belonging to a ‘family’ generated by participation in action and social relationships that persist between actions.

*Ibid.*[p. 134]: The pleasure they take from violent disorder is found also among the core group of Torcida for whom the ultimate buzz comes from fighting, often against an incomparably stronger enemy—the police.

*When we arrived at the stadium, just that feeling that you are at Giuseppe Meazza and that you silenced the home fans in the first 5 minutes, their flags down, 4000 of us shouting hard [...] money can't buy that feeling. I would have walked [to Milan] for that. (Crni, TOR, HR)*

Virchow (2007, 160): Participant observational methods are particularly useful for investigating movement interaction, leadership, ideological setting, and participant behavior, although observations can create differing impressions of the far right, depending on the number of people involved, the kind of interactions that happen between those marching and the police, bystanders and protesters opposing the neo-Nazis, and whether the rally is a silent march or a loud demonstration.

## Section 5

### Far-right organisational forms

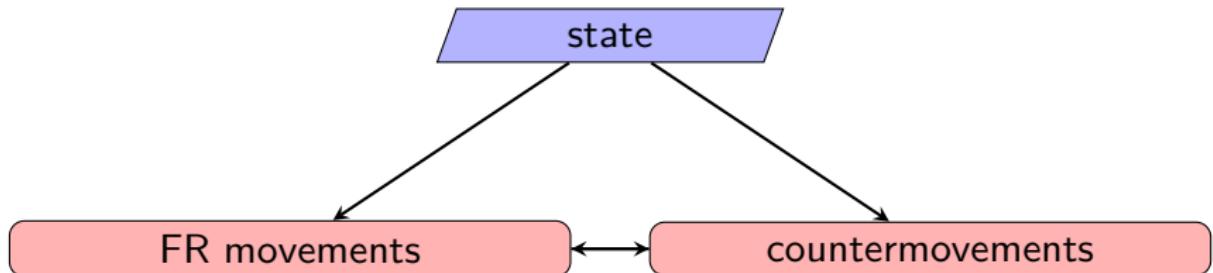
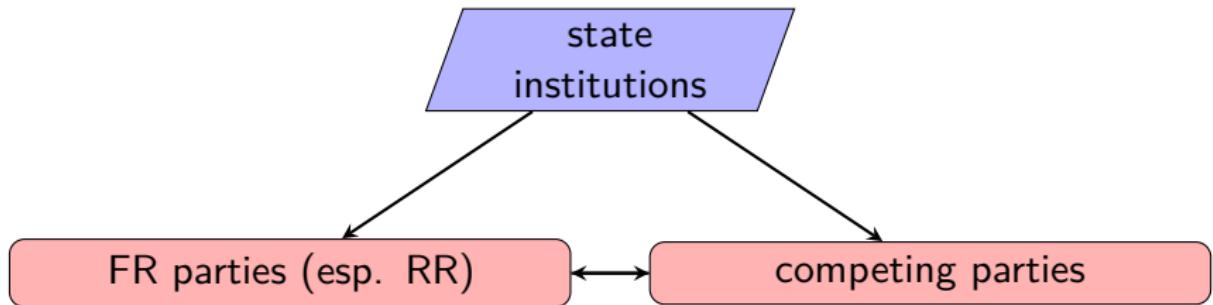
## Parties

- Party family (cf. Mudde)
- individual parties (and within-party studies)
- voters/supporters

## Mobilisation

- Whole movements or movement sectors/fields
- SMOs
- leaders, activists, members, participants

Terrorism / violent extremism (see Tore Bjørgo's work) - surrounding structures (e.g., NSU) - groups, cells - individuals



**Parties:** AfD, DVU, NPD\*, REP

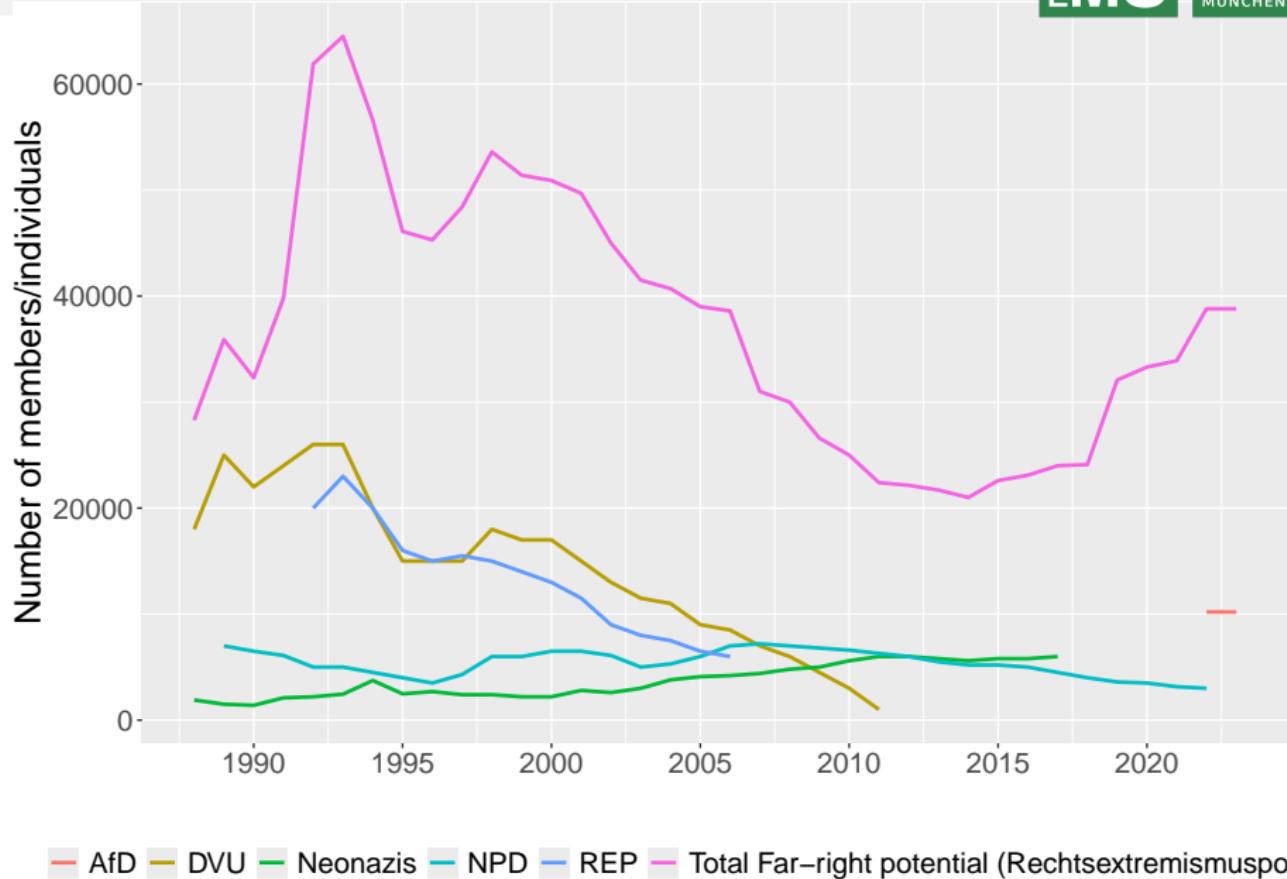
**Media, civil society:** Institut für Staatspolitik (*Sezession*), Compact, Desiderius Erasmus Stiftung (AfD)

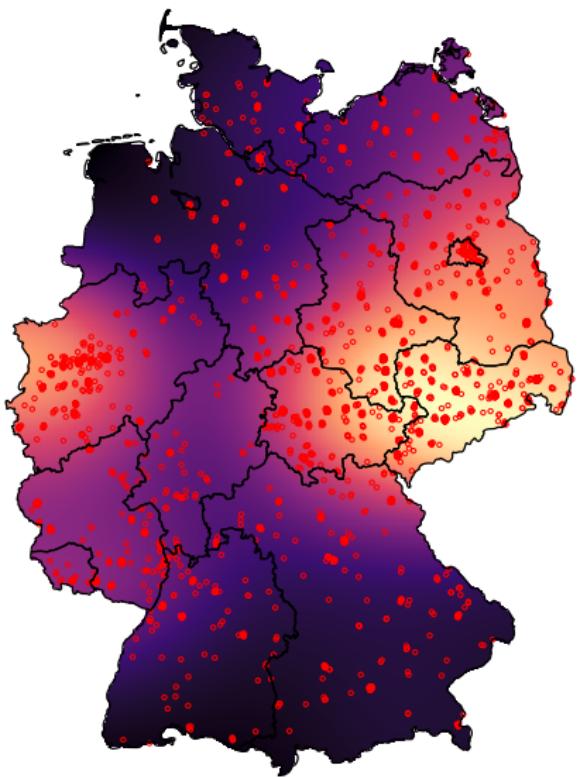
**SMOs:** NPD\*, Dritte (III.) Weg, Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland, Pro-Bewegung

- groupuscules, Kameradschaften
- Virchow (2007): 4 big demonstration campaigns of the 2000s: 13 Feb. Dresden, 1 May, Aug. Hess, Nov. Halbe
- anti-COVID groups? are they far-right? Querdenken 711, dieBasis? (e.g., [Plümper, Neumayer, and Pfaff 2021](#); [Heinze and Weisskircher 2022](#))

**Terrorism:** NSU, Gruppe Freital, Oldschool Society

# German FR party membership

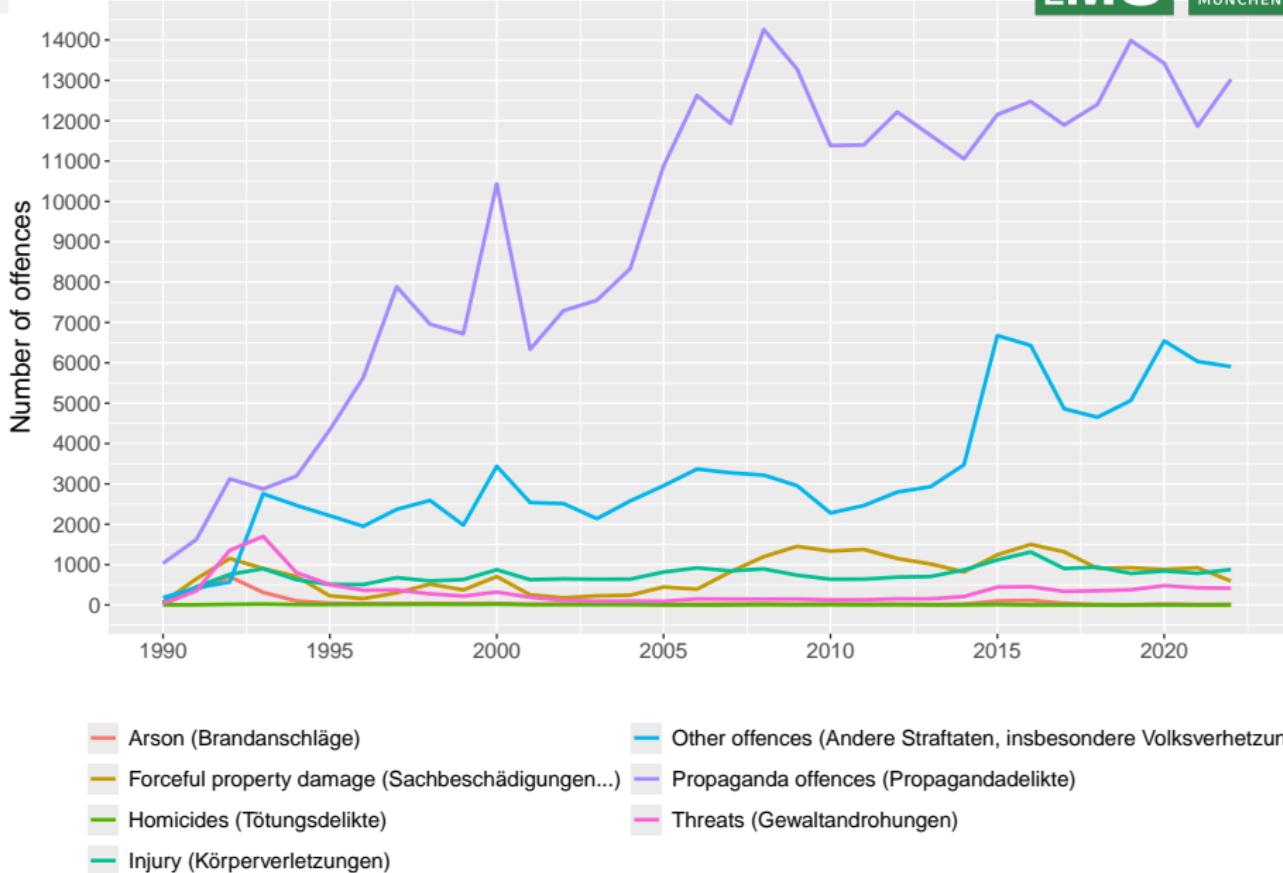




data from quarterly *Kleine Anfrage* (parliamentary inquiries) on *Rechtsextreme Aufmärsche* (far-right demonstrations)

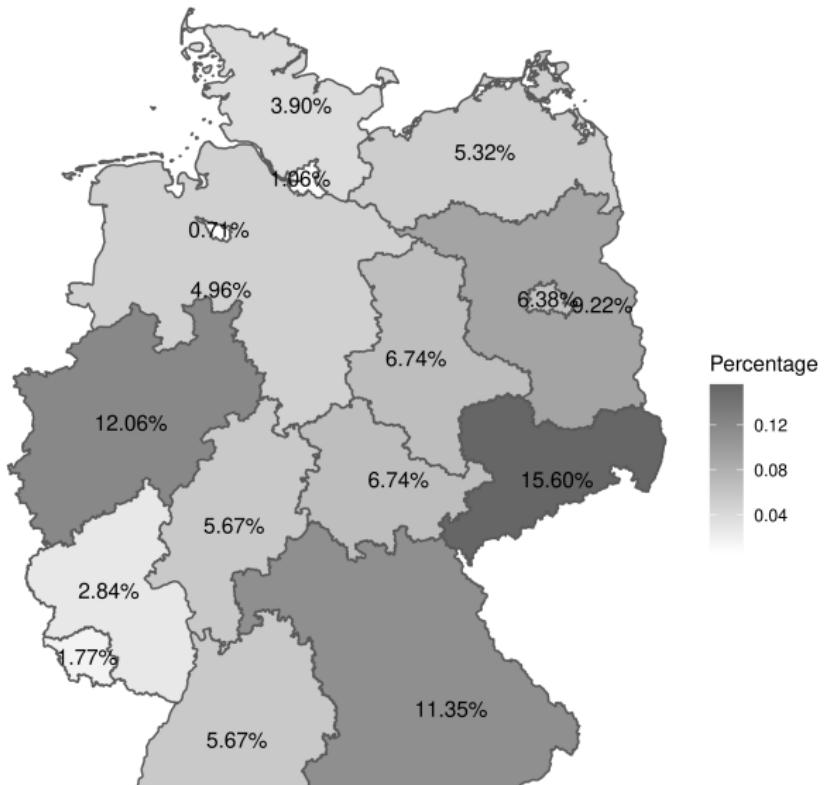
Events	Participants	Grouping
1	30	(ohne)
2	100	ARMINIUS-BUND
240	22,521	DIE RECHTE
124	9,988	Der III. Weg
1	50	NPD-JN
1,002	157,054	NPD/JN
1	200	NPD/JN – „Freie Kräfte“
2	160	NPD/JN/DIE RECHTE
11	1,325	NPD/JN/Neonazis / Rechtsextremisten
1,253	211,740	Neonazis / Rechtsextremisten
2	90	Neonazis / Rechtsextremisten/DIE RECHTE
4	1,470	Neonazis / Rechtsextremisten/Der III. Weg
2	380	n. b.
64	3,101	pro NRW

# German FR crime



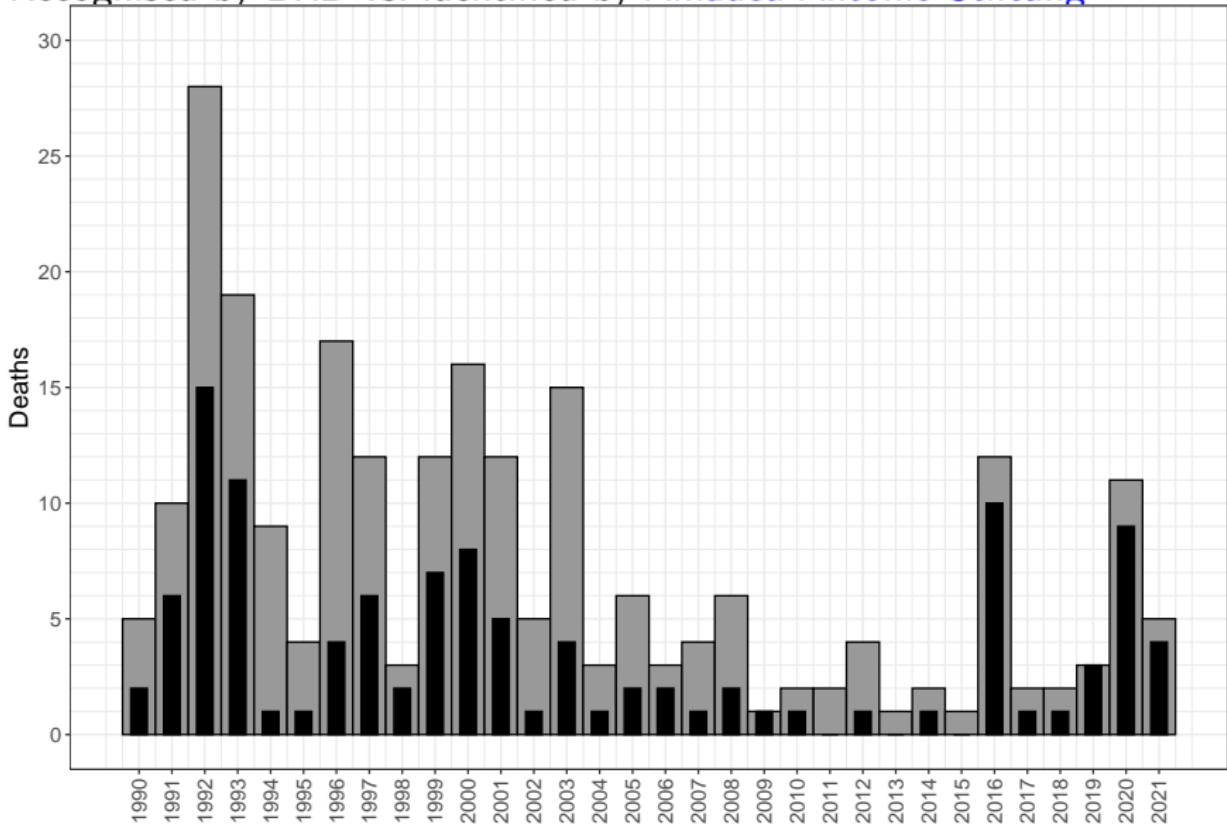
# German FR terrorism/violent extremism

Visualisation of DE data 1990-2020 from Ravndal et al. (2021)

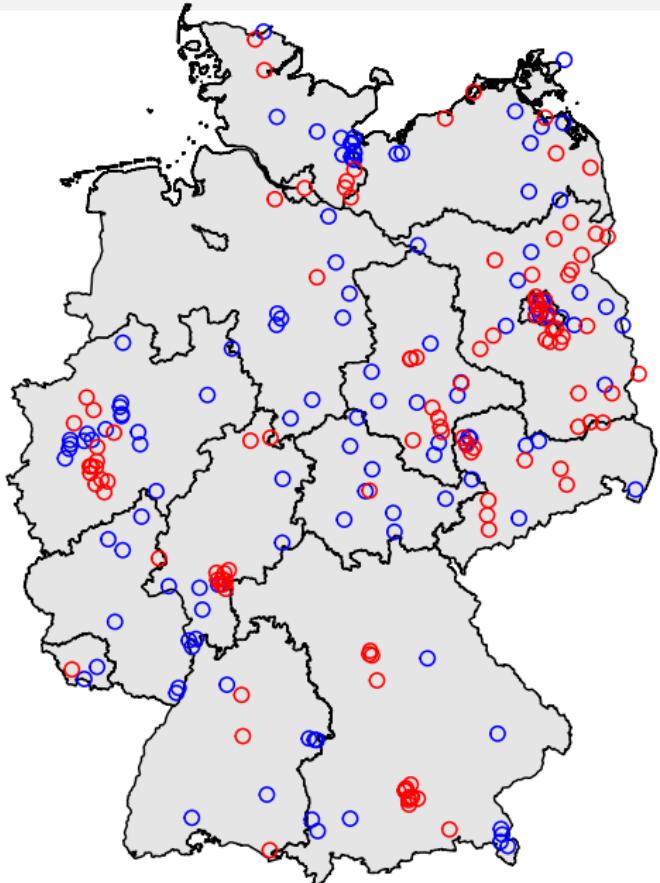


# focusing in on Germany, homicides

Recognised by BRD vs. identified by Amadeu Antonio Stiftung



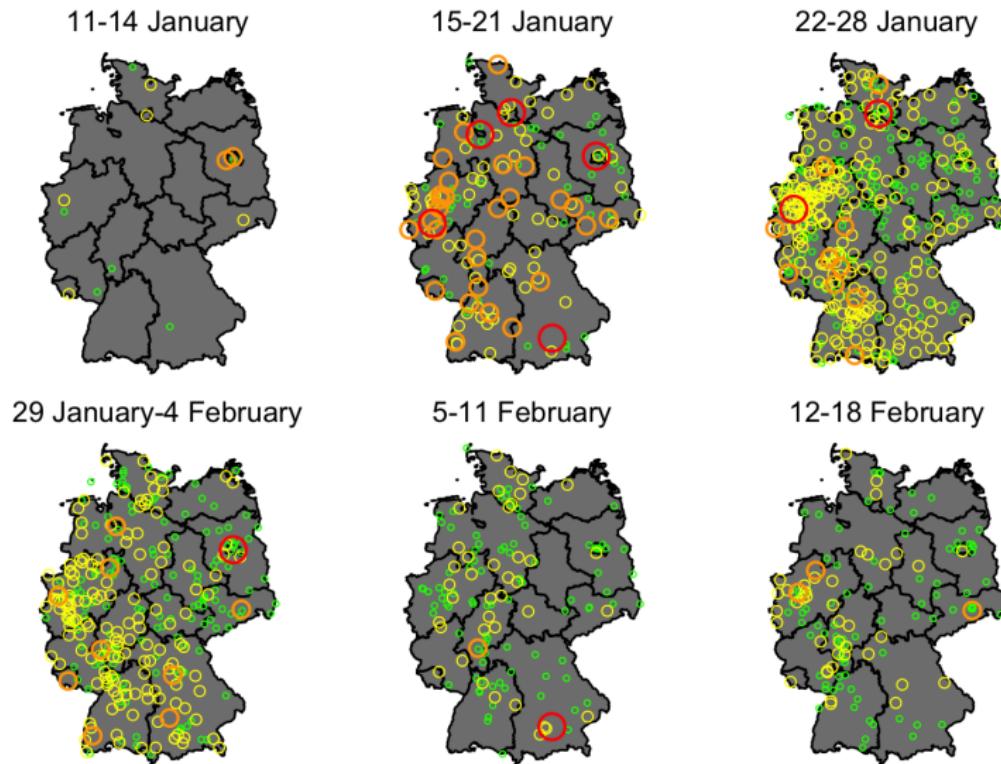
# focusing in on Germany, homicides



o: officially recognised by  
BRD  
○: identified by Amadeu  
Antonio Stiftung

data available:  
[https://michaelzeller.de/data/index\\_data.html](https://michaelzeller.de/data/index_data.html)

# Counter-mobilisation against AfD



[https://michaelzeller.de/blog/2024/02/12/anti\\_AfD\\_protests/](https://michaelzeller.de/blog/2024/02/12/anti_AfD_protests/)

## Section 6

Active research: FR movement leadership

“Leaders of far-right organizations carefully plan these emotions to integrate sympathizers, encourage followers to get involved in day-to-day political activities, and overcome the soci(et)al exclusions faced by members of the far right” ([Virchow 2007, 149](#))

“large sections of today’s German neo-Nazis do not try to build nationwide hierarchical (party) organizations with a definite leadership but organize in small groups on a local or regional basis or in groups dedicated to a specific issue like supporting like-minded prisoners or promoting an imagined Teutonic heritage. This has given rise to a number of leaders, who at times are rivals, but who also organize joint political campaigns.” ([Virchow 2007, 150](#))

RQs: (1) How can we characterise recent and contemporary far-right movement leadership? (2) Has leadership changed significantly with the advent of social media?

*Theory:* Weberian leadership types (esp. charisma), Nepstad and Bob (2006) on 'leadership capital,' modern far-right cases (Chermark, Freilich, and Suttmöller 2013; Virchow 2013; Busher, Harris, and Macklin 2018; Cleland 2020; Macklin 2020), Earl (2007): 9 'leading tasks'

*Research Design:* comparative case study in adjacent eras of FR movement leadership

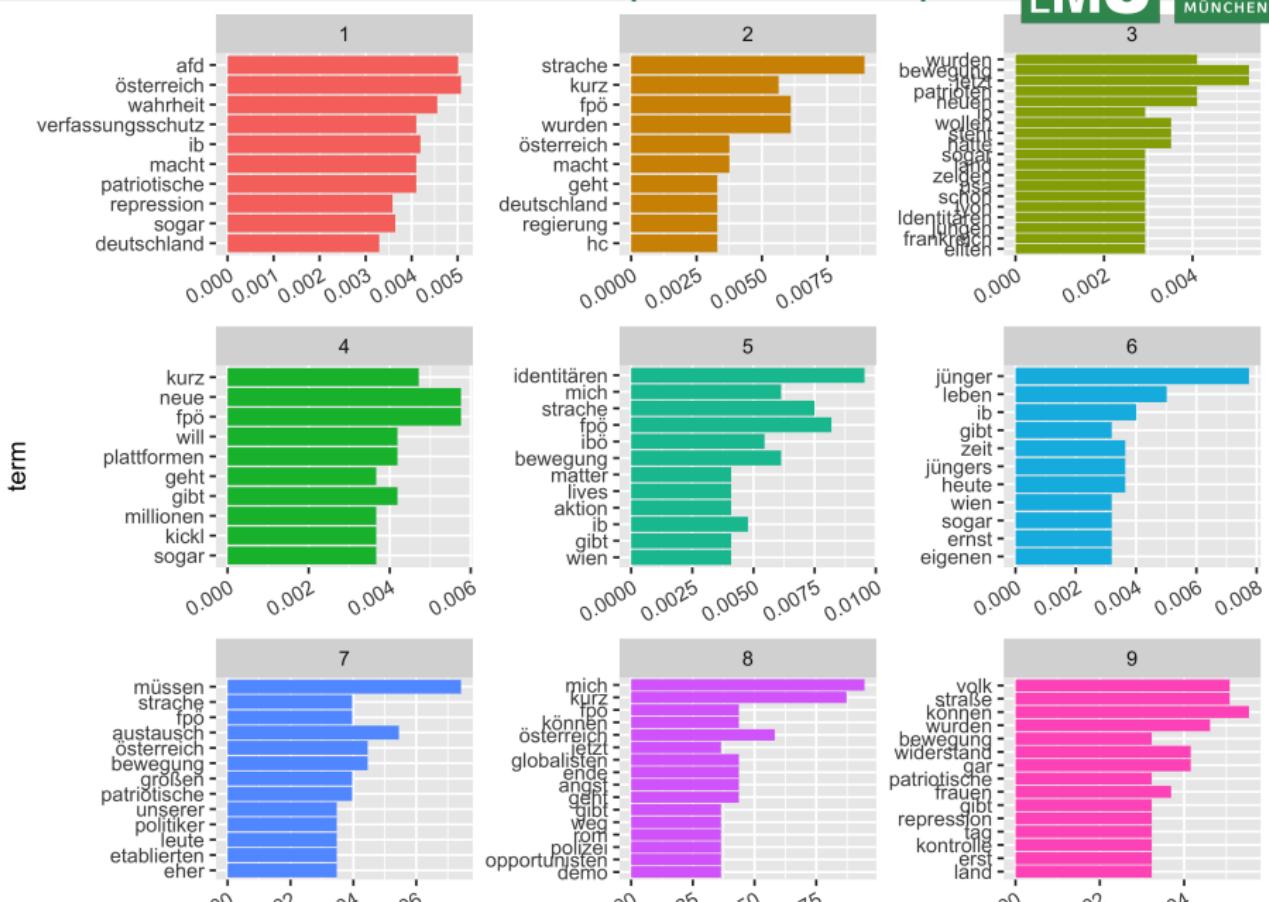
- quantitative text analysis on web-scraped (`rvest`) texts
- follow-up qualitative analysis: themes and campaign examples

<b>Author</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Total texts</b>	<b>Total words</b>
Worch	Rundbriefe	2005-2012	260	209,041
Sellner	Sezession	2015-2022	100	354,255
Sellner	Compact	2016-2021	54	34,926

# Active research: FR leadership - Worch topics

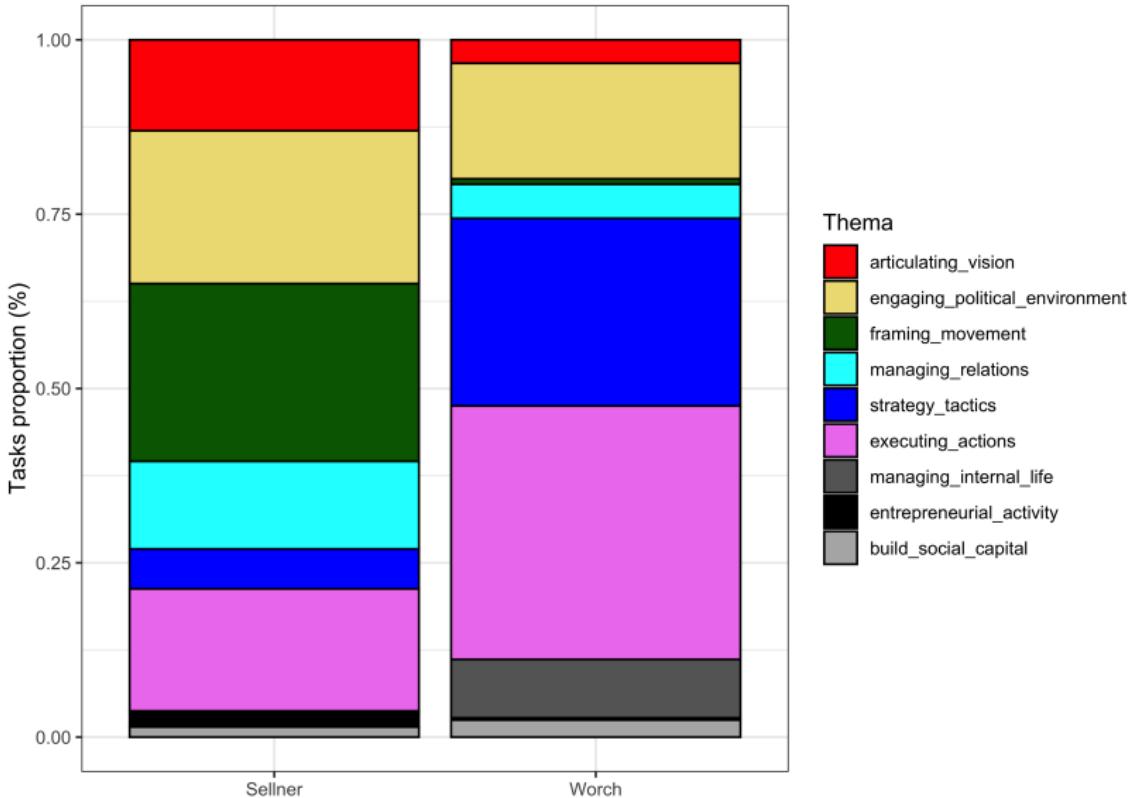


# Active research: FR leadership - Sellner topics



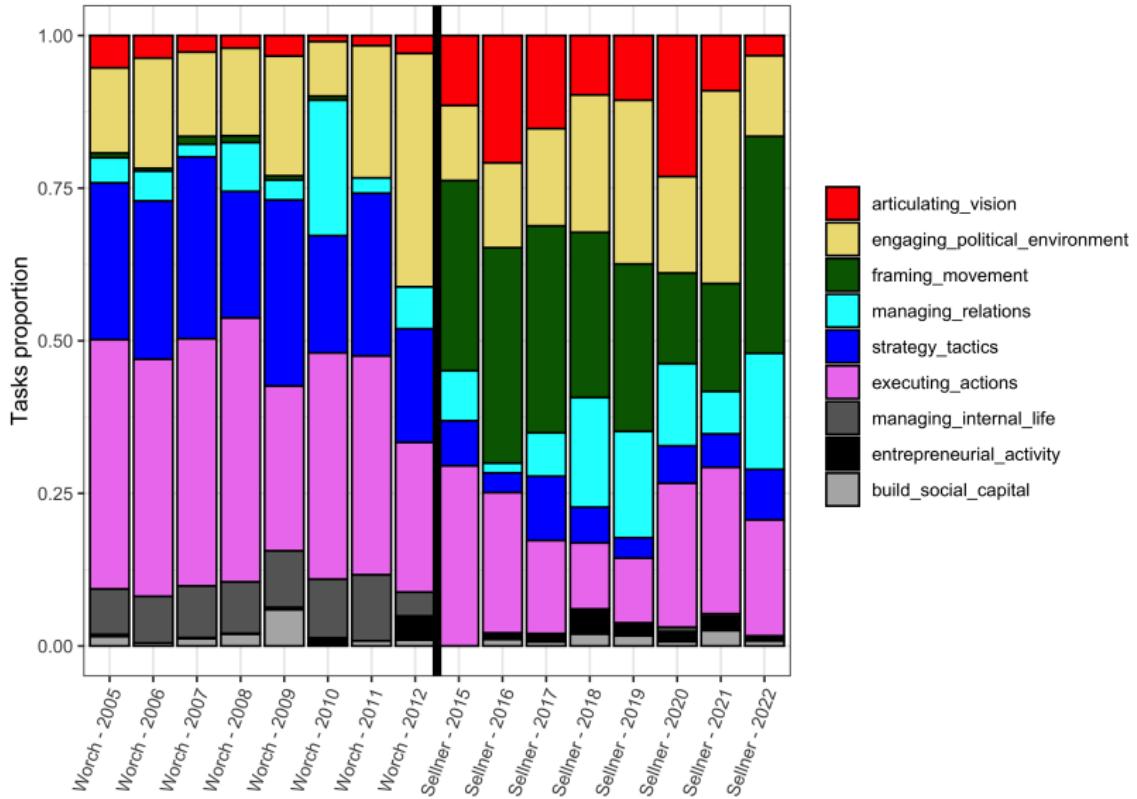
# Active research: FR leadership tasks

Leadership tasks performed by Sellner and Worch



# Active research: FR leadership tasks by year

Leadership tasks performed by Worch and Sellner



- Shared belief in street politics
  - social media are new tools—but both Worch and Sellner believe in change through mobilisation
  - mirroring left-wing tactics: IB as ‘right-wing clone’ of leftist movement organisations (at least according to Sellner); Worch’s *autonome Nationalisten*
- But Sellner is broader in his scope of activism, transnational if not global outlook
- Sellner more ideological: articulating vision and framing the movement, ‘metapolitik’ (e.g., ‘Defend Europa’ cruise)
- Worch more practical: strategy and tactics and executing actions, emphasis on demonstrations and courts—punishing cities (e.g., Leipzig)  
FYI: intro lecture on QTA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvqr70ZmyM>

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