

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 Bjørge, *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*



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

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**Daniel Koehler**

First published 2017  
by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge  
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

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*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*

Names: Koehler, Daniel, author.

Title: Right-wing terrorism in the 21st century the “national socialist underground” and the history of terror from the far-right in Germany / Daniel Koehler.

Description: New York : Routledge, 2017. | Series: Routledge studies in fascism and the far right

Identifiers: LCCN 2016020425 | ISBN 9781138123281 (hardback) |

ISBN 9781315648453 (e-book)

Subjects: LCSH: Right-wing extremists—Germany—History. |

Terrorism—Germany—Prevention. | Right and left (Political science)

Classification: LCC HN460.R3 K684 2017 | DDC 363.3250943—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016020425>

ISBN: 978-1-138-12328-1 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-64845-3 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman  
by Wearsset Ltd, Boldon, Tyne and Wear

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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

xviii *Abbreviations*

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 far-reaching 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

## 2 Introduction

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.

## 4 Introduction

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-Traughber 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 life-span 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.



## 6 Introduction

### Note

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

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## 6 Role of the intelligence and police agencies

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## 9 Conclusions and lessons learned

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