# Narrating Violent Crime and Negotiating Germanness: The Print News Media and the *National Socialist Underground* (NSU), 2000-2012

by

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# ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how the German print news media negotiate notions of Germanness by narrating the acts of violent crime committed by the right-wing extremist group *National Socialist Underground* (NSU) between 2000 and 2011. Combining Paul Ricœur's textual hermeneutics with insights from narrative criminology as well as violence and narrative media studies, I approach the NSU as a narrative puzzle. I thereby investigate how the media narrate a murder series of nine men with a migration background, a nail bomb attack in a Turkish-dominated street and an (attempted) murder of two police officers. I compare the narratives constructed both before and after the identification of the perpetrators in November 2011. Through an extensive narrative analysis of news media discourse, I examine how notions of Germanness are negotiated through the construction of relationships between perpetrators, victims, society and the state. The key argument is that the NSU has not affected dominant perceptions of Germanness, but reinforced existing ones through the creation of a hierarchy of "'Others' within": immigrants, East Germans, and (right-wing) extremists. The findings show that the interpretation of acts of violent crime, especially over extended periods of time, is rooted in everyday practices of story-telling and identity construction.

*For my mother, Martina Graef,*

*and my grandmother, Dr Elfriede Graef,*

*who taught me that strong people are always*

*their own worst critics*

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AfD            Alternative für Deutschland (*Alternative for Germany*)

ARD            Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (*Consortium of the Public-law Broadcasting Institutions of the Federal Republic of Germany*)

BamS           BILD am Sonntag

BGH            Bundesgerichtshof (*Federal Court of Justice*)

BKA            Bundeskriminalamt (*Federal Criminal Police Office*)

BND            Bundesnachrichtendienst (*Federal Intelligence Service*)

BVerfG         Bundesverfassungsgericht (*Federal Constitutional Court*)

CDU            Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (*Christian Democratic Union of Germany*)

CSU            Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern (*Christian Social Union in Bavaria*)

ddp            Deutscher Depeschendienst (*German Wire Service*)

dpa            Deutsche Presse Agentur (*German Press Agency*)

FAS            Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung

FAZ            Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

FDP            Freie Demokratische Partei (*Free Democratic Party*)

FRG            Federal Republic of Germany

GG             Grundgesetz (*Basic Law*)

KPD            Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (*Communist Party of Germany*)

MdB            Mitglied des Bundestags (*Member of the Bundestag*)

MWP            Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

NPD            Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (*National Democratic Party of Germany*)

NRW          North Rhine-Westphalia

NSDAP        Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (*National Socialist German Labour Party*)

NSU          Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund (*National Socialist Underground*)

PDS          Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus (*Party of Democratic Socialism*)

RAF          Rote Armee Fraktion (*Red Army Faction*)

SBB          Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (*Berlin State Library*)

SED          Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (*Socialist Unity Party of Germany*)

SPD          Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (*Social Democratic Party of Germany*)

StAG         Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz (*Nationality Act*)

StGB         Strafgesetzbuch (*Criminal Code*)

SZ           Süddeutsche Zeitung

TGD          Türkische Gemeinde in Deutschland (*Turkish Community in Germany*)

VerfS        Verfassungsschutz (*Office for the Protection of the Constitution*)

WASG         Arbeit & Soziale Gerechtigkeit – Die Wahlalternative (*Labour and Social Justice – the Electoral Alternative*)

ZDF          Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (*Second German Television*)

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION: THE *NATIONAL SOCIALIST UNDERGROUND*
## AS A NARRATIVE PUZZLE

> *[The three bomb builders from Thuringia] are on the run and – to our knowledge – have not committed any further violent crimes. The support for them is therefore not comparable to the support for an underground armed struggle.*
> — Klaus-Dieter Fritsche, Vice-President of the Federal Office
> for the Protection of the Constitution, 13 September 2003[1]

> *Indeed, who does something like that? Who leans a bike, on which a bomb spiked with nails is mounted, against a house wall on a sunny afternoon in the middle of a busy residential and shopping street?*
> — *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 11 June 2004

> *We have to insist that our willingness to integrate is met by a willingness to integrate among those who come to us.*
> — Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, 20 November 2004[2]

The quotes above refer to three issues that were on the political agenda in Germany in 2003 and 2004: the threat posed by violent right-wing extremism, the investigation of a nail bomb attack in a Turkish-dominated street in Cologne with 22 victims, and Germany's struggle to handle its de facto status as a country of immigration. In November 2011 an unexpected event connected these issues: a series of unsolved violent crimes that investigators, political elites and the media had previously located primarily within the milieu of "criminal immigrants" turned out to be the doing of a small right-wing extremist cell with the name "Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund" (*National Socialist Underground*, NSU). Apart from the 2004 Cologne bombing, the following deeds were ascribed to the group after its discovery: a series of nine murders of men with mainly Turkish migration

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[1] Deutscher Bundestag 2013 (229-230); unless otherwise stated, all translations from German are my own.
[2] Schröder 2005 (192).

backgrounds in the period 2000-2006 in different cities across Germany; another bomb

attack in Cologne in 2001 with one injured person; the attempted murder of two police

officers in Heilbronn, Baden-Wuerttemberg, in April 2007; a series of robberies between

1998 and 2011; and the arson attack on their hiding place in Zwickau, Saxony, on 4

November 2011.[3] The subsequent discovery of the NSU resulted in a major political

scandal because, as Fritsche's quote above indicates, the authorities had known them as

the "three bomb builders from Thuringia", the "Trio": Uwe Mundlos, Uwe Böhnhardt and

Beate Zschäpe. They disappeared in 1998 following a failed police operation in Jena.

An official state commemoration ceremony for the NSU victims was held in Berlin

on 23 February 2012. Two expert commissions, one in Thuringia and one with experts

from both the federal and state governments, were launched. In addition, several

parliamentary enquiry committees were set up in Germany's lower chamber, the

*Bundestag*, and in seven of the sixteen state parliaments.[4] All but two of these

committees, in Hesse and Bavaria, were still working at the time of writing or had been

followed by a second committee. The trial against Beate Zschäpe (Mundlos and

Böhnhardt committed suicide before they could be arrested) and four of the group's

supporters at the Regional High Court (*Oberlandesgericht*) in Munich has been taking

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[3] A chronological list of the key events associated with the NSU as well as a map of the crime scenes can be found in Appendix 1.

[4] The first federal enquiry committee was set up in January 2012 and presented its final report in August 2013, the second one was set up in November 2015. Committees were also set up in the following states: Thuringia (first committee February 2012-August 2014, second committee since February 2015); Saxony (first committee March 2012-June 2014, second committee since May 2015); Bavaria (July 2012-July 2013); Hesse (since May 2014); Baden-Wuerttemberg (first committee November 2014-January 2016, second committee since July 2016), North Rhine-Westphalia (since January 2015); Brandenburg (since July 2016).

place since May 2013 and is not expected to end before September 2017.[5] Zschäpe and her co-defendants have given – personally or through their lawyers – several statements in court, but these have not contributed a lot to elucidating past events. However, the investigation of the crimes, their impact on the victims and families, and the perpetrators' radicalisation have been addressed in biographical accounts (Şimşek and Schwarz 2013; John 2014), an opera libretto (Dischereit 2014), a trilogy of docudramas produced by German public broadcaster ARD in 2016,[6] several theatre plays,[7] and two detective novels (Schorlau 2015; Eckert 2016). A growing number of journalistic and scholarly accounts have also tried to answer questions concerning the NSU's internal organisation, its networks within the right-wing extremist milieu, planning of the crimes and connections to German security authorities.[8]

This thesis aims to bring together both key dimensions of these developments: the collective processes of interpreting violent crime between September 2000 and October 2011 that ended with the discovery of the Trio-turned-NSU *and* the impact that this discovery has had on German society since November 2011 as evidenced by news media discourses. A look at the existing literature about the NSU shows that such an integrative approach is still missing.

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[5] *ZEIT Online*, "Verfahren gegen Zschäpe wird bis September 2017 verlängert", 25 July 2016, URL: http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2016-07/nsu-prozess-rechtsextremismus-urteil-oberlandesgericht-muenchen-verhandlung-2017 (last accessed 20 September 2016).

[6] See the ARD's website on the trilogy, see URL: http://www.daserste.de/unterhaltung/film/mitten-in-deutschland-nsu/index.html (last accessed 30 August 2016).

[7] For example, *Die Lücke* ("The Gap") at the Schauspiel Cologne (since June 2014), *Urteile* ("Judgements") at the Marstall (Residence Theatre) in Munich (since October 2016), and the youth project *Unentdeckte Nachbarn* ("Undiscovered Neighbours") in Zwickau (still in progress).

[8] These questions concern, for example, how the "Trio" could disappear in January 1998 and how much the authorities knew about their whereabouts afterwards, what role Zschäpe played for planning and carrying out the crimes, and how much contact the "Trio" had to members of the right-wing extremist scenes in Thuringia and Saxony, in particular to Confidential Informants of the VerfS.

**The NSU Five Years On: A Concise Overview of the Literature**

Existing publications on the NSU are characterised by a blurring of boundaries between journalistic, political and academic discourses. One of the key studies is an 800-page volume on the involvement of the German state in the NSU murder series written by Stefan Aust, former editor-in-chief of *Der Spiegel* and author of a standard work on the West German terrorist group Red Army Faction (RAF), and author-film maker Dirk Laabs (2014). The authors trace the emergence of the "Trio" since the early 1990s in newly reunified Germany, its disappearance in 1998 and re-discovery as the NSU in November 2011, revealing the close entanglement of the Offices for the Protection of the Constitution (*Verfassungsschutz*, VerfS) with the right-wing extremist scene through its network of Confidential Informants (see also Wetzel 2015). The book is currently being adapted for German cinema.[9] A reportage (2012) by Christian Fuchs, freelance investigative journalist, and John Goetz, *Norddeutscher Rundfunk* (*NDR*) editor and freelance writer for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (*SZ*), focuses on the biographies of the three group members, their radicalisation in reunified Germany, and their life in the underground. The foreword to this book is written by Hans Leyendecker, head of the investigative research department of the *SZ* and one of the paper's key reporters about the NSU since November 2011. Another book (2012) by freelance investigative journalist Mike Baumgärtner, who covered the NSU story for *Spiegel*, and *Berliner Kurier* editor Marcus Böttcher takes a similar approach, but focuses more on the parallel dynamics of the police' search for the "Trio" and the investigation of the violent crimes they

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[9] See Constantin Film, "Constantin verfilmt Bestseller HEIMATSCHUTZ", 4 May 2015, see URL: https://www.constantin-film.de/ueber-uns/meldungen/constantin-verfilmt-bestseller-heimatschutz-30-04-2015 (last accessed 26 September 2016).

committed while in hiding. Its foreword is written by Hajo Funke, Professor Emeritus in Political Science at the Free University of Berlin with a focus on Holocaust Studies, anti-Semitism and right-wing extremism, who also served as an expert witness for the NSU enquiry committee of the Bavarian parliament in 2012-2013.[10]

Former Member of the *Bundestag* (MdB) and leader of the parliamentary group of *Die Linke* (Left Party) in Thuringia Bodo Ramelow, since December 2014 the state's Minister President, has edited two volumes on the NSU. Their contributors – civil activists, left-wing politicians, journalists and scholars – consider the manifold connections between the NSU members and their upbringing in the former GDR, the right-wing extremist scenes in Saxony and Thuringia, the allegedly flawed system of Confidential Informants, as well as racist and xenophobic attitudes that, so they claim, shaped and continue to shape the work of the security authorities and are also widespread within the general German population (Ramelow 2012; Ramelow 2013; see also Kleffner 2015). Very similar topics are addressed in a recent collection of articles edited by researchers at the University of Jena (Frindte et al. 2016a) that also includes journalists, activists and scholars (see also Gensing 2012; Schmincke and Siri 2013; Bescherer, Dörre and Quent 2014). The press of the *Amadeu Antonio Foundation*, whose chairwoman Anetta Kahane has contributed to several volumes on the NSU (including Frindte et al.'s collection), has published a volume that discusses the 2004 bombing in Cologne in the context of a history of racist violence in reunified Germany, based on a series of locally organised events and edited by the local group *Dostluk Sineması* ("cinema of friendship").

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[10] Funke has played a central role in the public debates about the NSU through delivering lectures, writing online pieces and publishing a polemic on the "State Affair NSU" (2015). He also maintains a personal blog with a dedicated section on the NSU, see URL: https://hajofunke.wordpress.com/category/nsu (last accessed 30 August 2016).

With regards to the NSU as a phenomenon of right-wing extremism more specifically, a debate about whether the group is an exception from or continuation of the history of right-wing terrorism in Germany has ensued. Pfahl-Traughber (2012), for example, has argued that the NSU – although it was integrated into right-wing extremist structures and motivated by a Neo-Nazi ideology – is a new phenomenon due to its method of face-to-face killings and the absence of claims of responsibility in combination with non-symbolic targets: "ordinary" persons with a migration background (191-195; see also Busch 2013). Koehler (2017), who has compiled a database of right-wing terrorist actors and incidents in post-WWII Germany, has considered the NSU an exceptional case because, according to his data, "[t]he vast majority of right-wing terrorist actors remain active for no longer than a year". For him, the NSU is therefore "the most successful German right-wing terrorist actor in terms of lifespan." (178) The opposite argument has been made, among others, by Fabian Virchow, head of the research area "right-wing extremism/Neo-Nazism" at the University of Applied Sciences in Dusseldorf. He acknowledges the group's unusual longevity and embeddedness within the right-wing extremist scene, but emphasises that it "is the continuation of a right-wing terrorism that has accompanied the Federal Republic of Germany [FRG] since the 1950s" (Virchow 2011), citing groups such as the *Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann*, the *Hepp-Kexel-Gruppe* and *Deutsche Aktionsgruppen* that committed bank robberies, bombings and arson throughout the 1980s. Virchow therefore considers the NSU a "prism" for analysing right-wing terror and terrorism (Virchow 2013: 71-74).

The relationship between the NSU affair and German society has also been considered to some extent. Borstel and Heitmeyer (2014), for instance, have argued that

the group's radicalisation process needs to be seen in context of different "layers" of radicalness, beginning with denigrating attitudes towards specific social groups prevalent in the general population. Short essays have looked at the implications of post-November 2011 discourses of the NSU for remembering and reinforcing East-West divisions in Germany (Lessenich 2013) or the collective reluctance to use the term "racism" for the NSU crimes, both before and after November 2011 (Bojadžijev 2013; Jäger 2015; Fekete 2015). In 2015 Virchow and his colleagues published a study of the pre-November 2011 press coverage of the 2000-2006 murder series and 2004 Cologne bombing in a selection of German and Turkish regional and national print news media (Virchow, Thomas and Grittmann 2015). It also includes a small number of interviews with German and Turkish journalists who reflect on this coverage. The authors' findings suggest that the media had a generally prejudiced attitude towards the victims and a tendency to follow interpretations offered by the police. However, the study is conceptualised as a media critique in connection with the label "kebab murders" and therefore focuses somewhat narrowly on journalists' failure to cover the crimes in a professional, "objective" and critical manner. Since it was commissioned by the research foundation *Otto Brenner Foundation* of *IG Metall*, the largest individual trade union in Germany with the stated aim of contributing to a "socially inclusive society",[11] this research is also linked to a specific socio-political actor and includes very few theoretical considerations.[12] With the exception of an MA thesis on the journalistic characterisation of actors in the NSU trial (Hansen 2015), also published by the *Otto Brenner Foundation*, Virchow et al.'s work

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[11] See the foundation's mission statement, URL: https://www.otto-brenner-stiftung.de/otto-brenner-stiftung/das-leitbild-der-otto-brenner-stiftung.html (last accessed 30 August 2016).

[12] Some aspects of the study have also been discussed further by Derya Gür-Şeker (2015) who assisted on the project.

remains the only comprehensive study of news media discourses connected to the NSU. A volume edited by former *Spiegel* reporter, *DIE ZEIT* editor and Professor of Journalism Michael Haller (2013a) compares the media coverage of "NSU terrorism" to that of Anders Behring Breivik who killed 77 people in a bombing and shooting spree on 22 July 2011 in Norway, but does not present any systematic analysis of empirical material and instead relies on anecdotal evidence.

The difficulties associated with interpreting acts of violent crime and linking them to a perpetrator have also been discussed to a limited extent. McGowan (2014), for example, has suggested that the NSU illustrates how important it is to identify acts of violent crime for what they "really are" in order to detect terrorist cells. Frindte et al.'s volume on the NSU includes an article on a research project commissioned by the Brandenburg Ministry of the Interior in 2013 which re-evaluates cases of violent crime in this state (Feldmann, Kopke and Schultz 2016). The authors point to the difficulties involved in classifying acts of violent crime as "politically motivated" and inferring a perpetrator's motive in practice, as acts of violence may be committed based on a right-wing ideology or by individuals with more latent right-wing extremist views. In a legal opinion published by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Office in response to the NSU case, Dieter Kugelmann, Professor of Law at the German Police University, also discusses the legal and practical implications of interpreting and prosecuting acts of violent crime as "hate crime" (Kugelmann 2015). Koehler's volume also addresses the problem of definition, but argues that "right-wing terrorism" can be clearly distinguished from other forms of violence based on its tactics, methods, ideology and intentions, even if individual

acts might not always be identifiable as such due to a lack of verbal communication from the perpetrators as part of their strategy (Koehler 2017: 64-65).

Overall, writings on the NSU have thus come predominantly from scholars in the field of right-wing extremism studies that is still somewhat dominated by German-language publications (Frindte et al. 2016b: 67-68) as well as left-wing journalists and activists. These authors are mostly occupied with the identification of failure and the ascription of responsibility and guilt to various socio-political actors, in particular the German security authorities and the news media whose pre-November 2011 coverage is painted with a rather broad brush. Meanwhile, the post-November 2011 coverage, with the exception of Hansen's MA thesis on the NSU trial in 2013, has not yet been studied systematically. The complexities involved in the interpretation of acts of violent crime as revealed by the NSU case have been considered, but not theorised in combination with in-depth empirical analysis. Moreover, the 2000-2006 murder series is often singled out from the NSU's violent campaign, while the 2001 and 2004 Cologne bombings and the 2007 (attempted) murder are given considerably less attention, and the robberies and arson are not considered as "terrorist crimes" at all.

What is therefore still missing is an integrative approach that looks at both the developments after November 2011 *and* the earlier spatial and temporal dynamics of media discourses of violent crime that led to the creation of the "story of the NSU" in the first place, and which combines an innovative theoretical approach with an in-depth analysis of empirical material. This thesis sets out to do precisely this.

**A Narrative Approach to the NSU: Violent Crime and Germanness**

I suggest that the NSU can be productively approached as a narrative puzzle to the extent that defining what the "NSU" is and how it has come into being as a discursive figure is the result of integrating individual acts of violent crime into a coherent story. I take inspiration from philosophical, literary and sociological contributions to narrative studies, combining in particular Paul Ricœur's narrative hermeneutics with insights from the recently established field of narrative criminology. My aim is to show that journalists tell stories of acts of violent crime by constructing relationships between offenders, victims, witnesses, investigators and the society in which they interact with each other. In doing so, they draw on a rich inventory of narrative resources, including stereotypes, memories and, in particular, "tropes": words or phrases that hint at familiar stories that audiences understand intuitively and therefore do not need to be fully spelled out. In this way they help to structure a hegemonic discourse. However, tropes can also be ambiguous, making it possible for readers or listeners to (choose to) hear different stories (Sandberg 2016: 164-166; Sandberg, Tutenges and Copes 2015: 1183). In the context of violent crime, tropes such as "deviant foreign milieus" or "Muslims as terrorists" may be relevant. They hint at familiar stories that imply particular perpetrator-victim constellations and thereby indicate the inclusion into or exclusion from "the Germans" as a community and/or society. Telling stories of violent crime in the news media thus reveals, and contributes to, the negotiation of notions of "Germanness" through reference to a repertoire of invisible "backstories".

I do not ask – as political, legal and academic discourses of the NSU have done so far – how we can fill the gaps in the "NSU story" in order to trace the group's emergence, criminal activities and support networks. Instead, approaching the NSU as a narrative puzzle means to take the stories as data in themselves and consider violent crime, somewhat counterintuitively, as something productive. It is productive to the extent that the narrative processes we can observe in the news media can tell us what mechanisms help to discursively (re-) produce the German social order over time (Shepherd 2013). The central research questions of this thesis can thus be formulated as follows:

What notions of Germanness are negotiated through the narration of violent crimes ascribed to the NSU during the period September 2000 to March 2012 in the German print news media?

What narrative resources does this process draw on and why?

These questions refer to three consecutive episodes that together create the NSU as a narrative puzzle: the first one is the media's narration of the three key acts of violent crime – the 2000-2006 murder series, the 2004 bombing and the 2007 (attempted) murder – as detective stories between September 2000 and October 2011, guided by the search for the unknown perpetrators. The second episode is the media's narration of the discovery of the NSU as the perpetrator of these and other crimes in the first half of November 2011. I term this the "narrative transition period". The third episode is the

media's narration of the violent crimes of the past to create a new story of the "right-wing terrorist group NSU" after mid-November 2011.

**Relevance and Contribution**

I suggest that studying the NSU as a narrative puzzle is important for two main reasons. The first one is that since its discovery in November 2011 the NSU appears to have shaped German society to a considerable extent as the multitude of projects, programmes and publications presented above as well as the NSU trial as the biggest criminal trial in the history of the FRG indicate. However, how and to what extent the NSU both reflects contemporary perceptions of and has shaped German society has not been studied systematically so far. Secondly, in light of the fact that the NSU case extends back to the formation of the "Trio" in the mid- to late 1990s and is therefore entangled with Germany's post-reunification history, studying how news media narrative discourses have both created and made sense of the NSU over time can provide insights into how far the country has come with reunifying East and West, (re-)conceptualising the German nation (state) as a country of immigration and negotiating its democratic boundaries. The question of how to sustain and further promote a cohesive German society in the 21st-century is particularly topical considering recent domestic developments and debates. These include the ongoing "refugee crisis", the increase in protests against Germany's refugee policy and arson attacks on asylum seeker homes, the rise of the *Alternative für Deutschland* ("Alternative for Germany"*,* AfD) as a new party since 2013 that is represented in ten of sixteen state parliaments as of September 2016, and the polarisation of the Turkish community in Germany due to Turkey's increasing

transformation into an authoritarian system under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the failed military coup d'état in July 2016. While doing research on the NSU is challenging as long as the political and legal process remains inconclusive and access to files and documents is restricted, it is therefore nevertheless important to address this question.

Since this thesis focuses on the narration of violent crime in the national print news media in Germany, it addresses only one among many different public spheres. In addition, newspapers have continuously lost readers over the past two decades, while online formats and social media have become increasingly important (Benkler 2006; Franklin 2008; Stroud 2011; Drushel and German 2011; Kramp et al. 2013).[13] There are four reasons why I have nevertheless chosen printed newspapers and magazines as the empirical basis for this project. First, there is currently no other source available for studying the narration of the NSU's violent crimes throughout the period 2000-2012. While other discursive spaces may have become (more) relevant for narrating the NSU since its discovery in 2011, in particular online media (chat fora, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.), they do not provide the same continuity over time that is essential for the research interest of this thesis. Secondly, national newspapers and weekly magazines remain opinion-making media in Germany, whether in print or through their online services, which complement, rather than replace the traditional format. Thirdly, the geographical dimension of print journalism is, as will become clear, relevant for narrating the crimes that are now attributed to the NSU, and this aspect would be lost if other discursive

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[13] See also the figures provided by the *Federal Association of German Newspaper Publishers*, URL: http://www.bdzv.de/maerkte-und-daten/wirtschaftliche-lage/kategorie/die_deutschen_zeitungen _in_zahlen_und_daten/ (last accessed 14 September 2016).

spaces not necessarily tied to specific geographic areas (such as the internet) were studied instead. Fourthly, given time and space restrictions as well as the lack of research on the NSU from a discursive, let alone a narrative perspective, it would have been unfeasible to also address the still under-researched field of online media communication.

The contribution that this thesis aims to make is threefold. As one of the first studies available in English it adds to the existing literature on the NSU as a socio-political phenomenon by offering a narrative perspective on its implications for contemporary German society, thereby establishing the topic firmly within the field of German Studies. Secondly, it applies Paul Ricœur's textual hermeneutics to (re-) narration processes in the print news media to explain the NSU puzzle. It thereby contributes to the literature on the use of narrative theory in news media studies that has developed since the 1980s as well as the emerging field of narrative criminology by studying journalists, rather than offenders, as narrators of violent crime. Thirdly, it adds to an interdisciplinary research agenda on the conceptual overlaps between types of violent crime and their implications for collective identities and social cohesion. While the NSU may be an exceptional case in many ways, the dynamics observable here can also be found in other contexts. For example, one might think of the initial speculations about an Islamist background to the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing committed by white-supremacists Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols due to the absence of claims of responsibility, or the recent debate about the applicability of the labels "terrorism" and "hate crime" to the mass shooting at a gay

club in Orlando, Florida, on 12 June 2016, by an American citizen with an Afghan migration background.[14]

**Thesis Structure**

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 locates the NSU as a narrative puzzle within the literatures on conceptual debates and (narrative) discourses of violent crime and the news media. It finds that media discourses of violent crime and, more specifically, terrorism are dynamic and inevitably connected to ideas of collective identity and cohesion. The media do not merely communicate acts of violent crime, but create them as socio-political events in the first place and assign particular meanings to them. I conclude that the news media are a key actor within the interactional context of telling stories of deviance and specifically violent crime, a perspective that remains underexplored in narrative criminology. The review also shows that a framework for conceptualising and analysing (print) news media discourses of (small-scale) violent crime over time and their implications for the construction of collective identities, e.g. "Germanness", is still missing. Chapter 3 develops such a framework by drawing on the narrative hermeneutics of Paul Ricœur (1913-2005) in order to bring together the notions of "(violently criminal) action", "narrative discourse", "story", "text", "time" and "identity" and link them to journalists as story-tellers. It also introduces the reader to the empirical material and method of narrative analysis.

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[14] See U.S. News, "Is it Hate or Terrorism?", 13 June 2016, URL: http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/ 2016-06-13is-it-hate-or-terrorism, and Observer, "Recognising the Difference between Terrorism and Hate Crimes", 14 June 2016, URL: http://observer.com/2016/06/recognize-the-difference-between-terrorism-and-hate-crimes (last accessed 26 September 2016).

Taking these discussions as a basis, chapter 4 turns to the first two episodes of the NSU as a narrative puzzle: the narration of the violent crimes between September 2000 and October 2011 as well as the narrative transition period in the first half of November 2011 that creates the NSU as a discursive figure. So far the 2007 murder has often been separated from the murder series and the Cologne bombing because the media did not make a connection between them before November 2011 (Virchow, Thomas and Grittmann 2015: 9) or because it would not "fit with the scheme of the NSU" (Busch 2013: 230). However, the narration of this event is, as I will show, crucial for the creation of the NSU story, regardless of the fact that the enquiry committees have not yet identified Mundlos and Böhnhardt as the perpetrators beyond doubt.[15] The discussion finds that the narration of the murder series and the bombing is shaped by the trope of "deviant foreign milieus" that points to stories of "persons with an immigration background", regardless of how long they have been resident in Germany, as strangers who arouse suspicion because difference would carry a potential for deviant behaviour. This, I argue, reflects Germany's ongoing struggle with conceiving of itself as a country of immigration. The narration of the bombing is additionally shaped by hegemonic stories connected to the trope "Muslims as perpetrators" that has become dominant as a result of global post-9/11 terrorism discourses. It prevents the application of either one of the labels "political violence" or "terrorism" in favour of a narration as youth or gang violence. Assumptions about German perpetrators in both cases are connected to an understanding of

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[15] The report of the first enquiry committee in Baden-Wuerttemberg, published in April 2016, states that there remains "no space for reasonable doubt" that Mundlos and Böhnhardt are the perpetrators, due to the great number of incriminating pieces of circumstantial evidence (Landtag von Baden-Wuerttemberg 2016a: 867). The second enquiry committed was appointed in July 2016 and is charged with answering the question of whether other members of the NSU or local members of the right-wing extremist milieu were involved in the (attempted) murder (Landtag von Baden-Wuerttemberg 2016b: 2).

idiosyncratic, exceptional behaviour. The 2007 (attempted) murder is linked to local drug crime, international organised crime or juvenile crime, and illustrates the media's tendency to portray women as victims rather than perpetrators. The chapter also discusses the narrative transition period in the first half of November 2011 when the three separate detective stories begin to be merged to create the story of the NSU, thereby moving the narrative focus from individual events to a specific violent actor.

Chapters 5 to 7 each discuss one dimension of the process of re-narration between mid-November 2011 and March 2012 as the third episode of the narrative puzzle. Chapter 5 asks how the media re-negotiate the relationship between the victims and German society in light of the right-wing extremist identity of the perpetrators. I argue that the narration reveals a hierarchy of "Others": while the Otherness of the perpetrators as right-wing extremists is taken as absolute, despite their ethnic and legal Germanness, the opposition between "immigrants" and "Germans" is also upheld. The 2000-2006 victims are narratively re-included into the German collective as "*our* immigrants", corresponding to normative ideas of a pluralist and tolerant Germany. This indicates that the tropes "deviant foreign milieus" and "Muslims as perpetrators" exist in parallel to stories of "immigrants as vulnerable victims". However, since the link between difference and deviance is not renounced, stories of immigrants (often used interchangeably with "foreigners") and, in particular, Muslims as perpetrators seem to remain dominant by comparison. The third "Other", East Germans, becomes part of the story because both the "Trio" and the last murder victim are from Thuringia. The story of this murder is re-narrated as weapon-related, ideologically motivated or acquaintance

crime, reinforcing hegemonic stories associated with the trope of the right-wing extremist – "brown" – East.[16]

Chapter 6 discusses how the perpetrators' place within German society is further re-narrated through the lens of "terrorism" as a form of political violence. It finds that the media give two main explanations for the collective failure to identify the crimes as "terrorism" before November 2011: first, NSU violence could not be interpreted as aiming to provoke political change because Germany's multicultural, multi-ethnic identity is not negotiable; the group also used violence as a tool to evict "immigrants" from Germany and was not interested in negotiating with the state, therefore they did not issue any claims of responsibility. Secondly, German society's perception that the victims are different from itself prohibited a wider terrorising effect and collective feeling of being attacked. The latter explanation is much less dominant than the first one.

Chapter 7 asks how the news media narrate the relationship between the perpetrators and the state that needs to respond to the violent crimes of the past and to what extent this implies a (re-) negotiation of democratic boundaries in Germany. It finds that the NSU as a "terrorist group" is distinguished from right-wing "everyday terror" because of its strategic behaviour, but that the political response is nevertheless conceptualised as an intensified struggle against (violent) right-wing extremism rather than counter-terrorism policy. Moreover, the security authorities – police and VerfS, in particular in "deviant East Germany" – are singled out as the culprit because they did not identify the "Trio" as potential terrorists in the 1990s and failed to connect the violent

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[16] Brown was the colour code of the National Socialists during the NS dictatorship, representing an attachment to the "German soil". Today it is often used as a metaphor for "right-wing extremism" in the German context.

crimes to existing knowledge about the violent potential of extremist milieus and individuals. Furthermore, the temporary inclusion of the Left Party, which is defined as *less* extremist and undemocratic than far-right parties and milieus, into the group of "good democrats" also serves to "other" the perpetrators. A renewed attempt to ban the far-right *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (National Democratic Party, NPD) is nevertheless subject to contestation, in particular between the left-liberal and liberal-conservative papers. The three dimensions of the re-narration process that these chapters address are complementary and overlap in various ways, as I will show.

Chapter 8 summarises the empirical findings about the NSU as a narrative puzzle and discusses their theoretical implications for the study of discourses of violent crime. It also reflects on the limitations of this study and considers avenues for further research regarding the NSU, narrative discourses of violent crime, and Germanness.

# CHAPTER 2

## VIOLENT CRIME, THE NEWS MEDIA AND GERMANNESS:
## CROSS-DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

**Introduction**

In this chapter I situate the study of the NSU as a narrative puzzle within the literatures on

conceptual debates and (narrative) discourses of violent crime and the news media in

order to develop the key argument of this thesis, namely that the process of narrating the

violent crimes ascribed to the NSU implies the negotiation of Germanness. Other bodies

of literature that are relevant for this thesis, in particular those on German immigration

and integration policy, will be integrated into the empirical discussion in chapters 4 to 7.

I first address the differences between legal and political definitions of the violent

crimes ascribed to the NSU in order to illustrate the conceptual distinction made between

"common crime" and other, more specific forms of violent deviance. I then discuss four of

these specific forms that play a particular role for the NSU as a narrative puzzle, namely

"politically motivated crime", "political violence", "terrorism" and "(right-wing) extremist

violence". In the third section I examine the impact that these conceptual debates have

on processes of interpreting acts of violent crime in the (print) news media, and

investigate how the concept of narrative might help us to account for the dynamics that

we can observe in this context. I conclude this chapter by reflecting on the findings of the

literature review, arguing that an analysis of the NSU as a narrative puzzle requires an

integrative framework for approaching (print) news media narrative discourses of violent

crime and their implications for national identities. However, such a framework is still

missing. Chapter 3 responds to this gap by applying Paul Ricœur's narrative hermeneutics to print news media discourses.

**The NSU: More than "Common Crime"? Legal and Political Dimensions**

While the notions of "violence" and "violent crime" are themselves subject to long-standing definitional debates (Schlesinger 1991: 6-8), in the context of democratic, Western societies[1] the term "violent crime" may be understood as sub-state illegitimate acts of deliberate harm-doing with physical means that constitute a breaking of legal rules (Wolff 1969: 602-606; Felson 2009: 24-25; Heitmeyer and Hagan 2002: 19). Acts of violent crime can be instrumental, where violence is used to achieve a specific purpose, for example to get hold of money during a bank robbery, or expressive, where it is employed as an end in itself with victims often being chosen randomly, for example violence against members of an ethnic minority (Imbusch 2002: 50-51).

Since May 2013 the surviving member of the NSU Beate Zschäpe has been tried before the High Regional Court in Munich for the following violent crimes as defined by the German Criminal Code (*Strafgesetzbuch*, StGB): (attempted) murder (§211 StGB), causing of an explosion with (serious) damage to the health of a large number of people (§308 (1) and (2)), aggravated battery (§224 (1) (2-5) StGB), (aggravated) robbery in concomitance with extortion (§249, §250, §251, §253, §255 StGB), and aggravated arson (§306a, §306b and §306c). In addition, Zschäpe is also charged with the formation of a

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[1] Article 20 of the German Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*, GG) defines the FRG as a democratic and social federal state in which "[a]ll state authority is derived from the people. It shall be exercised by the people through elections and other votes and through specific legislative, executive and judicial bodies." (Deutscher Bundestag 2012: 27, original translation)

terrorist organisation (§129a (1) (1) and (2) (2) StGB).[2] According to the StGB, such a group has the purpose or function to commit serious crimes, including those that are directed against human life itself (murder, manslaughter, genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes) *or* intends to commit crimes (e.g. arson, causing of an explosion, hijacking)

> designed to significantly intimidate the population, to coerce an authority or an international organisation illegally with violence or the threat thereof, or to eradicate or significantly damage the political, constitutional, economic or social basic structures of a state or an international organisation [and that] can seriously damage a state or international organisation based on its execution and effects. (§129a (2) StGB)

The German Criminal Code thus defines a "terrorist group" as one that pursues a violent strategy with the *aim* of committing serious crimes and/or using violence for the purpose of provoking a change of behaviour among the population or political actors, or in order to destabilize a political entity. The paragraph, which also criminalises the support or promotion of a terrorist organisation, entered the German Criminal Code in 1976 as an element of counter-terrorism measures against the violent left-wing groups RAF and *Bewegung 2. Juni* ("2 June Movement"). It was part of a bundle of amendments to the Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure termed "Lex RAF" and has been amended again since (de Graaf 2011: 201-206, Sturm 2006: 333-334).

These legal concepts of violent crime are, however, only one dimension of the discursive dynamics in the media that we can observe in context of the NSU. More important for ascribing social meaning to these acts are the notions of "political

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[2] See press release 32/2012 of the Federal Prosecutor General published on 8 November 2012, URL: http://www.generalbundesanwalt.de/de/showpress.php?heftnr=460&newsid=460 (last accessed 5 October 2016).

violence", "extremism" and "terrorism". The relationship between criminal offenses and these concepts, in particular the relationship between "crime" and "terrorism", has attracted scholars' attention in recent years. In a special issue on criminological theory and terrorism in the journal *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Joshua D. Freilich and Gary LaFree suggest that, despite the fact that acts of terrorism clearly imply the breaking of the law, the contribution of criminologists to the study of terrorism has been limited, while approaches from political science, psychology and economics have dominated the field (Freilich and LaFree 2015: 1). This is an unexpected development considering that the field of "terrorism studies" emerged in the 1970s by building on criminological approaches and many of the early scholarly contributions came from criminologists such as Ronald Crelinsten and Andrew Silke. Since the 1990s, however, terrorism has become more and more defined as an abstract, distinct problem in itself, shifting its focus away from concrete incidents and away from criminology (Silke 2004b: 194-195; Stampnitzky 2013: 88-92). To the extent that the link between "crime" and "terrorism" has been studied, this has therefore been done mostly by juxtaposing them as distinct objects (Mullins 2009: 811). Criminologist Mark Hamm, for example, has examined the criminal activity of terrorist groups, arguing that

> crimes are committed to supply terrorists with money, material, personnel, training, communication systems, safe havens, and travel. Far from being mere accoutrements strapped onto the terrorist's agenda, these crimes are the lifeblood of terrorist groups. (2007: 2)

For terrorist groups, "common crime" such as robberies, illegal arms trade and forgery is thus not an end in itself (as it would be for criminal groups), but *enables* terrorists to

commit other acts in pursuance of their ideological goals (see also Mullins 2009: 815;

Koehler 2017: 61). This connection, Hamm maintains, means that conventional criminal

investigations can be a successful method to detect and prosecute terrorist groups,

especially in light of the fact that "U.S. prosecutors have historically indicted terrorists,

not on terrorism charges, but on criminal charges" (2007: 18; see also Mullins 2009: 812).

Writing from a practitioner's point of view, Longmire and Longmire (2008) consider the

relationship in reverse. They argue that Mexican drug cartels do not only pursue forms of

organised crime, but are also terrorist groups in that they use the same tactics (such as

assassination of government officials, kidnappings and shooting sprees) as groups that

have officially been categorised as terrorists like the Irish Republican Army (IRA), Al-

Qaeda or the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) in order to achieve the same

effect – to intimidate the population and provoke a response from the government –

even if their motivations are different. Their re-categorisation as terrorist groups, so the

authors, would enable the Mexican and US governments to combat this violence and its

consequences more effectively through counter-terrorism policy. Williams (2012)

opposes this argument by focusing on the groups' motives, stating that drug-related

violence in Mexico is a form of "existential violence", a "way of life" and "an end in itself",

rather than political or terroristic (273-275; see also Phillips 2015: 232). Freilich and

LaFree's issue responds to these debates by making a case for the integration of

criminological theories into the study of terrorism. However, it also includes many

conceptual ambiguities, not least because the authors use the terms "terrorism",

"political violence" and "politically motivated violence" interchangeably.

In light of these debates, the next sections discusses the links between four concepts that have been differentiated from "common crime" and figure prominently in media discourses of the NSU: "politically motivated crime", "hate crime", "political violence", "terrorism" and "(right-wing) extremist crime".

**The Relational Nature of Concepts of Violent Crime**

The first key distinction that is often made when it comes to categorising acts of violence, primarily by the police, is whether they are "common crime" or have a political motivation and/or intention. Mouffe (2010: 8-11) tells us that the essence of the "political" is the act of making decisions because establishing a specific social order means to choose between different alternatives. The "political" therefore also implies the construction of power relations (Weber 1948: 78). In a democratic state such as the FRG, decision-making processes are organised in a particular way that transforms antagonisms into agonisms through creating ties between conflicting parties that prevent them from seeing each other as enemies who need to be destroyed, and instead as opponents with legitimate claims. Conflicts are thus accepted as a key element of social life and not as something that continuously questions or threatens to destroy the political community (Mouffe 2010: 29-30, 42-43). The only legitimate form of violence in such a system is the one used by the state in order to defend the democratic social order against forces that threaten the very system of pluralistic democracy, and only as a last resort (Weber 1948: 78; Keane 2004: 2-3, 60).

In the present context, the terms "politically motivated crime" or "political violence", however, refer to acts that are directed *against* such a democratic

understanding of the "political". The former term is used by the German police as a statistical category in opposition to "general crime" (*Allgemeinkriminalität*)[3] and refers to (violent and non-violent) acts whose offender considers him- or herself, or is considered by law enforcement bodies, to have acted with reference to the existing social order (Feldmann, Kopke and Schultz 2013: 344). This definition recognises that categorising violent crime as "politically motivated" may depend on different actors. The concept primarily refers to the targeting of persons (or institutions or objects related to them) because of their political views, nationality, ethnicity, race, skin colour, religion, disability, sexual orientation, etc., based on a feeling or an ideology of superiority. However, such acts may simultaneously be linked to a political (i.e. anti-democratic) intention (e.g. to overcome the democratic political system or influence the democratic decision-making process).

The transition to the category of "hate crime" is therefore fluid. Following Eisenstein (1996), "hate" can be seen as an interactional "politics of otherness", an exclusionary practice that differentiates between the "self" and the "other" and as such operates with a friend-foe-distinction between homogenised groups, rendering impossible a competition between legitimate opponents within a democratic system. Crimes committed based on hate, usually between strangers, therefore express claims to and the existence of specific power relations that can either be supported or sanctioned by the socio-political system (Blee 2004: 101-102; Chakraborti and Garland 2009: 130-131). Since 2015, and in response to the NSU, the German Criminal Code has stated that if

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[3] See the website of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, URL: http://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/Themen/ Sicherheit/Kriminalitaetsbekaempfung/Politisch-motivierte-Kriminalitaet/politisch-motivierte-kriminalitaet_node.html (last accessed 8 October 2016).

a (violent or non-violent) crime is based on a racist (meaning a devaluation of and animosity towards the "foreign"), xenophobic (relating to a general fear of and hence rejection of the "foreign") or otherwise misanthropic motive and/or has such aims, this has an aggravating effect (§46 StGB).[4] The question of whether a distinction should be made between hate crimes committed based on a comprehensive hate-focused ideology (which the category "politically motivated" focuses on) and those that are committed by "ordinary people" based on more latent anti-minority views continues to shape political and academic discourses. This is so because the question touches on judgments about the threat that these crimes pose to the democratic order and social peace (Perry 2005; Kugelmann 2015: 40-43).

In addition, there are a number of criminal acts that the StGB defines as being explicitly directed against the constitutional state and the public order (*Staatsschutzdelikte*). They include the preparation of a serious act of violence that endangers the state (§89a), treason (§94) and the formation of domestic and international terrorist organisations (§129a and §129b). These crimes are always (also) counted as being "politically motivated", even if a distinctive political motivation cannot be established.

The notion of "political violence" is both narrower and broader than "politically motivated crime" as it refers to violent acts only, but suggests that these have both a political motivation *and* intention. Political violence, according to Imbusch (2012: 47),

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[4] On 1 August 2015 §46 StGB was amended to include "racist, xenophobic or otherwise misanthropic" motives and aims. The government thereby responded to the recommendations of the first Federal Parliamentary Enquiry Committee as outlined in their report from August 2013 (see Bundesgesetzblatt 2015: 925).

defines itself through the aim that is to be achieved by the use of violence, which is to gain political power or change established power relations. In this sense it is primarily targeted at the state or a political regime and its representatives at whom the violent acts are directed, but also at specific stigmatised groups and at strangers. Political violence can therefore be understood as an act of destruction, violation or harm whose aims, objects and victims, circumstances, execution and intended effect have a political meaning. Such violence with an ideological background is aimed at changing the behaviour of other persons or institutions or possibly a political, social or economic system with the aim of establishing a new order. (Imbusch 2002: 47)

The notion of political violence, then, is bound to an agent's *intention* to affect the social order in a particular way. Moreover, this intention, Imbusch suggests, is rooted in a specific ideology that is opposed to the valid political, social and economic system. Imbusch defines "political violence" narrowly as sub-state, illegal and illegitimate violence by non-representative minorities. Other authors have adopted a broader definition. Bloxham and Gerwarth (2011), for example, define the term as subsuming "all forms of violence enacted pursuant to aims of decisive socio-political control or change" (2), including intra-state war, genocide, ethnic cleansing and (counter-) revolution (see also Boyle 2012: 527-528). It is, however, the narrow, evaluative definition that remains dominant, with most authors separating "political violence" from war or revolution as types of violent struggle that pursue a change of the social order and are supported by a large number of people within a political community (Rubinstein 1987: 17), even if most supporters do not endorse the use of violence as a political tool and the acts may constitute a break with the existing state's monopoly on violence. The violent campaigns of the IRA in Northern Ireland and the UK as well as ETA in the Basque Country, for example, have often been considered as "revolutionary violence" by those who shared

their aim of gaining independence from the British and Spanish states. The governments of the latter, by contrast, predominantly framed the discourse as one of "terrorism", in order to designate the acts and their agents as inherently illegitimate (English 2009: 62-63, 91-92; Schlesinger 1991: 20-21).

The "terrorism" label has become ubiquitous in political, security and academic discourses. In addition to designating acts of violence that are strategically designed to bring about change of the existing socio-political order and hence existing power relations (Eke and Alali 1991a; Wilkinson 1997: 51-52; Norris, Kern and Just 2003: 6; Hoffman 2010: 616), scholars emphasise that terrorism is the use of violence with the intention to produce "terror or fear among a directly threatened group and also a wider implied audience in the hope of maximizing political communication and achievement" (English 2009: 24; see also Wilkinson 1997: 53, Picard 1993: 13; Schmid and Jongman 1988: 19-21). That is, actors provoke "feelings of dread and anticipation *before* a horrifying experience occurs" (Fine 2010: 279, original emphasis) by using violence in an unpredictable manner. They target a specific social group whose status in society they want to change (e.g. politicians, bankers, military personnel, etc.) in order to achieve a response from the government. This implies that terrorism is *pars pro toto* violence in that a victim functions as a *symbolic* representative of a specific social group and/or society as a whole (Schmid and Jongman 1988: 7). There needs to be a certain degree of identification between the individual, the social group that the perpetrators target and the wider society – what English terms "symbolic strangers" (2009: 31) – in order for terrorisation to work because it makes clear that "only coincidence, fate, timing, or happenstance places that particular member in the hands of the terrorists at that time. It

could have been *my-self*, the symbol says." (Lule 1991: 108, original emphasis) If the targets are representatives of a specific minority, e.g. homosexuals, Muslims or non-whites, based on hatred or prejudices, terrorist acts can also constitute hate crimes (Hamm 1993: 7; Levin 2006: 42, 57; Mullins 2009: 816).

According to English (2009: 5-7), however, one should differentiate between "terrorist violence" specifically and "terrorising violence" more broadly, because although "terror" is essential to "terrorism", the provocation of fear can be employed as a tool in other "types of violent struggle" such as war. Perry and Alvi (2011) have also argued that acts specifically designated as "hate crimes" do not only victimise individuals, but intimidate the victim's social group, usually "vulnerable communities" such as people of Jewish and Muslim faith or gay and transgender people, thereby sending a message to that group. Moreover, since these communities should receive particular protection from democratic states, their victimisation "throws into question not only the victim's and the community's identity, but also national commitments to tolerance and inclusion" (Perry and Alvi 2011: 59). Nevertheless, Koehler (2017: 57-59) claims with reference to right-wing extremist actors that a distinction should be made between "hate crimes" and acts of "terrorism" because the former focuses on the *effects* that the violence has on the victim group, whereas the latter implies a distinct political *intention*. Using the two terms interchangeably would result in an under-reporting of both types of violence and consequently to a wrong threat analysis. It is also worth considering that a terrorising effect might equally be achieved not because the perpetrator sends a "message" to groups or society as a whole by using violence as a tool, but because s/he enjoys the feelings of power and media attention attached to his or her violence. This applies, for

instance, to many cases of serial murder (Fox and Levin 1998: 415). Violence may thus also be used strategically to achieve non-political goals, e.g. attention or money (Levin 2006).

As indicated above, the label "terrorism" has become increasingly detached from the study of "political violence" (Boyle 2012: 529). It is predominantly used, implicitly or explicitly, to designate violence that is perceived as illegitimate and unjustifiable and tends to be associated with irrational and "evil" perpetrators and enemies of the state (Zulaika and Douglass 1996: 23, 45-46; Picard 1993: 3; Ranstorp 2009: 21; Horgan and Boyle 2008: 56; Stampnitzky 2013: 4, 50-53). The label thus continues to be "charged with emotion and horror", provoking "extreme perceptions in almost all who consider and think about it; perceptions which spill easily into beliefs about the actors behind the violence" (Silke 2004a: 2, 19; English 2009: 4-7). As Jürgen Habermas already pointed out in the 1970s with regards to the then active West German RAF, the notion of terrorism as enemies' violence is problematic for democratic states because their constitution only allows them to respond to legitimate political opponents in the context of non-violent conflict resolution. Violent actors would therefore need to be treated as criminals under the law in order to demonstrate the state's authority (Habermas 1978: 81; Katzenstein 1993: 269).

Moreover, since the 1990s, and reinforced by the events of 11 September 2001 (Croft and Moore 2010: 831), we have seen the pitting of "new terrorisms" against "old terrorisms". This distinction suggests that there are two types of terrorism, with the latter being, in fact, "rational, goal-oriented, and understandable" (Stampnitzky 2013: 158) and the former describing "a new type of terrorist, extraordinarily irrational in both goals and

actions, and prone to committing unprecedented levels of violence" (140; Spencer 2010: 9-15). "Right-wing terrorism", a term that is key to the NSU discourse after November 2011, has been considered one of these "new terrorisms" by some authors (Crenshaw 2007). Koehler's recent definition, however, does not follow this notion of irrationality. He sees right-wing terrorism realised in

> 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. (Koehler 2017: 64)

From this perspective, a specific combination of elements such as method, ideology, intention and strategy separates "right-wing terrorism" from other forms of political violence. The author, however, does not apply this definition to the case of the NSU. In general, experts in "right-wing terrorism" have emerged from within the fields of right-wing extremism and hate crime studies and have remained much closer to these fields than "terrorism studies" to the extent that their focus continues to be on domestic cases, democratic contexts and the connections between extremist violent groups, non-violent movements and parties. This is also reflected in how the NSU has been approached so far as discussed in chapter 1. By contrast, "Islamic terrorism" as another type of "new terrorism" emerged as an entirely new subject area (Stampnitzky 2013: 146-148), leading to the development of further concepts and research topics such as "home-grown terrorism" and "suicide terrorism". While the intentions of "new terrorists" are also defined as being in opposition to the existing socio-political system, their violence has

been considered as unproductive, irrational and (hence) unable to effect any social change. Observers would therefore struggle to understand the motives (ideological basis) of "new terrorists" (Stampnitzky 2013: 152-153) – an approach that is also taken by the German print news media in response to the NSU after November 2011 as I shall show in chapter 6.

The highly contested notion of "extremism" complicates matters further, but is implicated in several of the points raised above. Jesse (2009: 14) suggests that it is simply the opposite pole of the "democratic constitutional state". Pfafferott (2012) elaborates on this by stating that extremism can be defined *ex negativo* as an antagonistic force against the normative basis of the democratic state of law, including human rights, sovereignty of the people, division of power, government responsibility, administrative legitimacy, independence of the courts, a multiple party system with equal opportunities for all parties and the right to form an opposition. *Ex positivo*, the author argues, it can be characterised as being based on an absolute claim to truth and the prerogative of interpretation of the elite, the idea that a willingness to compromise is a sign of weakness, clear friend-foe-distinctions, and a deterministic conception of history (Pfafferott 2012: 166-168). "Extremism" is thus an umbrella term for the views, behaviours and actions of individuals, parties and movements (Mudde 1995: 204). It can be both organised and non-organised, violent and non-violent, "hard" and "soft", depending on how many elements of the democratic constitutional state are being questioned, how many elements of coherent ideologies are adopted, whether the cooperation with violent sub-cultures is accepted or rejected, whether a system change is

proposed or not, and whether a party has more or less (powerful) anti-democratic members (Jesse 2009: 14-18).

While "extremism" therefore does not only refer to comprehensive political ideologies, it is this dimension that is predominantly associated with the term. The key difference between left-wing and right-wing extremism, according to Pfafferott (2012: 169), are their different approaches to questions of inequality: the former considers inequality as absolutely artificial and pursues its total eradication while oppressing the autonomy and emancipation of the individual. The latter, as indicated above with regards to the definition of "right-wing terrorism", sees inequality as natural and worth preserving in the form of social hierarchies. "Right-wing extremism" is an umbrella term for various, often overlapping ideologies of inequality. White Supremacism, for example, ascribes an absolute superiority to white people, defined as a race in opposition to, in particular, people of colour and Jews. Neo-Nazism, subsumed under white supremacism by some authors, but seen as an overarching concept by others, glorifies historical National Socialism and focuses on the idea of the *Volksgemeinschaft* (people's community). McGowan, writing in context of the NSU case, thus sees Neo-Nazism defined through a specific approach to the concept of national identity because it is

> based upon the idea of a *Volksgemeinschaft* (national community) [which] […] excludes 'others', most notably immigrants[,] and it opposes all efforts at fostering multiculturalism which the neo-Nazi ideology equates to the genocide (*Volkstod*) of the German people. (2014: 200, original emphasis).

"(Right-wing) extremist crimes", then, are committed based on an extremist ideology (e.g. Nationalism, Racism, Communism, Neo-Nazism) or specific extremist views (e.g.

xenophobia, Anti-Semitism, Social Darwinism). They may or may not be violent, and can (but do not have to) be connected to the goal of changing the socio-political order. Parkin and Freilich (2015), for example, have considered ideologically and non-ideologically motivated homicides by American far-rightists, counting acts as ideologically motivated if

> the offender committed the homicide to further their extremist far-Right ideology. Evidence of this nature could include an offender espousing that the targeting of a minority victim was to provoke a race war between Whites and minorities or that the assassination of a police officer was to further their anti-government stance. (Parkin and Freilich 2015: 191)

This approach puts a strong emphasis on what the offender him- or herself considers to have been their motivation, rather than what the circumstances of the crime themselves or witnesses' interpretations suggest. Moreover, the authors actually seem to be referring to the offender's intention – the use of violence as a means, for instance, to provoke a "race war" – rather than merely his or her motivation ("far-right ideology"), and further support this by applying the label "terrorist" to this kind of homicide. It is, moreover, worth noting that violent crimes may be motivated by an idea of some lives being worth less than others without being based on a political ideology. This applies, for example, to many cases of serial homicide, hence the disproportional victimisation of prostitutes (Haggerty 2009: 180).

In summary, the different concepts of violent crime discussed above depend on how the relationship between the offender's motives, intentions, ideology, target selection and communicative strategies as well as the effects of his or her violent acts on the victims and the wider society, is conceptualised. The interpretation of an act of

violent crime as "political violence", "hate crime", "terrorism" or "right-wing extremist crime" therefore reveals the construction of specific relations between offenders, victims, society and the state.

**Interpreting Violent Crime: The News Media and Collective Identities**

As has become clear, meaning is ascribed to acts of violent crime not only by offenders themselves, but also by various audiences, including law enforcement authorities, the media and scholars. In the introduction to their special issue Freilich and LaFree point to the close connection between the police' categorisation of violent crime and the availability of empirical data for research purposes:

> […] [T]errorist acts often cut across several more common types of criminal categories. Thus, an assassination might be included in police data as a homicide but not as terrorism while destruction of a building might be included in a police report as arson but not as terrorism. (2015: 4).

Violent crimes such as arson and homicide, with "assassination" referring specifically to the targeted killing of a public figure (Imbusch 2002: 27), may or may not be defined as "terrorism", depending on what assumptions are made about the perpetrator's motives and intentions based on their own statements, witness testimonies and circumstances of the crime. How violent realities are constructed depends on the answers that audiences give to such interpretative questions. This section first addresses the issue of categorising acts of violent crime for the purpose of producing statistics and constructing databases, before turning to violent crime as an act of communication and the news media's role more specifically. This is important because many statistics and databases draw on news

media reports as a data source, while the media themselves often make use of such data when telling stories of violent crime. Moreover, as indicated in chapter 1, the discovery of the NSU led to a re-consideration of how acts of violent crime are classified by law enforcement authorities.

Collecting Data on Violent Crime

In July 2016 the *Guardian* published a news report with the title "'Terrorism Threat is Waning': Figures Put Europe's Summer of Violence in Context". It suggests that the violent attacks in Nice, Normandy and Munich that month did not signal a rise in acts of "terrorism" in Western Europe where, according to the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), the numbers of fatal victims of terrorism had actually decreased since the early 1990s, in contrast to many other parts of the world. The article quotes a university professor from the University of Bath as saying that "we" (Western Europeans) assess violent attacks differently depending on who the perpetrators (our "allies" or our "enemies") and the victims are. It suggests that the database can help to correct such perceptions.[5]

The US-based GTD provides information on world-wide terrorism events, both domestic and international, for the period 1970-2015 and includes the NSU murders and bombings. It is based on other general databases and open sources, in particular the news media. The authors concede that relying on news reports means that their selection is biased towards those acts of violent crime that the media consider to be newsworthy, which might not apply to unsuccessful attacks or events in remote parts of the world. This

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[5] *The Guardian*, "'Terrorism Threat Is Waning': Figures Put Europe's Summer of Violence in Context", 28 July 2016, URL: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/28/there-is-less-of-a-terrorism-threat-now-experts-put-europes-summer-of-violence-in-context (last accessed 12 October 2016).

type of source would also often not provide information about the offenders, but their motives and intentions would be key to categorising an act of violent crime as "terrorist" (LaFree and Dugan 2007: 188). Another example from the US context is the US Extremist Crime Database (ECDB). It collects relational, open source data on violent and financial crimes committed within the US by perpetrators who hold an extremist (right-wing, Islamist or environmentalist) ideology, though the crimes themselves do not need to have been motivated by that ideology (Freilich et al. 2014). The collectors therefore do not focus on whether events can be defined as "terrorism", but on extremist identities (2014: 374). Media reports are an important data source in this case as well.

As regards data on right-wing extremist violence and terrorism in the German context, the collection of the long-term journalistic investigation project "156 fates", first published in September 2010 and last updated in June 2015, is worth considering. Its authors have compiled a list of cases of "right-wing" or "right-wing motivated" violence with fatal victims since German reunification on 3 October 1990, including the ten murders presumably committed by the NSU. They base their selection on information about the perpetrator's motivation gathered from local news articles among other material (Jansen et al. 2010). An offender's motivation may relate to some type of right-wing extremist ideology or specific right-wing extremist views, and he or she may or may not be a member of a right-wing extremist group, movement or party. The authors emphasise that these incidents are not "normal" violent crimes, but were committed against people "because they were different".

In a similar but more comprehensive project, Ravndal (2016) has recently compiled a new dataset of right-wing terrorism and violence ("RTV") in Europe. It

comprises 578 planned and carried out acts of (near) lethal violent crime in seven Western European countries between 1990 and 2015 and is also based on publicly available sources, including media reports. Ravndal points out that the official figures provided by institutions such as EUROPOL, the European Union's law enforcement agency, are unlikely to reflect the actual number of right-wing terrorist acts because governments either do not register them at all or categorise them as something else, e.g. "hate crimes" (2016: 3). His own collection is based in particular on two criteria, namely that the target selection was made based on "right-wing beliefs" (which he also defines as "ideas promoting social inequality") and that the act is severe (e.g. lethal and use of deadly weapons). Acts "unmistakably qualify" as terrorism if they are pre-mediated and target a victim in order to influence a wider audience, although he acknowledges that the boundary between acts of right-wing violence and right-wing terrorism is blurred (Ravndal 2016: 5-6, 13). He includes the NSU murders and bombings, citing the corresponding German Wikipedia entry and Koehler's recent volume on the history of right-wing terrorism in Germany (2017) as sources.[6]

Koehler's historical account itself is based on a self-compiled database ("DTG$^{rwx}$") of actors as well as planned, carried out and failed acts of right-wing terrorism in post-WWII Germany, drawing again on news articles in addition to other material (2014: 49-50; 2017: 7-13). Similar to the ECDB, Koehler differentiates between *criminal* and *terrorist* acts committed by right-wing extremists, counting the NSU murders and bombings among the latter (2017: 129-130). He only includes acts that the sources clearly identify

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[6] The dataset is available from the website of the *Centre for Research on Extremism* at the University of Oslo, URL: https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/rtv-dataset/rtv-dataset.html (last accessed 9 October 2016).

as having been committed by a right-wing extremist perpetrator with a right-wing extremist motive *and* intention, acknowledging that deducing this information about a specific act is not always possible (2014: 50-51).

All of the authors above thus consider the difficulties connected to the construction of databases of violent crime and terrorism. Yet, they reflect little on how the different audiences whose interpretations they draw on interpret acts of violent crime in the first place, and how and why these interpretations might change over time, as is the case with the NSU. The remainder of this section addresses this issue by discussing the existing literature on the (print) news media's role for communicating violent crime and how this process may be related to the negotiation of collective identities.

The Communicative Dimension of Violent Crime

How are acts of violent crime interpreted? Heitmeyer and Hagan (2002: 17) state that processing violence (and crime) "seems to depend on the respective historical, *zeitgeistige* [related to the spirit of the times], political and cultural interpretations of perpetrators, victims and audiences." (my emphasis) Depending on who interprets a specific act of violence and in what context, assessments of its legitimacy and legality, the innocence of the victims and justifiability of the perpetrator's motives and intentions will differ. Or, as Schlesinger (1991: 2) puts it, "the interpretation of violence may work as a way of codifying the world into 'friends' and 'enemies', of separating 'us' from 'them', the 'national' from the 'foreign'." Contrary to what many authors have suggested (e.g. Koehler 2017: 54), no act of violent crime is "self-explanatory", but requires a process of

interpretation: it has a communicative dimension. This idea has predominantly been associated with the notion of "terrorism". According to Alex Schmid and Janny de Graaf's influential 1982 volume on insurgent terrorism and the western news media (covering the period 1968 to 1979), violent crime in a terroristic sense

> can best be understood as a violent communication strategy. There is a sender, the terrorist, a message generator, the victim, and a receiver, the enemy and/or the public. The nature of the terrorist act, its atrocity, its location and the identity of its victim serve as generators for the power of the message. Violence, to become terroristic, requires witnesses (1982: 15).

According to the authors, terrorism as a socio-political phenomenon – in contrast to others such as serial murder or organised drug trade – only exists to the extent that it is perceived by audiences as such, based on messages generated through violent action and disseminated by the media (see also Zulaika and Douglass 1996: 21; Spencer 2010: 5; Frindte et al. 2011: 12). Tuman, adopting one of Stuart Hall's key concepts (2006 [1980]), speaks of the "encoding" of messages in the violent activity itself by the "terrorist" as a sender and their decoding by the target audience as receiver, "relying on the methods and tools it has for constructing its own sense of reality" (2010: 32). Moreover, he claims that "because the impact of terrorist violence and destruction reaches more than the immediate targeted victims […], what we call terrorism is different and distinct from murder, assault, arson, destruction of property, or the threat of the same" (Tuman 2010: xiii). What he means is that defining an act of violence as "terrorism" assigns a specific social meaning to these offences that is different from the one attached to other types of violent crime because it describes a particular relationship between perpetrator(s),

victim(s) and society – one that is not simply a function of the latter's interest in preserving the social order by punishing breaches of the law, but one that depends on the use of the victim (and/or other elements, e.g. a specific weapon or location) as a symbol (Tuman 2010: 72; see also Zulaika and Douglass 1996: 102-103). However, as indicated above, the question of whether perpetrators' intention or the effect that their violence has on victims are more relevant for defining specific acts as, for example, "terrorism" or "hate crime" is still debated among scholars. Koehler (2017), for example, clearly focuses on the perpetrators' intentions, arguing that this is what defines "the nature of right-wing crimes" (59). He does not make clear, however, what the relationship between the NSU's intentions and audiences' interpretations of its acts of violent crime is.

Violent Crime and the News Media

The news media occupy a specific role in this communicative process because they establish relations between perpetrators, victims and society through their coverage *and* make their interpretations available for appropriation by their audiences (Norris, Kern and Just 2003: 9). Violence and crime are dominant themes in the media because they attract readers' interest and support the upholding of normative boundaries by identifying those who fall outside of them (Bates 1999: 24; Innes 2003a: 55). The literature has therefore looked in particular at how the news media construct different forms of violent crime as social problems and how they contribute to an increased fear of criminal victimisation (see e.g. Heath and Gilbert 1996; Potter 1999; Best 1999; Potter and Kappeler 2006).

Media coverage of terrorism is much less dominant than general crime reporting and driven by key events, also and in particular in Germany (Henn and Vowe 2015). Nevertheless, scholars have focused on the relationship between the media and terrorism, based on the assumption that those who employ violence in a terroristic way are, like the news media themselves, interested in reaching a mass audience (Viera 1991: 74). In the orthodox view, the media are terrorists' main "method of diffusion" (Eke and Alali 1991b) or even their "weapon", as Pfefferbaum suggests (2003: 177). They have a symbiotic relationship (Wilkinson 1997: 54) that may even have a contagious effect because giving terrorists a platform could promote the use of violence as a political tool (Dowling 1986; Picard 1991b and 1991b; Schlesinger 1991: 25-26). Since these actors do not intend to and cannot achieve a military victory with (usually) small-scale acts of violence, they need to use violence rhetorically (Dowling 1986: 13; Picard 1991a: 42; Picard 1993: 4; Tuman 2010). While the communication between actors identified as "terrorists" and audiences is much less mediated these days due to the use of online channels such as social networks, own websites and online magazines (Elter 2008: 71), the work of journalists remains crucial as they reach broader audiences and identify acts of violent crime as acts of communication in the first place.

Publicity is thus key to the notion of terrorism. As Gerrits (1992) writes: "The amount of publicity, especially mass media publicity that terrorists manage to achieve with their deeds will often be seen as the criterion for the success or failure of an action" (31). Already in 1978 terrorism studies pioneer Walter Laqueur had claimed that "the terrorist act by itself is next to nothing, whereas publicity is all. ... The real danger facing the terrorist is that of being ignored" (Laqueur, quoted in Dowling 1986: 14). This

approach differentiates between acts of violent crime on the one hand and acts of publicity that communicate messages contained by them on the other hand as two necessary conditions for evoking the terrorism label, based on the idea that violence by itself is unable to achieve a sufficient communicative effect as its meaning is not self-evident but subject to interpretive processes by various audiences. In their most elaborate form, these acts of publicity are (written) claims of responsibility, which connect the act of violent crime in question to a specific perpetrator and his or her motives and intentions, thereby making it easier for audiences to make sense of the act (Davis 2013: 140). The West German RAF, for example, publicised long texts to explain and justify their acts. These claims convey the "message" of a violent act, while the news media, so the argument, respond by reporting the violent event itself *and* transporting this message, including its terrorising effect (Dowling 1986; Eke and Alali 1991a; Picard 1993; Wilkinson 1997). They also increase the propagandistic effect (Koehler 2014: 56) and enable the perpetrators to gain supporters by linking themselves clearly to these acts (Hoffman 2010).

The prominent notion of "propaganda of the deed", by contrast, suggests that an act of violent crime itself can have a symbolic value that helps to distribute a perpetrator's "message" effectively to audiences – referring primarily to the news media, but also to potential supporters. Most authors nevertheless see the propaganda of the deed as complementing, rather than replacing claims of responsibility (Elter 2008: 70-71). However, there has been a considerable rise in the number of acts that are labelled "terrorism" in absence of any claims of responsibility and an identification of the perpetrators, rendering the media's interpretations more influential. As Davis (2013: 146)

observes, this increases the likelihood that the media define these terroristic events as "criminal" rather than "political", unless they are staged, large-scale events, in particular bombings (Eid 2014: 847; Hoffman 1997; Wilkinson 1997: 53).

"Right-wing terrorism" in particular has been linked to a notorious absence of claims of responsibility. To the extent that such claims exist, they "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." (Koehler 2017: 179) This has resulted in a discussion about whether right-wing extremists can be "terrorists" at all since there would be no intention to communicate a "political message". Koehler (2017: 21, 66), however, has argued that "right-wing terrorists" seek to challenge the state's legitimacy through small-scale acts of violence over an extended period of time and therefore try to reduce the risk of being detected by not issuing claims of responsibility. This is in contradiction to the fact that, as mentioned earlier, his data suggest that most right-wing terrorist actors are active for less than a year (178).

The news media tend to apply the label "terrorism", as indicated earlier, to acts of violent crime that they perceive to be directed against the "basic norms and values of the dominant order" which they generally support and promote (Picard 1991a: 42; Picard 1993: 24; Altheide 2009: 158-159). This implies the definition of perpetrators as "not operat[ing] within acceptable parameters of national society" (Picard 1991a: 42), as "playing outside the rules, without honor, attacking the innocent and weak, who cannot defend themselves" (Tuman 2010: 57). Labelling an act of violent crime "terrorism" has thus come to be connected to a process of opposition-building between an "us" (the

news media and the society they claim to represent) that needs to be defended and a "them" (the perpetrators and their in-groups) that needs to be responded to with "adequate policies and counter-measures" (Wilkinson 1997: 60; Zulaika and Douglass 1996: 13; English 2009: 19).

That the media employ the terrorism label in a selective and evaluative manner has also been shown empirically. A study of US newsmagazines by Simmons (1991), for instance, found that the application of the label "terrorism" is causally connected to perceptions of the victims' identity: If US citizens were involved, the media tended to label the acts as "terroristic" much more often. The author concludes that "the media are greatly swayed by the involvement of U.S. citizens in terrorism" (Simmons 1991: 32). Debatin (2002) has shown that media discourses in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks differentiated strictly between innocent victims who worked at one of the symbols of US financial power and "evil terrorists" who attacked the country and its people. A study of the coverage of terroristic incidents within the US in the *New York Times* between 1980 and 10 September 2001 by Chermak and Gruenewald (2006) also confirms that violent events are most likely to be reported as "terrorism" if they are severe, have long-lasting effects and a potential for policy-making, and are committed in the northeast of the country, reflecting a location bias. Among the very few qualitative studies on media coverage of "terrorism" in Germany, Spencer's (2010) examination of the *BILD*'s construction of "new terrorists" between 2001 and 2005 is worth mentioning. He argues that the paper used "conceptual metaphors" to make sense of terrorism – describing it as war, crime, disease, something natural or uncivilised and evil – and that these metaphors had an impact on Germany's military, judicial, disaster management and

immigration policy responses (see also Spencer 2012). This, again, points to the fact that concepts of violent crime relate closely to each other. But the question remains: how can the media's role in creating and communicating certain phenomena of violent crime, in particular over extended periods of time, be analysed and explained?

Violent Crime and the Narrative Approach

Throughout the 1980s and for much of the 1990s scholars conceptualised the news media as a biased actor that would distort "terrorist realities". Even scholars who consider "terrorism" as a discourse sometimes tend to reify the term. This includes Zulaika and Douglass who speak of "brute facts in their speechless horror" as "the very substance of serious terrorism discourse" and identify an "inescapable complicity between fact and fiction in terrorism discourse" (1996: 4-5). The narrative turn in the social sciences (Kreiswirth 1992), however, has made popular the idea that human beings – including researchers and journalists – cannot conceive of events, including violent ones, without narrating them (Polkinghorne 1988). That is, "assassination", "terrorism" etc. only exist in the form of stories that are inextricably linked to narrators' identities, potentially resulting in different stories about the same events. This research strand, I suggest, can be developed further by examining the NSU case.

Brownstein (2000), based on personal stories in addition to other material, has shown that violence, and violent crime more specifically, are socially constructed notions and hence what counts as violence or violent crime within a society changes over time. Perry and Alvi's study of personal stories of members of communities affected by hate

crime also confirms that the very categorisation of an act of (violent) crime as "hate crime" implies the construction of the perpetrator's relationship to his or her peer group, the relationship between the perpetrator, his or her victim and the victim's community, and the location of both of these relationships within the broader community, "who are reminded of the appropriate alignment of 'us' and 'them'" (2011: 61). Moore (2010) has considered war as a hermeneutical problem, arguing that violent actors tell different stories and that these stories matter, regardless of what other "reality" exists or not (2-3, 16). Cobb (2013) makes extensive use of the work of key narrative theorists, including Paul Ricœur and Mikhail Bakhtin, to make an argument about how conflicts are produced, sustained and overcome through processes of story-telling that defy their neat categorisation as local or international.

As indicated in chapter 1, narrative criminologists have recently begun to explore how offenders create their own criminal selves through processes of story-telling, drawing on the works of cultural criminologists and their focus on the "foreground", the creative dimension, of offending (Presser 2012: 7; Presser and Sandberg 2015: 13). This endeavour is based on the insight that "[g]ood and bad, crime and justice, deviance and punishment […] are, at heart, narrative concepts, belonging only and always to the field of stories and story-telling" (Maruna 2015: viii). According to Sandberg (2010: 455), offenders' stories draw on limited narrative resources such as memories and tropes, and therefore "tell us something important about values, identities, cultures, and communities" in relation to individuals' criminal behaviour. Specifically, he maintains that "exceptional forms of crime, such as school shootings, serial murders or terrorism, emerge from an established repertoire of stories that motivate harmful acts" because

"[o]ffenders enact familiar stories and strive to make their lives similar to life-stories they are intrigued by" (Sandberg 2016: 159). Plots – the organisation of events in time and space that forms the core of any narrative – are, as Presser and Sandberg (2015: 3) suggest, subject to change over time, while the process of story-telling also depends on the audience and the purposes it serves. Presser herself (2012), for example, has studied how Jim David Adkisson's self-stories of personal hardship in combination with those of "America's ruin" promoted by US liberals as "terrorists' allies" animated and later justified his shooting spree at a church in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 2008 which he himself termed a "hate crime", a "symbolic killing" and "an act of political protest" (12-13). In another piece, Sandberg (2013) considers a specific case of violent crime that has been labelled "terrorism", the bombing and shooting committed by Anders Behring Breivik in Oslo in July 2011. The author argues that the offender's rationale as found in his "Manifesto", written before the attacks as a kind of self-narrative, can help us understand his actions because self-narratives constitute "agency conditioned by culture and context" and "attempts at coherency and unity drawing on a wide variety of cultural narratives and discourses" (80-81). In asking why acts of crime are committed, narrative criminologists approach perpetrators' motives and intentions as recounted phenomena that are impacted upon by changing contexts, rather than as something that is conditioned by specific factors, e.g. psyche, socialisation, gender, race, etc., although all of these, as Presser points out, play into processes of story-telling (Presser 2012: 5; Sandberg 2016: 156).

These considerations regarding offenders' stories can also be applied to other narrators of violent crime. Law-enforcement agencies, eye witnesses or the media also

create their stories by drawing on limited narrative resources, in particular tropes that indicate the existence of "backstories", and consider their effect on other audiences, thereby providing insights into dominant values and identities. Narrative criminologists maintain that their discipline is not only concerned with how stories instigate, sustain or effect desistance from harmful action, but also how audiences, including the news media, use them to make sense of harm (Presser and Sandberg 2015: 1; Presser 2009: 178). However, so far these scholars have not explored this second dimension empirically, although there is a clear link to other disciplines, e.g. terrorism studies. According to Bhatia (2009: 281), for example, "terrorism" needs to be seen as "a socio-political phenomenon, an illusive [*sic*] and narrative construct, which is difficult to define objectively and universally; it is largely […] context-based" because it is the result of the interaction between offenders', victims', witnesses' and other audiences' stories. Consequently, "discourses of terrorism are constant sites of struggle" (Bhatia 2009: 287; Altheide 2009: ix). That terrorism is a narrative construct and that different actors struggle for their story to be heard, has been shown in several studies, in particular in the context of Islamist terrorism. Croft and Moore (2010), for example, have considered different narratives of threat that developed in the UK after 11 September 2001 (Al-Qaeda as a central, network, home-grown or apocalyptic threat) and that made it difficult to respond with a coherent counterterrorism narrative. Leuprecht et al. (2010) have argued that Global Jihad is built on a meta-narrative that consists of narratives of the evils, moral double standards, infidels and crusader tactics of Western democracies. Since these narratives are espoused by different audiences, counter-narratives would need to be designed with these specific audiences in mind. Neither of these two articles, however,

define what exactly they mean by "narrative". Another example is Collins' (2014) analysis of news media stories of two incidents of random public shootings in the US in December 2012. She finds that a "commemorative" and a "gun control" news frame compete with each other, but that these have become so conventional for public shootings that audiences' expectations are met, thereby preventing political change. While she speaks of "narrative strategies"" and "narrative patterns", she does not define what a news media story is and ultimately draws on framing and classical rhetorical theory. Jarvis (2009) has examined "narratives of temporality" in context of the post-9/11 "War on Terror", arguing that "specific writings of time […] were absolutely central to the perceived coherence, necessity and legitimacy of the Bush administration's new War on Terror" (2), a conflict that had to be "sold" to the public by "writing urgency into [it]" (14). He makes reference to Ernesto Laclau's discourse theory and Paul Ricœur's work, but approaches "time" as a discursive theme within the "War on Terror" discourse rather than a discursive feature itself and also uses "narratives" as equivalent to "frames".

While the integration of the narrative approach into the study of crime, political violence and terrorism over the past fifteen years has thus helped to emphasise the context-dependent and relational nature of these phenomena, scholars have used the notions of "story" and "narrative" very unevenly, often employing them as mere synonyms for "frames" or "discourses". However, scholars of violence and crime have recently begun to engage in greater detail with narrative theories originating in hermeneutic philosophy and literary studies, in particular in the discipline of criminology. The NSU as a narrative puzzle is built on and simultaneously provides an opportunity to develop further the key idea that acts of violent crime are recounted phenomena by

studying the role of journalists as story-tellers who draw on limited narrative resources and thereby give insights into the narrator's values and (collective) identity, as suggested by narrative criminologists.

Violent Crime and Germanness

In the context of the NSU, the repertoire of cultural stories that is available to the print news media for making sense of acts of violent crime and simultaneously subject to negotiation through this narrative process can be grasped, I suggest, by the term "Germanness". Scholars have used the term as an equivalent for "German identity" or to describe dynamic notions and practices of "being German" or "belonging to the Germans", referring to the latter as a people (*Volk*), a culture or a political community (Koopmanns 1999: 630; Pautz 2005: 45-46; O'Donnell, Bridenthal and Reagin 2005: 4; Foroutan 2013). I combine these approaches and define Germanness as the inventory of stories of *what* counts as "being German" and *who* belongs to the "Germans" in today's Federal Republic, implying discursive processes of in- and exclusion.

The construction of collective identities through news media discourses has been studied in depth. However, an approach that sees it as a performative, everyday process in which both the media and national audiences, including minority communities, contribute to and challenge patterns of inclusion/exclusion and sameness/difference has become dominant only in recent years (see e.g. Yumul and Özkırımlı 2000; Edensor 2002; Madianou 2005; Ashuri 2010; Sheyholislami 2011), building on Billig's concept of "banal nationalism" (Billig 1995). The media's role in the construction of collective identities has

also been studied in the context of violent conflicts, including civil and inter-state war (Allen and Seaton 1999), domestic violence (Berns 2009), separatism such as that of the IRA in Northern Ireland (Rolsten 1991), the US' "War on Terror" (Hutcheson et al. 2004), and domestic terrorism. With regards to the RAF in West Germany, for example, Balz (2007) has studied how the discourse about RAF terrorism in the 1970s was, first and foremost, a communication process about social values that ultimately had the effect of limiting the pluralistic character of (West) German society, based on clearly drawn "us vs. them" distinctions during a time of crisis. In a similar vein, Bielby (2012) establishes a link between discourses of violent women in the 1960s and 1970s and ideas of the (West) German nation, combining gender and nation as two interdependent notions in need of constant performance. While all of these studies point to the role that the news media play for connecting discourses of violence with notions of collective identity, there are currently no studies available that consider how national identities are constructed through everyday news media discourses of (small-scale) violent crime. I address this gap in the literature by approaching the NSU and its violent crimes from a narrative perspective.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has illustrated three main points: first, academic, political and legal discourses differentiate between "common crime" and other, more specific forms of violent deviance such as "politically motivated violence", "hate crime", "extremist crime" and "terrorism", whose concepts, however, strongly overlap. I also showed that the

conceptual debates associated with these terms influence the construction of open-source national and international databases on (extremist) crime and terrorism. These databases rely, amongst other sources, on media interpretations of violent crime, while the media in turn make use of these databases to tell their own stories. Secondly, I suggested that (institutionalised) processes of interpreting and categorising acts of violent crime are complex because they are context-dependent and relational, with audiences making assumptions about the offender's motives and intentions, his or her relationship to the victim, the victim's identity and how the offender-victim-relationship relates to the society in which the act is committed. Thirdly, I argued that the construction of these relationships both reflects and develops notions of collective identity, specifically notions of Germanness. In order to bring all of these dimensions together, I develop an integrative framework for analysing the negotiation of Germanness through long-term processes of narrating violent crime in the (print) news media in the next chapter. I do so by combining Paul Ricœur's textual hermeneutics with insights from media and journalism studies as well as (narrative) criminology.

# CHAPTER 3

# ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK: FROM PAUL RICŒUR'S TEXTUAL HERMENEUTICS TO NARRATIVE DISCOURSES OF VIOLENT CRIME IN THE PRINT NEWS MEDIA

**Introduction**

The preceding discussion revealed that there is currently no comprehensive theoretical framework that integrates the complex relationships between everyday narrative discourses of violent crime, the (print) news media and national identities. In this chapter I develop such a framework. It informs the discussion of the dynamics observable in the NSU case in chapters 4-7 by bringing together the notion of (violently criminal) action and the terms "narrative discourse", "story", "text", "time" and "identity" in the context of the news media, integrating both theoretical and methodological aspects of my study of the NSU as a narrative puzzle.

My discussion is guided by the expansive and rich work of Paul Ricœur (1913-2005), the most important contemporary philosopher of hermeneutics besides Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) (Mattern 1996: 7). Ricœur's work is especially pertinent in this context because he develops an integrative and innovative approach to the complex relations between texts, narrative and identity. In combination with insights from scholarship in the fields of (narrative) criminology, literary and media studies as well as the broader field of narrative studies, it provides a suitable approach for analysing the empirical material and exploring the role of journalists as story-tellers of violent crime. I refer to Ricœur's work without claiming to provide a comprehensive account of his philosophy. Instead, I adapt his thoughts, as well as other scholars' research that has built

upon it, to develop a framework for analysing the dynamics of narrating violent crime in the print news media.

Deriving the analytical framework for this interdisciplinary research project from Ricœur's work on the hermeneutical process is particularly fruitful because, as John B. Thompson writes, Ricœur's

> thought is not constrained by the dictates of an orthodox position or by boundaries of an established discipline. […] Ricœur is a philosopher in the classical sense, a thinker who turns his attention to diverse domains and who expresses his views on issues which are of social and political as well as intellectual concern. (1981: 26)

His thoughts therefore transcend disciplinary boundaries and are guided by the philosophical and social problems he addresses: the relationship between the Self and the "Other", the efficacy of texts in societies, and the essential function of story-telling for human lives. While the complex and dynamic character of Ricœur's work makes it challenging at times to trace the development of his thoughts and to grasp the links between the various concepts that are central to his philosophy, engaging with it can prove useful for researchers who are confronted with social puzzles that defy a monodisciplinary or "orthodox" approach.

I maintain that the case of the NSU constitutes such a social puzzle. I respond to it by adopting narrative, following Spector-Mersel's suggestion, as a "research paradigm" because "the core of narrative inquiry combines both a philosophical stance towards the nature of social reality and our relationship with it, and the mode in which it should be studied." (Spector-Mersel 2010: 206) The study of narrative therefore informs my

ontological, epistemological and methodological approach to the NSU case. The discussion below will make clear what this implies.

This chapter first discusses the key elements of Ricœur's philosophy: the distinction between language as system and discourse, the text as a distinct hermeneutical problem, and the nexus between narrative texts and the configuration of human time. I then apply these concepts as well as Ricœur's notion of "action as text" to the process of telling stories of violent crime in the print news media. This is followed by a discussion of the position of actors involved in this process as it relates to the negotiation of Germanness: journalists as story-tellers, story characters as agents within these stories, and the intended readership. The final section discusses narrative analysis as a method, introduces the empirical material on which this research is based and shows how the data was examined.

## From Language to Texts as Works of Discourse

Ricœur defines hermeneutics as "the theory of the operations of understanding in their relation to the interpretation of texts" (1981: 43; see also Czarniawska 2004: 63). He connects these operations with "the understanding of being and the relations between beings" (Thompson 1981: 19). The relationship between texts and the human condition is thus central to Ricœur's hermeneutics. It developed as the result of his attempt to overcome the opposition that the phenomenological tradition of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and others had assumed between structural explanations on the one hand – developed by French linguists in the 1960s based on Swiss linguist Ferdinand de

Saussure's (1857-1913) language system theory – and hermeneutical understanding on the other hand (Ricœur 1981: 43). Ricœur defines a structure as "a closed set of internal relations between a finite number of units [whose] indifference to extra-linguistic reality […] is an important corollary of the rule of closure" (281). Language as system is thus limited to how signs refer to each other *within* that system. As Thompson summarises, Ricœur criticises this structuralist approach to language for excluding the fundamental dynamics of the production of language as discourse that is shaped by three key elements: the performative aspect (use) of language; the historicity of the human being; and the relation between language and the world. The absence of these elements in structuralism means that there is no room for self-reflection, which is the very core of any philosophy (Thompson 1981: 9-10).

This distinction between language as an abstract system and discourse as the use of language, realised in concrete temporal moments, is key to Ricœur's work. He holds that, due to the polysemy of words, language as a system offers us unlimited possibilities of expressing ourselves, of actualising the potential meaning of signs (1981: 44; Hall 2006 [1980]: 168-169). Structuralism thus remains relevant to the hermeneutical project, which is why Mattern calls Ricœur's approach "neo-structuralist" (1996: 76). However, it is the *use* of language that relates us to the world by helping us to articulate what Heidegger called our "being-in-the-world". Or, as Gadamer put it, "[b]eing that can be understood is language" (1979: 432). Language as system and language as event that makes it communicative in the first place thus form a dialectic that corresponds to a dialectic between the *sense* of a linguistic unit, which we explain, and its *reference*, which we aim to understand (Mattern 1996: 89-91). Discourse is the act of someone saying or writing

something *about* something in a given situation which implies that context is key to the process of understanding (Ricœur 1981: 44, 134). This insight is particularly important for studying offenders' and, as I will show, print news media stories of violent crime (Sandberg 2016: 165-167). Drawing on Ricœur enables me to study the latter because he holds that the dialectic of sense and reference plays out at the level of the text: it is here that *"structural explanation and hermeneutic understanding confront one another"* (Ricœur 1981: 35-36).[1]

Ricœur considers texts as a specific form of discourse where the spoken, temporally anchored word as a fleeting event is not simply fixed by writing, but the text takes the place of speaking: "A text is really a text only when it is not restricted to transcribing an anterior, when instead it inscribes directly in written letters what the discourse means" (Ricœur 1981: 146). Through this transformative process, the "saying" (*sagen* as event) becomes the "said" (*Aussage* as meaning) (1981: 198-200). The communicative function of discourse is thus affected by being fixed in writing (1976: 28) because the meaning of a (speech) event is fixed by the text, decontextualised from a concrete socio-historical condition and re-contextualised in a new situation through the act of reading.

In contrast to spoken discourse, e.g. between interviewer and offender, there is no direct dialogical relation between writer and reader, as the audience of the text is unknown and potentially includes anyone who can read in the respective language (Ricœur 1981: 91, 139, 182, 203). Ricœur terms this phenomenon "distanciation". It is the

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[1] Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy is guided by the experience of aesthetics and historicity, whereas Ricœur takes the relationship of our being to the text as the basis of the hermeneutic project. I therefore limit myself to briefly mentioning Gadamer's influence on Ricœur's work wherever appropriate.

pre-condition for interpreting texts because it de-psychologises them,[2] makes them semantically autonomous and thus capable of relating to different worlds qua interpretation (1981: 52-53, 148). It enables us to "communicate at a distance" (1981: 62, 111). Understanding the world and our own position in it is only possible through texts and the act of reading (polysemic) texts (Ricœur 1984: 53). Or, as Frus puts it, texts are all we have (1994: 51-52, 160).

Distanciation is key to the interpretation of texts also because it implies that action is detached not only from its original socio-historical context, but also from its author(s): "[w]hat the text says now matters more than what the author meant to say" (Ricœur 1981: 201). This is crucial because it means that the world of the text continues to produce and reproduce lived experience through its appropriation (*Aneignung*) by the unknown reader, independently of the author's original intentions, thereby mediating the reader's – rather than an offender's – self-understanding. Here we can detect Ricœur's anchoring in phenomenology, relating to the "ways in which phenomena appear" and the "subjective processes of consciousness" connected to them (Thompson 1982: 4). The text is being objectified and produces potentially unlimited readings, both synchronically and diachronically (Ricœur 1981: 139), as "[t]he reader is absent from the act of writing; the writer is absent from the act of reading" (146-147). As I shall demonstrate below, this emancipation of the meaning of the discourse from the event itself, actualised through reading, is key to the dynamics of narrating violent crime in the news media over time. In

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[2] This de-psychologising of the process of understanding was introduced by Martin Heidegger who moved from "the question of the *other* [being-with]" to "[t]he question of the *world* [being-in-the-world]" (Ricœur 1981: 56, original emphasis).

sum, texts do not have a fixed meaning in themselves, but only acquire this meaning through interpretation (Mattern 1996: 81; 104).

Given this semantic autonomy of the text, it is important to note that Ricœur considers texts to be "works of discourse", defined as closed discursive sequences composed of sentences. These are complex entities in themselves, the product of individual labour, and configured in a specific way according to the text's literary genre and singular style (Ricœur 1976: 7, 32-33; Ricœur 1981: 136-137). As such, "the text preserves the properties of the sentence, but presents them in a new constellation which calls for its own type of interpretation" (Thompson 1981: 13). Interpreting texts is therefore not reducible to the understanding of a sequence of sentences (Ricœur 1981: 175). The next section clarifies the link between texts, action, the process of story-telling and the configuration of human time, before I apply Ricœur's understanding of the text to the print news media.

**Narrative Texts, Stories and Human Time**

The concept of narrativity, to which Ricœur turned in the early 1980s, is an essential element of the hermeneutical problem in the social sciences (Thompson 1981: 25; Ricœur 1981: 38), not least because human beings are by nature "story-telling animals" (MacIntyre 2007 [1981]: 216). Ricœur defines a narrative (text) as a discursive unit that is larger than the sentence (1981: 281) and therefore needs to be treated as a coherent whole. Unlike structuralists, Ricœur considers narratives not simply as "large sentences" (Barthes 1975: 241) because the relationship between words and the sentence is

different from the one between sentences and discourse – that which says something *about* something.

Narrative texts are created through the process of emplotment (Aristotle's *muthos*): it is the plot as the "organisation of events" (Ricœur 1984: 64) that performs the mediating role between action events and speech acts on the one hand and interpretation on the other hand. A plot "grasps together" and integrates "into one whole and complete story multiple and scattered events" (Ricœur 1984: x; see also Czarniawska 2004: 122) by configuring a chronological sequence of events (episodes) into "meaningful totalities" (Ricœur 1981: 278). It is thus "a synthesis of the heterogeneous" (1984: 66, 83) that is achieved through the productive imagination (1981: 39) of, for example, offenders and audiences of violent crime. Narrative, for Ricœur, does not only designate the discursive unit as a whole, but also the process of organising events (emplotment) that creates something new and makes it available to interpretation.

A narrative (as) text, because it results from the integration of multiple, heterogeneous events, signifies the reconfiguration of time, while the phenomenon of human time cannot be conceived of without narrative (Ricœur 1984: 7, 83). That is, there is a "reciprocity between narrativity and temporality" (3) that Ricœur identifies by bringing together Aristotle's *muthos* and Augustine's aporias of human time. This reciprocity is reflected in the imitation (*mimēsis*, another concept Ricœur borrows from Aristotle) of action in a three-step process of ordering, composing and configuring events (1984: 33). The ordering of events, what Ricœur calls $mimesis_1$, requires the existence of a shared pre-understanding by both authors and readers of notions such as agents, goals, means, motives, intentions etc. as "meaningful structures" that create a "conceptual

network of action". The terms "perpetrator", "victim", "witness", etc. are part of a

conceptual network of violent crime (see also Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 6-7), but the latter

can also include notions that are specific to particular forms of crime, e.g. "dealer" in the

context of the drug-dealing milieu (Sandberg, Tutenges and Copes 2015; Sandberg 2016).

The composing of events (mimesis$_2$) is the mediating act of locating these meaningful

structures within time and space. That is, syntactic (discursive) features are added to the

previously merely paradigmatic order of events. The transition to mimesis$_3$, finally, is

induced by the act of reading and implies that "the world of the text and the world of the

hearer or reader" meet (what Gadamer calls "application") and the work enters into the

field of communication, thereby providing the starting point for another hermeneutic

cycle. Mimetic activity thus does not merely "*re*-present" or "copy" a reality, but creates

it in the first place through this process of ordering, composing and configuring events

(Ricœur 1984: 55-77).

Ricœur maintains that the narrativity of events can only be fully assessed at the

end of a hermeneutical cycle, i.e. after the story has been told. It is only at this point that

the contingency of the events turns into narrative necessity (Ricœur 1992: 142; see also

Polkinghorne 1995: 8). At the same time, the act of following a story is shaped by

expectations, in particular the convention, internalised by the reader, that stories have a

beginning, a middle and an end (Ricœur 1984: 66). Ricœur writes:

> […] [T]o follow a story is to understand the successive actions, thoughts
> and feelings as displaying a particular *directedness*. By this I mean that we
> are pushed along by the development and that we respond to this thrust
> with expectations concerning the outcome and culmination of the process.
> In this sense, the 'conclusion' of the story is the pole of attraction of the
> whole process. But a narrative conclusion can be neither deduced nor

predicted. There is no story unless our attention is held in suspense by a thousand contingencies. Hence we must follow the story to its conclusion. So rather than being *predictable*, a conclusion must be *acceptable*. Looking back from the conclusion towards the episodes which led up to it, we must be able to say that this end required those events and that chain of action. But this retrospective glance is made possible by the teleologically guided movement of our expectations when we follow the story. Such is the paradox of the contingency, 'acceptable after all', which characterises the understanding of any story. (Ricœur 1981: 277, original emphasis)

The beginning and end of a story are therefore mutually constitutive of its *followability*. We read a story with a view towards its conclusion, and understand it in retrospect *through* its conclusion.

This process of following a story over time is based on the ability of the human mind to conceive of a "present" that is created by the process of something passing "*from (ex)* the future, *through (per)* the present, *into (in)* the past" (Ricœur 1984: 13, original emphasis). That is, making sense of events in the present is only possible through reference to memory (that which has already happened) and expectation (that which *might* happen in the future). The past is the "no-longer-present" and the future is the "not-yet-present", hence the notion of a "threefold present" as Augustine termed it in his *Confessions* (Ricœur 1984: 10). Conceiving of the very phenomenon of time through narration is thus bound to the human ability of "*expecting* the future, *attending* to the present and *remembering* the past" (1984: 19-20, original emphasis). Ricœur considers the act of remembering in the present as a key element of story-telling:

It is not just to recall certain isolated events, but to become capable of forming meaningful sequences and ordered connections. In short, it is to be able to constitute one's own existence in the form of a story where a memory as such is only a fragment of the story (1981: 253).

To remember is thus part of the narrative process, while memory is thematic: we remember *something*. Ricœur makes a distinction between "memory" as a "capacity, an effectuation" and "memories" as something we possess (2004: 22). As I will show, this link between narration as the act that "articulates and shapes our own temporality" (Ricœur 1996: 6) and the concrete human experiences that are brought to language through this process is essential for analysing not only offenders' self-narratives (Presser 2009), but also how (news media) texts narrate specific acts of violent crime over time.

It is important to note, however, that Ricœur bases his explorations of narrative specifically on two "large classes of narrative discourse" (1984: 81): "the 'true' narratives of the historians and the 'fictional' narratives of storytellers, playwrights and novelists". Historians write "empirical narratives", a term Ricœur borrows from Kellogg and Scholes, which re-inscribe lived time upon cosmic (anonymous) time and make a referential claim to "real" events (Ricœur 1988: 132; Ricœur 1981: 288). Fictional narratives refer to the world by offering different possibilities of "being-in-the-world"; they distance the reference of the text from the world structured by everyday language and cosmic time, thereby enabling a break with, and the transformation of, an existing reality and order (Mattern 1996: 111-115, 121). The two narrative modes therefore have "different ways of relating to the world of action, of being *about* this world", but they "refer, nonetheless, each in its own way, to the same fundamental feature of our individual and social existence" which is that we are historical beings (Ricœur 1981: 274, original emphasis). They both produce "imaginative variations" and are connected because each of them "shares in some way the intentionality of the other" and "it is in the exchange between […] their opposed referential modes […] that *our historicity is brought to language*."

(Ricœur 1981: 294, original emphasis). Due to this complementarity, Ricœur's distinction between fictional and factual texts is not based on different narrative features, but on their assumed referentiality, i.e. on how they relate to characters and events that are taken to be truthful (see also Genette 1990). Narrative criminologists explicitly follow Ricœur's approach and concern themselves with storied experience that offenders themselves take to be truthful and that impact their behaviour (Presser and Sandberg 2015: 4-5; Sandberg 2010: 461-462). I will return to this link between fact, fiction and narrativity in my discussion of print news media texts below. First I will link Ricœur's narrative theory to the empirical phenomenon of violent crime.

**Narrating Violent Crime: Conceptual Networks of Action and Bodies of Knowledge**

Action as Text

As discussed above, stories mediate experiences, including the experiences of others, by bringing them to language. They textualise them by imitating action. Ricœur, similar to Polkinghorne (1988), suggests that action is analogous to narrative texts because it has a narrative structure itself. It is a "quasi-text" because it exhibits the key dimensions of distanciation: first, what makes action social is that it takes into account the behaviour of others as suggested by Max Weber (Ricœur 1992: 155). This means that "the actions of each one of us are intertwined with the actions of everyone else" in the threefold present (Ricœur 1992: 107; 1988: 112-113; see also Presser 2009: 178-179) and that the roles of individual actors cannot be distinguished from each other. Action events are always preceded by other action events, while being embedded in collectively meaningful

structures that make human action interpretable in the first place (Ricœur 1984: 58;

MacIntyre 2007 [1981]: 218). The intention of an agent can therefore not be severed

from these circumstances and hence is not alone decisive for the interpretation of action.

By making sense of action, transforming it from an event (the "doing") into meaning (the

"done"), we do not appropriate a "hidden intention" *behind* the act, but a "world *in front

of* it". This corresponds to the idea, discussed in chapter 2, that meaning is *ascribed* to

acts of violent crime by different discursive actors.

Secondly, just as story-telling constitutes an active process, so meaningful action is

something that does not merely "happen", but is *made* to happen. Action is also

potentially "*addressed* to an indefinite range of possible 'readers'" (Ricœur 1992: 75;

original emphasis). The contemporaries of an action do not occupy a privileged position in

the hermeneutic cycle; it is, as Hegel said, history itself that judges its meaning. Through

this process of autonomisation, action becomes social (Ricœur 1981: 203-208) because it

is made available to the hermeneutic process and becomes part of our human existence.

Lived experience itself is therefore narrative in character, *narrating action* does not

succeed *action*: stories "are told in being lived and lived in being told" (Carr 1986: 126;

Frus 1994: xiv; MacIntyre 2007 [1981]: 214-215). This fundamental insight is also key to

how narrative criminologists approach stories of harmful action.


The Agent-Motive-Intention-Nexus

For Ricœur, analysing the semantic field of action means to ask three questions: "Who?",

"What?" and "Why?". These "form a network of interrelated meanings such that our

ability to reply to any of these questions implies our ability to reply to any other belonging to the same sphere of sense" (Ricœur 1992: 88). His starting point, again based on Aristotle, is simply that "action *depends* on the agent" (89, original emphasis), meaning that action "is in the agent's power" (101), which speaks to all three questions. This is an important observation because it means that understanding what the agent as an element of the conceptual network of action is, requires the reader to "place it correctly in that network" (96). In other words, agent, action and what connects them are mutually dependent elements of any story. Asking *why* someone did something (*what*) means to speak of his or her motive(s) and intention(s), while the mentioning of either of these also means to mention the agent (*who*, 95). The responses to these questions "form a chain that is none other than the story chain. Telling a story is saying who did what and how [and why], by spreading out in time the connection between these various viewpoints." (146) This applies both to individual and collective or institutionalised narratives.

It is worth considering that whereas crime stories tell the story of a crime, detective stories tell the story of the *solving* of a crime (Alewyn, quoted in Hall 2016: 3). In the latter case, an event, e.g. a murder, sets into motion the process of story-telling and leads to the posing of the following questions: *Who* did it (*what*, the murder), and *why*? Ricœur states that any action can be attributed to "*someone* in the sense of anyone, hence in the sense of an individuation admitting of indifferent substitution". Identifying the "who" as part of a criminal investigation means to substitute this "someone" with "the actual attribution to this or that agent" as the direct cause of action (1992: 98, original emphasis). It is important to note, however, following Innes (2003b: 6-8), that this

does not mean to simply compile facts, but to interpret and make inferences in order to construct an account of what "really happened", meaning that the factual character of this account is not inherent in the events themselves. With regards to the relation between the "who" and the "why" Ricœur makes the following observation:

> […] [S]earching for the author is a *terminable* investigation which stops with the designation of the agent, usually by citing his or her name: "Who did that? So and so." On the other hand, searching for the motives of an action is an *interminable* investigation, the chain of motivations losing itself in the unfathomable haze of internal and external influences […] (Ricœur 1992: 95, original emphasis).

Narration thus implies a "twofold process of identification" relating to the infinite search for motives and the finite search for the agent, which links plot and character (Ricœur 1992: 146-47). In particular in cases where forensic (e.g. fingerprints, blood) or other evidence (e.g. witness accounts, claims of responsibility, inferences regarding opportunity and utility) does not suffice to identify the offender, the search for the motive of the perpetrator is key to constructing a relationship between offender and victim, ultimately attributing the crime to a specific agent (Osterburg and Ward 2010: 120).

Ricœur, in the tradition of Schütz and Luckmann (1973), differentiates between backward-looking motives (doing something *because of*) and intentions as something "forward-looking" (doing something *in order to*). This describes "a relation of dependence between two states of affairs – one earlier, the other later" (Ricœur 1992: 70-71). Even if in the reconstruction of events both relate to actions after-the-fact (Ricœur 1992: 80; Frus 1994: 11) and they are not necessarily easy to distinguish in practice, this analytical distinction – which the literature on political violence, as I demonstrated in chapter 2,

currently does not reflect on – helps to make sense of the interactional dimension of violent crime by relating acts, their perpetrators and victims to imagined or actual events in the past.

To give an example, a story that depicts one of the NSU serial murders could read as follows: "A man stands in his kiosk, another man comes in and fires three shots at the first man, *then* the man leaves. The man dies *shortly after*." While there is a clear temporal sequence here and an implied causal relation between the second man shooting and the first man dying of these shots, the social dimension of this act of violence, including its criminal dimension, is determined by the questions *who* the first man is and *why* he shot the second man, i.e. what the relationship between the two men is. Narrating crime therefore means to reconstruct earlier events (Huisman 2005: 36) in order to conclude the story by identifying the violent agent (perpetrator), based on the questions *who* did this and *why*? The answer could, for example, be "a neighbour *because* he owed him money" (motive) or "a stranger *in order to* provoke fear among local kiosk owners and extort money from them" (intention).

Reading a story from its conclusion as suggested by Ricœur is thus particularly important for detective stories because, as Rimmon-Kenan puts it, in these "the end discloses a definitive solution to the problem which the narrative set out to solve: X is the murderer, Y is the thief, Z's death was caused by fire" (2002: 122). It is this built-in, temporary hermeneutic gap in the story that keeps detective stories in suspense and stimulates the reader's interest (126-129; Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2008: 38).

Action, then, is always *inter*action due to the consideration of the behaviour of others. To act, however, can also mean to commit acts of omission and submission (*Unterlassen* and *Dulden* in Max Weber's words) because

> [...] not acting is still acting: neglecting, forgetting to do something is also letting things be done by someone else, sometimes to the point of criminality; as for enduring, it is keeping oneself, willingly or not, under the power of the other's action; something is done to someone by someone; enduring becomes being subjected, and this borders on suffering. At this point the theory of action is extended from acting to suffering beings. This addition is so essential that it governs a large part of the reflections on power as it is exerted by someone on someone, as well as the reflections on violence as the destruction by someone else of a subject's capacity to act [...]. (Ricœur 1992: 157)

Ricœur's definition of violent action and its link to (criminal) justice as an element of his analogy between the narrative operation and action thus suggests that the latter is always relational. Both actions, offending and suffering, are part of violent criminal action. This makes the offender, the victim and the power relations between them as well as their embeddedness within a specific community key to institutionalised processes of narrating violent crime, also and in particular in the news media.

Narrative as a Mode of Knowledge and Discourses of Violent Crime

It is the conceptual network of criminal action, then, that we use as an inventory for narrating detective stories, shaped by the questions "Who did it?", "What was done?" and "Why was it done?". This network is part of existing discourses of violent crime as bodies of knowledge and inventories of stories that I discussed in chapter 2. In their

seminal works on the social construction of reality, despite conceptualising the relation between the world and how it is (re-) presented through language differently,[3] linguist John R. Searle and sociologists Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann have described how "habitualized actions" (Berger and Luckmann 1991 [1966]: 72) or, in Searle's terms, "constitutive rules" (1995: 28) become institutionalised through the exertion of social control (what Searle terms "collective intentionality", 94). This institutionalisation generates categories to which particular events or objects – and the stories created around them – can be linked.

Stories therefore make sense of events that are themselves embedded in the "symbolic universe" of collectives, while contributing to the establishment of institutional facts as a shared memorisable past that forms the basis for the narration of new events (Berger and Luckmann 1991 [1966]: 120). In other words, institutional facts perpetuate themselves because of the dynamics of linguistic representation in narrative discourse and the iteration of the functions that these institutions have for constructing social realities (Searle 1995: 78-80). Or, as Stuart Hall puts it, "[t]here is no degree zero in language" (1980: 167). Established discourses of, for example, "right-wing extremism" and "terrorism" as bodies of knowledge that are created over time through processes of story-telling can "act back upon the collectivity that has produced [them]" (Berger and Luckmann 1991 [1966]: 104). New events are continuously integrated into these discourses, reinforcing, amending or developing the dominant discursive order further over time (Hall 2006 [1980]: 169).

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[3] Searle advocates an ontologically subjective external realism, assuming that some features of the world exist independently of human representations, whereas Berger and Luckmann operate with epistemo-logically objective constructivism, an approach that sees all reality as socially constructed because it is only independent of humans' volition, but not of their being.

This research project therefore takes into account the context in which the news media stories of NSU violence stand in order to make pre-understandings of meaningful structures, which are shaped by historical developments, and well as "untold stories" visible. While interpretations are ultimately arbitrary and one-sidedness cannot be excluded from the act of reading, the field of interpretation is limited. An interpretation can be *more* probable and plausible, and hence *more* valid, i.e. judged to be believable, than others, depending on how the interpreter establishes the reference of a text to the world and to existing shared knowledge by taking into account the conceptual network of action and (other) narrative resources that the text draws on (Ricœur 1981: 212-213; Polkinghorne 2007).

Based on these considerations of narrative discourses of violent crime, I now turn to how these are institutionalised by the print news media, focusing in particular on the media's role as a collective socio-political actor.

**The Print News Media as Genre: Institutionalised Story-telling in Violent Contexts**

Violent Crime and the Integrative Function of the News Media

In modern, democratic and pluralistic nation states, the mass media serve as a communicative platform for social discourses of self-understanding in an imagined community of time and space (Anderson 1991 [1983]; Ricœur 1988: 113). They mediate between different social actors and draw on, and supply society with, shared knowledge, take recourse and establish connections to commonly shared values and norms, and

ascribe social relevance to specific topics (Jarren 2000: 23-24, 31). Having emerged in parallel to the formation of the modern nation state in the 19th-century, they continue to fulfil an integrative function, especially in light of the increasing fragmentation of (online) media consumption that result in a diversification of normative ideas of the social order. The German print news media specifically integrate the local and regional levels, individuals and social groups as well as different cultures and languages (Jarren 2000: 25-28) to create and sustain the "Germans" as an imagined community in a political and legal sense. They strive towards cohesion and a collective identity as moving targets by mediating conflicts and constantly re-stabilising "normality".

Violent crime is part of the category of "disorder news" that concern threats posed to the existing socio-political order (as opposed to "routine activities" such as elections, commemorations and sport events) which the news media generally help to reproduce. More specifically, violent crime constitutes social and moral disorder news because it violates valid norms and legal rules and has the potential to disturb social peace (Gans 1980: 52). As Somers writes, "[t]he mainstream media arrange and connect events to create a 'mainstream plot' about the origin of social disorders" (1994: 619). They do so by establishing "an institutionalised form of story-telling, wherein symbolic demarcations of the sacred from the profane, and the pure from the impure, are provided" (Innes 2003a: 63-64). In other words, "crime [detective] stories inform us about right and wrong and about the boundaries beyond which one should not venture" (Bates 1999: 24; see also Sandberg 2016: 154), reflecting the historically pedagogical function of stories (Barkin 1984: 30). These boundaries, however, are not static because what counts as socially acceptable behaviour is context-dependent and subject to change in relation to

socio-political developments (Barak 2011 [1995]: 5). A longitudinal study of news media narrative discourses of violent crime can therefore demonstrate how valid norms and rules change over time and how these norms, in turn, influence the process of story-telling.

The media's integrative function in violent contexts is inextricably connected to the value that detective stories have for them. Although conceptualised as deviance from the norm, crime is not necessarily newsworthy because it happens regularly, even in principally non-violent societies such as Germany. It is in particular extreme and rare forms of violent crime such as assassinations or bombings that tend to receive a lot of media attention because of their market value (Bates 1999: 23-24; Barak 2011 [1995]: 12). This value has been rooted in the commercialisation of newspapers since the early 19th-century. Without the support by political parties or other sources, publishers relied on selling large numbers of papers, and covering crime and violence was one way of building their role as defenders of society's interests (Frus 1994: 101-102). This role continues to be important as the media provide a forum for debating questions of guilt and innocence, social resistance against and democratic responses to violence and crime (Barak 2011 [1995]: 17, 22; Wilkinson 1997: 59-60). Stories concerned with the latter therefore still sell well and "it is almost guaranteed that there will be a steady supply of interesting, 'newsworthy' stories, which the journalist can draw upon as and when needed" (Innes 2003a: 55; Innes 1999: 273), reflecting that "the economic structure of media industries determines their output, the kinds of stories they can [and will] tell" (Fulton 2005a: 3). After all, newspapers and magazines are a consumer product – a "one-day bestseller" as Anderson calls it (1991 [1983]: 35). Overall, then, news media stories of

violent crime fulfil similar functions as offenders' stories: they justify action, negotiate moral dilemmas, defend values and seek to entertain (Sandberg, Tutenges and Copes 2015: 1180-1181).

## Narrativity in the Print Media: Creating "News"

The hermeneutic process is considerably shaped by the fact that we read stories through their form. The process of understanding is tied to their genre and the rules of the production process. This has an impact on how readers appropriate texts as the result of this process (Hall 2006 [1980]: 165-171; Frus 1994: 5, 53, 160). Genre influences how stories are told *and* understood (Bruner 1986: 6). News media texts as a narrative genre are intelligible because the reader is familiar with the conventions they follow. They "establish a kind of contract between the text and the reader" that steers the latter's expectations (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 126). Thus, expectations of a text precede the act of following a story by reading it. These expectations relate in particular to the way in which news media stories form "the point of departure for the realization" of the stories we tell (Hall 2006 [1980]: 165), which forms part of our cultural knowledge and is closely linked to questions of temporality.

### *News Reporting and the Narrative Mode*

Since the late 18th-century, journalistic news has reflected and helped to develop the values of the Enlightenment – reason, certainty and rationalism. This

helped position journalism as a driver of modernity, which was expected to advance rational and reasoned deliberation through full and complete information relay, to utilize clear judgment and reasoning, to produce value-free information and impartial balanced prose, and to encourage a belief in productive civic engagement. (Zelizer 2014: 37)

The idea that the news media provide impartial accounts of events has been preserved to a considerable extent. In contrast to narrative fiction and similar to history, news as a "form of nonfiction story-telling" (Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2014: 99) is generally *expected* to relate to the "real world" and to be reliable (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 101). The reader relies on journalists not intentionally distorting or tainting the truth. Their referentiality is (almost) absolute, readers do not constantly ask "did this really happen?", also because the events they narrate are verifiable to the extent that they can be checked against other sources (Frus 1994: x, xvii, 4, 7).[4] The German Press Codex even establishes a direct link between a "respect for the truth" and "respect for human dignity" (Deutscher Presserat 2015: 2). Audiences associate "news" with "truthful facts". In contrast to the stories told by offenders themselves (Presser 2009: 181; Sandberg, Tutenges and Copes 2015: 1173; Sandberg 2016: 155), the stories of violent crime that the news media tell are therefore usually met with trust on the part of the reader, giving journalists particular interpretative power over a key dimension of social life.

However, since "the world is complex beyond measure", it is the media's task to provide readers with a coherent understanding of this world (Schudson 2014: 88; Frus 1994: 105-106). This coherency, as Ricœur's narrative theory suggests, cannot be achieved without emplotting events in a specific way – journalism cannot do without

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[4] These sources have multiplied through online journalism and social media ("citizen journalism"), meaning that the print news media have lost their status as the dominant source for news stories and journalists their status as the key story-teller in the public domain (Bird and Dardenne 2009: 212-213; Robinson 2009).

narrativity (Bell 1995; Polkinghorne 1995: 5). This means that the act of making a story open to the public by virtue of publishing a written text (Ricœur 1980: 176) is based on a selective operation ("gatekeeper") and construction of a particular social reality (Frus 1994: 177; Bird and Dardenne 2009). The fact that different news outlets tell different stories, also about the same sequence of events, attests to this narrative dimension of news reporting. A striking example in the context of the NSU are the different temporal (and hence causal) links that the media establish between the group's discovery and their publicising of claims of responsibility which leads them to drawing different conclusions about the design of their violent campaign (cf. chapter 6). At the same time, news media stories of violent crime are – similar to those told by offenders – complex, often contradictory and dependent on the socio-political context (Sandberg, Tutenges and Copes 2015: 1182). I will highlight this in the empirical discussion.

As Barkin (1984) notes, the institutionalisation of story-telling in the (print) news media is due to "[j]ournalists compartmentaliz[ing] human activity by placement (in sports or finance or 'Lifestyle'); by tone (hard news, editorial, news analysis, feature); and by narrative structure." (29) The "cloak of neutrality and objectivity" that he identifies for political journalism is but a "shroud" because the events that journalists report are by definition significant, they need to have the potential to make a difference to readers' lives, and hence "dramatization is part of the journalistic imperative to make the world comprehensible" (30-31). While the increasing instantaneousness and democratisation of news reporting by both professional and amateur journalists based on new technologies may, similar to the "new journalism" in the 1960s and 1970s, imply a greater use of

fictional techniques and hence emotionalisation (Barkin 1984: 31; Matheson 2009: 710-711), narrativity is a built-in feature of all news reporting. As Barkin puts it:

> The newsmagazine cover story speaks to the potency of individual action. The premise of investigative reporting is that society is redeemable. Political reporting rests on the assumption that the contest matters, that there is something worth winning. Acting as storytellers, journalists play an important role in affirming and maintaining the social order.

The traditional distinction between supposedly impartial "hard news" and interpretive "soft news" (Fulton 2005b: 221-232; Hall 2006 [1980]: 167) as well as between the "quality reporting" of broadsheets and the "sensationalist" reporting of the tabloid press is thus primarily based on different (narrative) styles and tones. In any case, the reader is implicitly or explicitly aware that all articles are "man-made" (Frus 1994: 19).

*News Reporting and Time: The Telling and the Told*

The very notion of "news" reminds us that, as Patterson has stated, "[t]ime affects the work of every institution, but few so substantially as the news media" (1998: 56). They are a constant reminder that narrative, as Roland Barthes argued, is simply there, "[l]ike life itself" (1975: 237). Or, as Fulton puts it, "print journalism turns daily life into a story" (2005a: 1; see also Spector-Mersel 2010: 211). The term "journal" derives from the old French; as an adjective it refers to something that recurs daily, as a noun it means the record of these recurrences: journalism is periodical story-telling.[5] News media texts are a site of "saying 'now'" and due to advances in technology, the gap between event, that

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[5] "Journal, adj. and n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press. URL: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/101731?rskey=XbC77C&result=1 (last accessed 25 October 2016).

which is told, and its narration, i.e. the telling, has continuously decreased (Bell 1995: 325).

The hermeneutic process connected to print news media texts is shaped by a specific temporal dynamic where the "present time" in which the act of reading is meant to happen (Ricœur 1981: 185; see also Zelizer and Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2014: 2) extends to 24 hours in the case of daily newspapers and 7 days for weekly papers,[6] which makes reading a "mass ceremony" within imagined communities (Anderson 1991 [1983]: 35). Contrary to what Ricœur has assumed for literary and historical texts, the relationship between journalist and intended reader is defined by the common socio-historical context they share, even if there is no immediate communicative relationship as would be the case in spoken discourse.[7] Thus, while a news media text can "produce new readers for itself" (Ricœur 1981: 192), it is not meant to do so – after all, who reads yesterday's newspaper? The short-lived news cycle means that new stories are constantly told and need to be appropriated by readers.

However, given the inherent link between story-telling and the configuration of our temporal experiences, it is important to stress that, because they report "news", media texts do not simply record the present (Zelizer 2014: 33). Instead, we need to acknowledge the multiple and "complex temporal nuances by which the news works" (Zelizer and Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2014: 2). The publishing of stories in the news media

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[6] In the case of internet journalism story-telling is even more dynamic because information is often published as soon as it becomes available (Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2014: 97). In narrative terms, online news stories are therefore, at least potentially, subject to a constant change of their paradigmatic, and hence also their syntagmatic, order of events.

[7] Literary texts are also published within a specific socio-historical context and have an intended audience (hence our concept of literary periods), but we conceptualise "literature", in particular canonical texts, as a category of texts that are *intended* to transcend time and open themselves up to new interpretations. This function of literary texts is implied in Ricœur's approach.

linked to specific "moments of now" connects cosmic time of astronomic phenomena (24-hour cycle of day/night, seasons, etc.) and human time by following a calendar. The latter is a socio-political institution that helps integrate a community and its practices into cosmic time (Ricœur 1988: 106-108).

Similar to how established bodies of knowledge perpetuate themselves, what becomes "news" is determined over time by what appears in the media *as* news (Olick 2014: 25). At the same time, "[t]here is nothing intrinsic to an event that predetermines its quality as news" (Fulton 2005b: 233), but events become news through their presentation as such in order to fit news values. Journalism can thus be described as the practice of "writing about newsworthy subjects" (Frus 1994: ix). News values concern in particular the immediacy or immanence of events and their fit within the 24-hour-cycle as well as their unexpectedness and novelty (Galtung and Holmboe Ruge 1965) – criteria that are found especially in staged acts of violent crime such as hostage-takings and hijackings (Weimann 1987: 23). News is by definition a fleeting phenomenon, in particular in light of the ever decreasing temporal distance between event and coverage as mentioned above.

In contrast to other narrative genres, but similar to many offender stories (Sandberg 2016: 163-164), journalism as periodic story-telling implies that individual news texts are usually not resolved at the end (Bell 1995: 313-317). The narration of specific chains of violent events often extends over the course of several issues, sometimes covering a period of weeks, months or even years if a crime is difficult to solve, embedded within other dynamic social processes that affect the narrative resources that the media draw on. So while news journalism as a practice is tied to the 24-hour (or 7-

day) news cycle, the process of story-telling is generally more durable, even if the attention for individual stories varies greatly.

As Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2008 states, "[n]ews stories can be brought to an end when the 'external' narrative has not been resolved, or kept alive long after the story's 'material death'" (35). In other words, the telling of a story may stop or continue, regardless of whether that which is told has ended or is still ongoing. Hardly any event remains "news" forever because there are always other, new stories to tell and readers' (or viewers') attention spans and levels are limited (Critcher 2003: 139). With regards to crime reporting, this implies that "the murder is more noteworthy than the police investigation, the verdict more than the trial" (Bell 1995: 320). Although the media tend to make sense of acts of crime by considering them as an expression of larger issues (e.g. "crime committed by foreigners" or the dangerous nature of criminals released from prison), their attention to these issues is short-lived and dependent on the news cycle (Patterson 1998: 56-57; Barack 2011 [1995]: 12).

*Audiences and Sources*

Another feature that connects offenders' and journalists' stories of violent crime is that all story-telling is done with an audience in mind (Riessman 2008: 3, 183). Creating news happens with a view to expectations "of what will be received as relevant by the audience. These expectations depend on an awareness of what is important to the group" (Olick 2014: 25). As a mass medium daily newspapers that are sold nation-wide aim to reach a mass audience (Edy 2014: 67). This tends to have a homogenising effect on

the stories they tell, in particular as regards crime and "terrorism" due to the media's liking for clear-cut norm/deviance oppositions as indicated above (Barak 2011 [1995]: 10; Picard 1993: 88).

But the news media do not only write *for* an audience, they also write *based on* specific sources, thereby connecting specific social actors, often institutions, with the general public (Jarren 2000: 38). They rely on material offered in particular by officials (including politicians, bureaucrats and the police) on a day-to-day basis. They therefore tend to reinforce the role of officials as news-makers and hence powerful agents, although this does not mean that media coverage of their actions is not critical (Schudson 2002: 255-257). At the same time, marginalised groups (based on class, age, ethnicity, etc.) are underrepresented and "barely appear in hard news except as victims or criminals" (Fulton 2005c: 249; Barak 2011 [1995]: 10; Frus 1994: 107, 234).

In the context of violence, crime and justice it is in particular the police and other security authorities that serve as the key source for the news media because it is primarily they who "reconstruct a narrative account of who did what to whom, based upon the information and evidence available" (Innes 2003a: 56, 64; Innes 2003b: 6; Osterburg and Ward 2010). The media, on the other hand, have an interest in publicising detective stories. Particularly in cases which are difficult to solve, such as the murders and bombings committed by the NSU, they act as an investigative resource themselves by providing access to a geographically extended public (witnesses, victims) and potentially exerting pressure on the offender (Innes 1999: 275-277; Frus 1994: 196). Narrating violent crime thus becomes a collaborative process. The mutual dependency between the police and the media has resulted in the former pursuing its own media strategy, in

particular in high-profile investigations and on the national level, in order to generate information from the public and to prevent journalists from intervening in the investigations by following their own leads (Innes 2003a: 57-58; Innes 1999: 274-275).

The media orientation towards the criminal justice system is part of a more general development in which the digitalisation of journalism replaces direct contact with informants. This process privileges those who can communicate their stories through PR outlets as opposed to "the poor or others who live in places unpleasant to visit" (Schudson 2002: 260), thereby manifesting existing power relations (Fulton 2005b: 220; Hall 2006 [1980]: 171-172). The material for "hard news" is often provided by government and news agencies (Bell 1995: 308-309). This applies also and in particular in Germany where much of domestic political news in both the regional and national, quality and tabloid press is based on information provided by the following agencies: *Deutsche Presseagentur* (German Press Agency, *dpa*), established in 1949 and market leader in Germany; *Reuters*, whose British parent company has been offering the German service since 1971; *Agence France-Presse* (*AFP*) with a nation-wide service in Germany since 1987; and, until 2013, the *Deutscher Auslands-Depeschendienst* (*dapd*) that had emerged in 2010 from a fusion of the German service of the US-American Associated Press (*AP*), extant in Germany since 1946, and the *Deutscher Depeschendienst* (German Wire Service, *ddp*), originally founded in 1971. The latter was united with the former state agency of the GDR, the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst* (General German News Service, *ADN*), in 1994 to form the *ddp*/*ADN* news service (Hagen 1995: 21-29; Schulten-Jaspers 2013: 60-64).

The power of the (print) news media to shape how public events are narrated is thus combined with the power of specific social actors to have their stories told (Somers 1994: 629). Newspapers and news magazines are collective, institutionalised political actors who are in a position to contribute or inhibit social change (Schudson 2002).

News Articles as Archive and Re-Narration

While the print news media, in particular daily newspapers, produce texts that are intended to be read in the present, they nevertheless constitute (dated) cultural documents that contribute "to our historical tradition" (Ricœur 1981: 115) as they fix the meaning of (speech and action) events. They function as a "trace left by the past" (Ricœur 1988: 118) and serve as an "archive available for individual and collective memory" (147) based on physical (printed papers) or digital retention (Olick 2014: 23, 27). Institutionalised archives of news articles continue to make these texts accessible to an unknown audience and hence open to new interpretations.

In addition to their value as a source of data for research purposes (including this thesis), these documents also have a practical relevance for the process of narrating and re-narrating events over time. Since, as indicated above, most news stories are never really resolved (Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2008: 32-34; Fulton 2005b: 241; Bell 1995: 313-314), Rimmon-Kenan's description of how we read individual news articles also applies to how we read news media stories that are told periodically across time: "reading can be seen as a continuous process of forming hypotheses, reinforcing them, developing them, modifying them, and sometimes replacing them by others or dropping them altogether"

(Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 122). The sequence and configuration of events of the past always have the potential to be changed by a new discursive utterance in the present; individual news texts are not only always in the presence of others, but build on previous ones and anticipate new ones. They form episodes within serial narratives. This applies in particular to detective stories that imply the counting of time, e.g. serial murder and kidnapping (Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2014: 99).

In addition, the news media, although their attention is by definition on the present, serve as a site of collective memory. They are, following Maurice Halbwachs, themselves a "social framework of memory" (Olick 2014: 27; Zelizer 2014: 40-42; Zelizer 2008). They tell stories *of* remembering and commemoration (the science and politics of memory as well as anniversaries, including those related to the media and journalism as institutions themselves). More generally they refer to events in the (very) recent or distant past, often through the stories that they themselves have already told, fixing and re-fixing their meaning in light of the events and purposes of the present. They also institutionalise the notion of human time in implicit ways, e.g. by drawing on concepts such as "debt", "revenge" and "promise" (Schudson 2014: 85-87) or through specific news categories, e.g. obituaries (Zelizer 2008: 83). Societies also remember (through) journalistic events:[8] "[w]e remember journalistic images and events, and these are major features of public memory" (Olick 2014: 29). Hence "[j]ournalism and memory are clearly implicated in each other" (18), in particular in Germany with its lively memory culture

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[8] A well-known example from the German context is the cover of the satire magazine *Titanic* in November 1989 after the fall of the Berlin Wall. It depicts a young woman from East Germany holding a peeled cucumber with the caption "My first banana". It illustrates West Germans' general perception of East Germans as naïve and unsophisticated in context of the influx of East Germans to the West after the opening of the inner German border.

(Kolmer 2009: 207).[9] The empirical discussion in chapters 4-7 will demonstrate how memory work is embedded in German print news journalism and how the process of telling the NSU story after the discovery of the perpetrators in November 2011 is enabled and simultaneously limited by the previous fixation of events.

News media texts are therefore more than individual articles. Instead, the term refers to the totality of articles in a specific paper, authored by different journalists (individually or as a team), which contribute to the development of stories – in this case the stories of (NSU) violent crime between September 2000 and March 2012. This conceptualisation is provided for by Ricœur himself who notes that texts can have different lengths "which can extend from a paragraph to a chapter, a book, a collection of 'selected works' or even the corpus of the 'complete works' of an author" (1981: 166). In this sense, the notion of "intertextuality" as developed by Kristeva and Bakhtin, which suggests that a text is not self-sufficient, but always intersects with and transforms other texts (Martínez Alfaro 1996), is also applicable to the genre of news media texts.

If new events are integrated or previous events are re-configured to create a new plot, "a retrospective patterning of earlier parts of the text" may be required (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 122). This can mean to reinforce or develop the past, but without contradicting previous meanings, or – and this is the form taken by the story of the NSU, as chapters 5-7 will show – the past is re-examined, thereby rejecting previous meanings, often leading to surprise or shock (123). To this extent, "re-narration" is a characteristic element of story-telling in the news media across time. However, whether changes made to a story can be absorbed by the reader or are perceived as amounting to a fundamental

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[9] It is worth considering, however, that the new media ecology has given way to a fragmentation of public memory because viewers and readers are exposed to highly selective media content (Edy 2014: 71).

re-narration of this story is a question of degree – the degree to which the existing paradigmatic and syntagmatic order of events is changed. In this sense, the idea that the hermeneutic process is never really complete applies also and in particular to news media stories, because previous texts that fixed the meaning of events can always be overridden, thereby opening up "unlimited readings" of these texts and therefore also of the meaning of events. The relation of individual articles to the totality of articles that relate to a specific chain of events remains elusive. The researcher responds to this by defining her text corpus prior to the empirical analysis.

## Summary: The News Media as Story-Teller

Considering the various factors that shape the process of story-telling in the news media, it becomes clear that they are themselves constitutive of the social phenomena they claim to report. Similar to offenders, journalists as well as guest authors from among the social and political elite "live by" the stories they tell, following the set of internalised rules discussed above. News stories do "not exist somewhere outside the media organisations, waiting to be found and brought inside" (Fulton 2005b: 219), but are created by journalists who belong to history themselves. For both offenders and journalists, "[t]he game of telling is included in the reality told" (Ricœur 1981: 294). On the one hand, the media reinforce the existing social order and power relations, while on the other hand they contribute to long-term social change through their everyday story-telling and creation of a repertoire of cultural stories over time. This notion of belongingness and its relation to narrative identity will be examined in the next section.

**News Media Discourses and Narrative Identities**

The Role of Ideological Closure

Ricœur's whole hermeneutic project is an attempt to develop an *indirect* path to an ontology based on the mediating function of language, specifically in the form of narrative texts. His key argument is that the way in which we relate to texts reveals something about our temporal and spatial relatedness to the world (Mattern 1996: 93-96, 151) because language both constructs and indicates collective identities. It is this orientation towards a narrative ontology (Somers 1994: 607) that provides the basis for examining how news media stories of violent crime negotiate ideas of Germanness.

Ricœur points out that the field of interpretation is narrowed by the socio-cultural context to which both author and reader belong. He calls this "ideological closure" (1984: 227), stating that "[…] all objectifying knowledge about our position in society, in a social class, in a cultural tradition and in history is preceded by a relation of *belonging* upon which we can never entirely reflect" and hence "objectifying knowledge is always secondary to the relation of belonging" (1981: 243, original emphasis). Following Heidegger's concept of "being-in-the-world" and Hans-Georg Gadamer's notion of "historically effected consciousness" (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*),[10] Ricœur emphasises that the human being is necessarily a historical being and that the whole hermeneutic process that is tied to the "threefold present" is always already embedded in understandings of "who we were, are and will be", while it also contributes to the

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[10] Ricœur defines Gadamer's concept as follows: "In general terms, it can be characterised as the consciousness of being exposed to history and to its effects, in such a way that this action over us cannot be objectified, for the efficacy belongs to the very meaning of the action as an historical phenomenon." (1981: 73)

development of new understandings of the Self through appropriation. For Ricœur, the principles of distanciation and belonging, which Gadamer had conceptualized as an opposition, are thus dialectically linked (1981: 106, 131). Put more simply, the process of bringing experience to language – and the interpretation of the resulting texts – is shaped by the stories we have already told. Identity can therefore "be articulated only in the temporal dimension of human existence" (Ricœur 1992: 115). Narrative criminologists also acknowledge that the discipline needs "to identify the repertoire of [cultural] stories in a given society or (sub)culture" in order to enable researchers to understand offenders' narratives (Sandberg 2016: 167).

Ideological closure therefore applies to all social actors involved in the narrative process: the author, the characters (agents) within the story, and the unknown reader. However, this closure, as Ricœur says, does not pose a challenge that needs to – or ever can – be overcome on the route to objectivity and truth. Rather, belonging fulfils an important social function in that it provides a social group with an "interpretative code". Without this code, groups cannot create an image of themselves through story-telling, while this image in turn reinforces this code. The code "is something *in which* men [*sic*] live and think, rather than a conception *that* they pose"; it "operates behind our backs, rather than appearing as a theme before our eyes. We think from it rather than about it." In other words, without ideological closure of the interpretative field, events cannot be made meaningful and no collective consciousness can develop (Ricœur 1981: 226-228, original emphasis; Hall 2006 [1980]: 167).[11] The untold stories that structure hegemonic discourses (Sandberg 2016) are an important element of this interpretative code, and

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[11] "Ideology", for Ricœur, therefore does not denote a "false consciousness" in a Marxist sense as no consciousness can develop without an ideological code (1981: 228).

researchers need to make these visible when analysing stories of violent crime in the news media, bearing in mind that the interpretative codes of journalists and their intended audiences may change over time. More specifically, studying the NSU as a narrative puzzle means to take into consideration the changes in German society during the period from 2000 to 2012 and their impact on the process of narrating violent crime.

The Imagined (News) Community: Journalists, Characters and Audience

In the context of news media discourses, three distinct, yet closely related dimensions of the construction of "Germans" as an imagined community are important: journalists' professional identities and how they shape the stories they tell; the creation of characters within news media stories (e.g. victims, perpetrators, witnesses and investigators); and the appropriation of these stories by the intended audiences.

As mentioned above, Ricœur considers texts as "works of discourse" based on their individual composition and style. This implies that "a text remains a discourse told by somebody", i.e. we cannot "conceive of a text without an author" (Ricœur 1981: 201; Ricœur 1976: 30), regardless of the fact that its meaning is actualised through the act of reading and thus independent of the author's intentions. Taking this role of the author into consideration, we should also recall that all story-telling is necessarily selective because "[u]p to a point, it is possible to tell several stories based on the same events" through their organisation around different plots (Ricœur 1996: 6; see also Czarniawska 2004: 7 and Presser 2009: 180). A story therefore always privileges a specific re-

configuration of "our confused, unformed, and at the limit mute temporal experience" (Ricœur 1984: xi), based on the author's interpretative code.

This applies also and in particular to print news media texts as the product of journalistic work that is conducted within an institutionalised environment. Journalists' interpretative code is determined by their professional identities, which in turn is shaped by context (political and media system; social, legal and economic structures; technology; journalism education; national journalistic cultures, etc.) as well as collective and personal values and beliefs (Nygren and Stigbrand 2014; Deuze 2005). According to a representative study by the Institute for Journalism and Communication Science at the University of Hamburg in 2005, over 90% of journalists (of whom 35.4% work for newspapers) have at least a university entrance qualification and are between 26 and 55 years old; just over 60% are men; almost 20% do not have any party allegiance, while almost two thirds are closest to centre-left or left parties and only 15% feel connected to centre-right and liberal parties (CDU/CSU and FDP). They also consider the timely provision of "neutral" information and the communication of complex situations as well as criticism of injustices as their most important tasks (Weischenberg, Malik and Scholl 2006). Moreover, many journalists have links to other organisations and institutions, work for different media over the course of their professional career, or leave journalism behind to work as policy advisors, press officers, lobbyists, etc. The German Press Codex permits journalists' affiliation with other organisations if these roles are kept strictly separated (Deutscher Presserat 2015: 6). An example of this network of relationships is Georg Mascolo, former editor-in-chief of *Der Spiegel* who now heads the research collaboration between *SZ*, *NDR* and *Westdeutscher Rundfunk* (West German

Broadcasting, *WDR*). He also serves as an advisor to the Munich Security Conference, an international forum for security policy, and appears regularly as a "terrorism expert" on Germany's main public TV channel ARD. Politicians, NGO representatives, academics, etc. who write as guest authors bring in their own professional identities and pursue their own specific agendas as well.

The second dimension of the creation of a collective narrative identity through print media texts is the attribution of characteristics to a specific set of agents within a news story based on the productive imagination of the journalist. As discussed above, heterogeneous action is emplotted to tell a story. Since it is characters who perform the action in a story, there is a correlation between action and character in any story. Ricœur argues that the contingency of a sequence of events in a story, which is followed by the reader with a view towards its conclusion and eventually transforms contingency into necessity, can also be found on the level of the characters themselves. This is so because the life of an individual is presented as "a temporal totality which is itself singular and distinguished from all others" (Ricœur 1992: 147) and the events in a story threaten to disrupt this totality – events that are initially seen as contingent, but that reveal the necessity of the history of a life, corresponding to the person's identity, once the story has been concluded:

> Thus chance is transmuted into fate. […] The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character. (Ricœur 1992: 147-148)

Characters can therefore be treated as plots as well. This implies that to compete for what stories to tell also means to compete for what identities to construct (Somers 1994: 631). Narrative criminologists' understanding of offenders' narrative practices is also informed by this feature of stories (Sandberg 2016: 157-159). Characterisation in the news media more specifically ascribes *typified roles* to the characters they create, thereby enabling individuals to reach their anonymous contemporaries in the imagined community. Imagination replaces experience and inference replaces immediacy (Ricœur 1988: 113). These stereotypes can be understood as

> socially-constructed mental pigeon-hole[s] into which events and individuals can be sorted, thereby making such events and individuals comprehensible: "mother", "patriot", "businessman", "neighbour", on the one hand, versus "hooligan", "terrorist", "foreigner", "wet [Tory]", on the other, are some specific instances of stereotypical categories […]. (Fowler 1991: 17)

The news media therefore operate with characters as roles, rather than as individuals. The very construction of news stories according to news values is partially rooted in the dialectical process of creating and reinforcing such stereotypes because it facilitates the selection of news items – it is an "ideological act of interpretation" (Fowler 1991: 19). Van Dijk adds that stereotypes as group schemata

> control social information processing, that is, our interactions with or communications about members of such groups. […] If the schemata are negative or based on insufficient information, they are called prejudiced, sexist, or racist. The same is true for the interpretation of or the actions with members of groups that are assigned inherent or semipermanent properties associated with gender, race, origin, appearance, or age. In this case, the cognitive representations will vary for different groups depending

on their socioeconomic and cultural position in societal structure. (van Dijk 1988: 25-26)

Stereotyping is thus essential for telling stories in the news media. It not only has an impact on what stories are told, but is also inextricably linked to questions of social power through discursive in- and exclusion. In the context of the NSU, "immigrants", "East Germans" (*Ossi*), "right-wing extremists" and "terrorists" are the most dominant typified roles as the empirical discussion will show.

The third dimension of mediating the German nation as an imagined community through print news media texts concerns the papers' intended audiences that appropriate the stories that journalists create. While the tabloid newspapers *BILD* and *BILD am Sonntag* (*BamS*), for example, attract in particular male readers (66% and 68% respectively) who are educated below-average (only 13% of *BILD* readers have their A-Levels), older than 40 years and blue-collar workers with low to middle incomes,[12] more than half of the readership of the *SZ* receives high incomes[13] and 34% of *Spiegel* readers have a university education, but only 11% live in the East German states.[14] Gender, age, level of education, social status and local context therefore correspond to readers' media use. Journalists, guest commentators and the individuals and groups that are typified as characters in news stories are themselves also members of these audiences and have their own distinct media usage behaviour.

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[12] See https://www.mediaimpact.de/dl/166770/Factsheet_BILD_2016_08.30.2016.pdf (last accessed 26 October 2016).

[13] See http://sz-media.sueddeutsche.de/de/service/markt--und-mediastudien-mafo.html (last accessed 26 October 2016).

[14] See http://meedia.de/2013/01/15/print-analyse-der-typische-spiegel-leser/ (last accessed 26 October 2016).

The dynamic link between these three dimensions constitutes the narrative identity of a (media) community: journalists as well as guest authors from all spheres of public life (politicians, activists, academics, intellectuals, etc.) drive a collective process of story-telling over time, both within a specific medium and across the national media landscape. They create characters according to their social functions, drawing on a shared repertoire of cultural stories, and present readers with (narrative) knowledge about the world, including crime and its investigation, thereby adding to their own immediate experiences (Innes 1999: 272; Barak 2011 [1994]: 3). Through a process of self-understanding that stands at the end of the hermeneutic process, narrative knowledge is fed back into the cycle. This circular dynamic is illustrated in figure 3.1 below:
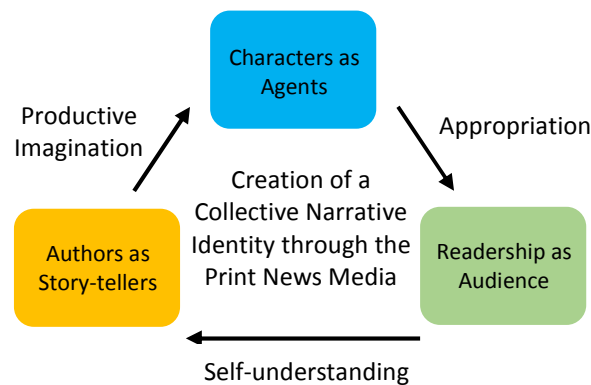


*Figure 3.1: Narrative Identity Construction through News Media Texts*

A community's narrative identity is thus (also) constantly negotiated through this circular process of narration by bringing the imagined community together through "measurable simultaneity" of events that happen in parallel to and independently of each other, but are linked in the print news media based on calendrical time (Anderson 1991 [1983]: 25, 33; Ricœur 1988: 108). Moreover, this process allows the community to constitute its Self without having to make recourse to a "substantial something" (Mattern 1996: 198). As

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Ricœur puts it, "[t]he identity of a group, culture, people, or nation, is not that of an immutable substance, nor that of a fixed structure, but that, rather, of a recounted story" and in this sense comparable to individuals' life stories (1996: 7; Riessman 2008: 7; Anderson 1991 [1983]: 205). This is evident already in the fact that readers do not expect individual characters in news media stories (whether it is national leaders, a convicted criminal or whole countries) to cease to exist if there is no news story told about them for a while – they know that they can and will reappear at some point (Anderson 1991 [1983]: 33). The hermeneutic cycle thus keeps social reality alive. The news media are not a distinct narrative actor among others, but a *forum* for negotiating perceptions of the collective Self, shaped by specific rules and norms.

In light of this narrative cycle, I refer to "the Germans" as a (national) community, society and political entity as the Self (the "what") that we take to exist as a discursive constant despite its various manifestations over time. I explore how the news media exert their social power by negotiating *who* this Self is through the process of telling stories of violent crime. Since this process implies the exclusion of perpetrators *from* the collective and inclusion of victims *in* the collective to different degrees, based on existing notions of who "we" are, the focus is primarily on questions of identity as membership through felt commonality (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 20), indicating levels of social cohesion.

I therefore suggest that Germanness is not only negotiated through narrative discourses that explicitly and directly challenge notions of the collective Self, such as discourses of immigration policy, but that this can happen through all kinds of everyday narrative discourse and the negotiation of untold stories, similar to how "small stories" form individual identities through everyday spoken discourse (Bamberg 2005;

Georgakopoulou 2006; Kraus 2006; Sandberg 2016: 155). Because they stand in opposition to the utopia of a violence-free democratic state of law (Baberowski 2015), have a built-in inclusion/exclusion nexus and draw on a myriad of narrative resources, analysing stories of violent crime allows insights into processes of identity construction.

Considering the link between the hermeneutic process, print news media stories of violent crime and the negotiation of notions of Germanness that the discussion above has traced, we can say that violence as a human phenomenon is not, as Ricœur has defined it, limited to the "destruction by someone else of a subject's capacity to act" (Ricœur 1992: 157). It can also have a productive dimension to the extent that bringing violent experiences to language by narrating them is itself a performance of identities and all identity formation is consequential (Jenkins 2004: 162, 174-175).


**Narrative Analysis as Method and Empirical Material**

Reading Stories of Violent Crime

The discussion above has established that for Ricœur the object of interpretation is the "matter" of the text itself (Ricœur 1981: 62, 111) because the text is semantically autonomous. The concrete situation of interpretation in which I find myself as the researcher is guided by my specific questions towards these texts and is itself an instance of the actualisation of the potential of meaning inherent in the text. At the same time, configuration, genre and style (aspects linked to the site of production) and my own socio-cultural belonging also impact on the hermeneutic process. Therefore, when Ricœur states that "to understand a narrative [story] is to master the rules that govern its

syntagmatic order" (1984: 56), he is referring to rules with a linguistic, cultural and institutionalised dimension. While the researcher needs to have advanced knowledge of the language in which the story is told (in this case German), she also needs to reflect on the text's genre, the socio-political position of the author(s) and the repertoire of cultural stories that they draw on as well as her own relation to the text as an interpreter. In my case, this relation is certainly shaped by the fact that I am a German citizen who was born in the GDR and grew up in the decade following re-unification. Although the collection of texts in archives does not imply the creation of stories in a material sense, it is therefore important to consider the inseparableness of myself as the interpreter from that which is interpreted and the fact that I produce a story of my own as an element of the hermeneutic cycle that the reader is asked to assess with regards to its validity (Spector-Mersel 2010: 213-217; Riessman 2008: 22-23; Polkinghorne 1995: 19; Polkinghorne 2007: 477).

Moreover, the researcher herself becomes part of the "hermeneutic circle of narrative and time" (Ricœur 1984: 76) because her interpretation of texts, connected to her own cultural belonging, restores the latter to the (academic) world of communication. Their meaning is therefore actualised in a specific way and results in the production of further texts. The researcher as interpreter is "not simply a passive reader", but "[s]he has a special relation with the text, and assumes thereby responsibility to treat the text with integrity" (Farrands 2010: 3). These considerations notwithstanding, news media stories, as discussed above, are perpetually incomplete due to their dependence on "real life events" and have an affinity to re-narration – a specific case of the generally inconclusive hermeneutic process.

Based on the considerations developed in this chapter, I apply narrative analysis to news media articles as my empirical material because they reflect social reality as narrative reality. By approaching the NSU as a narrative puzzle I situate myself within a constructivist and, more specifically, post-structuralist paradigm (Spector-Mersel 2010: 211-213). The structuralist study of narrative as developed in particular by William Labov, Roland Barthes and Gérard Genette, has focused on the "implicit [language] system of units and rules" that shape any process of story-telling. This method breaks a coherent story into its parts with the aim of studying how a specific text has been created based on a linguistic model and what function specific elements have for the act of story-telling (Barthes 1975: 238-239; Riessman 2008: 81). The post-structuralist study of narrative, by contrast, focuses on how a text uses language to create discourse and, to use Ricœur's words, what this discourse says *about* the world. These two approaches are not contradictory as they are both situated on the "hermeneutical arch". They are complementary levels of narrative analysis as both Barthes (1975: 264-265) and Ricœur (1981: 152-157) emphasise. However, this research project not only deals with large amounts of narrative data whose structural analysis would be too time-consuming, but is also primarily interested in the context- and actor-specific use of language and in what the narrative discourses of violent crime can tell us about contemporary Germanness. I therefore adopt a post-structuralist, inductive approach to the empirical material. Moreover, while my analytical focus is mostly on *what* the text says, linguistic aspects (e.g. expressions specific to the German language or to detective stories as a type of narrative text) also play a role in the analysis.[15]

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[15] As Benedict Anderson has pointed out, today's nation states are not "isomorphic with the determinate

Following Spector-Mersel (2010: 214), I understand stories to be the data themselves in that they do not merely provide the *condition* for the creation of perceptions of Germanness, but are themselves a *site* of the creation of these perceptions. The method I apply combines elements of the analysis *of* narrative with those of narrative analysis, thereby referring to both paradigmatic and narrative cognition. With reference to Jeremy Bruner's work, Polkinghorne (1995: 10) suggests that the "paradigmatic mode of thought" corresponds to the qualitative research practice of coding data items to assign them to specific categories and exploring the relations between them. These can either be predefined or developed inductively from the data itself, revising the coding schemes over the course of the analysis in order to find "the 'best fit' of a categorical scheme for the data set." The "narrative mode of thought" deals with the interaction of conceptual networks, including goals and purposes. The difference between the two approaches is that "[w]hereas paradigmatic knowledge is focused on what is common among actions, narrative knowledge focuses on the particular and special characteristics of each action" and is "maintained in emplotted stories" (Polkinghorne 1995: 11). My data are stories from which I produce a new, coherent whole by synthesising them, that is, I create a meta-narrative. This new configuration does not include details of the original stories that are not necessary for this synthesis, but, as Polkinghorne points out, "[t]he final story must fit the data while at the same time [bring] an order and meaningfulness that is not apparent in the data themselves." (1995: 16) My

reach of particular print languages" because many nations and nation states today share a print language, while others do not use those national languages on an everyday basis. Stories told in the German news media are thus not only readable by anyone who understands German, but also by anyone who shares the German print language with other nations and nation states, i.e. Austria and Switzerland. At the same time, not everyone who lives within a particular political community also understands the (dominant) print language and therefore does not become part of this community as an imagined entity (Anderson 1991 [1983]: 46, 145-146)

analysis is guided by a range of categories of violent crime that I derive inductively from the data, including "serial murder", "hate crime" and "terrorism". At the same time, I am interested in both the features that make the NSU stories unique *and* what these stories can tell us about how and why specific empirical phenomena are linked to distinct categories of violent crime. The analysis is therefore about knowledge of concepts *and* knowledge of a specific situation. However, in creating my own narrative account of the NSU as presented in the print news media, I do not myself try to explain the outcome of a chain of events, but instead make sense of the dynamics of telling stories about acts of violent crime that are specific to the NSU case.

So far, the study of the news media as a site of story-telling has been neglected – not just by narrative criminologists – in favour of the collection (through observation) or production (through interviews) of stories of and by individuals or small groups, i.e. situations in which there is a direct communicative relation between speaker and listener, even if these spoken discourses are subsequently transcribed into written texts (Riessman 2008; Polkinghorne 1995: 12-13). I am not aware of any study that systematically analyses news media stories over an extended period of time in a non-structuralist way that does not focus on a specific discursive theme while taking into consideration the specific temporal and spatial features of this genre. This thesis therefore also aims to advance the use of narrative analysis in news media studies.

Media Selection, Text Corpus and Data Collection

Since my focus is on the implications that the dynamics of narrating violent crime associated with the NSU since November 2011 have for the negotiation of perceptions of Germanness, my empirical material is taken from a selection of national (*überregional*) print news media listed in table 3.1 below. The selection includes both broadsheet and tabloid papers, daily and weekly newspapers and news magazines,[16] publications with different political orientations and different ownerships. Moreover, the selection reflects the fact that the market for national print newspapers and magazines in Germany is almost entirely dominated by West German media (Wedl 2009: 116). All of these dimensions shape the stories that the papers tell as they have an impact on the news cycle, target audience, style, tone and editorial guidelines.

All of the selected media are opinion-making publications in Germany, influencing both key political actors and other media, in particular regional media that remain the most important source of information for most Germans (Weischenberg, Malik and Scholl 2006: 359; Pürer and Raabe 2007: 16-17). Moreover, with the exception of the *FAS* all of them were established between 1945 and 1956 and thus shaped by the history of post-WWII Germany.

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[16] The *FAS* and *BamS* editorial offices are independent of the *FAZ* and *BILD*, but nevertheless share editorial resources, including some journalists who write for both the daily and Sunday paper (Pürer and Raabe 2007: 25, 164).

| Medium | Esta-blished | Orientation | Frequency | Ownership | Head-quarters | Circulation (copies)[17] | Circulation (readers) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *BILD* | 1952 | conservative | MO-SAT | Axel Springer AG | Berlin | 1,956,431 (IVW II 2016)[18] | 12,200,000 (AWA 2016)[19] |
| **BILD am Sonntag** (*BamS*) | 1956 | conservative | SO | Axel Springer AG | Berlin | 1,066,330 (IVW II 2016) | 10,700,000 (AWA 2016) |
| **Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung** (*FAZ*) | 1949 | liberal-conservative | MO-SAT | Fazit-Stiftung | Frankfurt | 255,198 (IVW III 2016)[20] | 1,005,000 (AWA 2016) |
| **Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntags-zeitung** (*FAS*) | 30 Sept 2001 (nation-wide) | liberal-conservative | SO | Fazit-Stiftung | Frankfurt | 245,128 (IVW III 2016)[21] | 1,065,000 (AWA 2016) |
| *Spiegel* | 1947 | left-liberal | MO (since 2015 SAT) | Spiegel-Verlag | Hamburg | 833,004 (IVW 2015)[22] | 6,440,000 (MA 2016) |
| **Süddeutsche Zeitung** (*SZ*) | 1945 | left-liberal | MO-SAT | Süd-deutscher Verlag | Munich | 392,204 (agma 2015)[23] | 1,130,000 (agma 2015) |

*Table 3.1: Newspapers Chosen for Empirical Analysis*

As mentioned in chapter 1, a particular emphasis should be on the geographical aspect because the crimes on which this thesis focuses were committed in six different states. Five of the nine serial murders, including the first two, were committed in Bavaria – two in Munich (2001 and 2005) and three in Nuremberg (2000, 2001 and 2005) – and hence in close vicinity to the *SZ*'s headquarters and central news desk in Munich. Four other crimes happened in Kassel, Dortmund and Cologne, in close proximity to the *FAZ/FAS*

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[17] AWA = Allensbacher Markt- und Werbeträgeranalyse; agma = Arbeitsgemeinschaft Media-Analyse; IVW = Informationsgemeinschaft zur Feststellung der Verbreitung von Werbeträgern e.V.

[18] The figures for *BILD* and *BamS* are taken from URL: https://www.mediaimpact.de/artikel/Preise-Formate-Zeitungen-Anzeigenpreise-Auflagen-Zeitungen-2016_24609433.html (last accessed 25 October 2016).

[19] The figures for *BILD* and *BamS* are taken from URL: https://www.mediaimpact.de/artikel/AWA-Allensbacher-Werbetraeger-Analyse_722104.html (last accessed 25 October 2016).

[20] The figures for *FAZ* are taken from URL: http://www.faz.media/medien/frankfurter-allgemeine-zeitung-fuer-deutschland (last accessed 25 October 2016).

[21] The figures for *FAS* are taken from URL: http://www.faz.media/medien/die-fas-bei-der-elite-zu-hause (last accessed 25 October 2016).

[22] The figures for *Spiegel* are taken from URL: http://www.spiegelgruppe.de/spiegelgruppe/home.nsf/Navigation/C226C5F6118D70E0C12573F700562F49?OpenDocument (last accessed 25 October 2016).

[23] The figures for *SZ* are taken from URL: http://redaktion.sz-media.de/en/service/files/preisliste-mediadaten-sz_en.pdf (last accessed 25 October 2016).

headquarters in Frankfurt/Main, and one in Hamburg where the *Spiegel* is produced. The murder of Michèle Kiesewetter in Heilbronn in April 2007 received the most coverage in the *SZ* with its general focus on the German south and in the *FAZ/FAS*, whose central office is less than 150km north of Heilbronn. As many of the relevant articles appear in the regional sections of the *SZ* (Munich/Bavaria) and *FAZ* (Rhein-Main area), these are also included in the text corpus. The Berlin-based *BILD* and *BamS* allowed me to control for this geographical bias as none of the murders or bombings attributed to the NSU were committed in Berlin or Brandenburg, and only one of the murders in the East German states. Overall, it is reasonable to expect differences with regards to how these print media narrate the violent crimes and the NSU story.

*Data Collection and Text Corpus*

My empirical material includes a total of 1,061 newspaper articles, collected at the *Westhafen Newspaper Archive* of the State Library in Berlin (SBB) between July and September 2014. Only 174 of these articles were published between 11 September 2000, two days after the first murder, and 22 August 2011, the day the last article was published on the murder series before the discovery of the NSU, indicating a limited amount of media attention for all crimes. The other 887 articles were published in the five-month period between 8 November 2011, the day that the weapon used in the (attempted) murder 2007 was found following Mundlos' and Böhnhardt's suicide, and 31 March 2012. I also collected articles for the months April to December 2012. However, 31 March 2012 was eventually chosen as the cut-off date for the empirical analysis, not only

to reduce the corpus to a workable size, but also – and more importantly – because I identified this date as signifying the end of the immediate, and hence most intense, crisis period of the process of re-narration. Between November 2011 and March 2012, the relationship between key plot elements in the stories – victims, perpetrators, their position within German society and relationship to state authorities – is fundamentally re-negotiated before the NSU story begins to stabilise.

Based on the information about the NSU that I gathered before conducting the archival research, mainly through the report of the first Federal Parliamentary Enquiry Committee published in August 2013, the material collected includes all articles that have either one or more of the crimes and/or the NSU itself as their main topic or that focus on a key actor's (e.g. ministers, security authorities, civil society initiatives) relationship with the NSU (crimes). Since the stories I am interested in concern the topics of (intra-societal) crime, violence and security policy, the sections on business, foreign affairs, science and technology, sport, real estate, life-style, etc., were not scanned for articles.

Articles that began on the cover page and were continued within the paper were counted as one article.[24] If two different versions of articles were available (e.g. in the national and Munich edition of the *SZ*), the edition with the highest geographical reach was chosen if the differences were only marginal, otherwise both versions were included. The corpus includes the following narrative text types as all of them contribute to the development of the dominant stories over time, regardless of their claim to "objectivity": agency news items, news and background reports, cover stories, reportages, essays, op-

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[24] The *FAZ* marks these articles with the phrase "continued on" (*Fortsetzung*) and a reference to the relevant page; in *BILD* and *BamS* images on the front page are accompanied by a short teaser and a reference to the article page within the paper; there are no two-part articles in the *SZ*, *FAS* and *Spiegel*.

ed articles, feature articles, editorials, polemic commentaries, portraits, interviews, reviews, testimonies, conference reports, guest contributions, and expert opinions. In addition to elements such as timelines and chronicles I also excluded letters to the editor and press reviews, because these texts usually do not constitute coherent works of discourse as the author's original work is subject to extensive editing.[25] Given that Ricœur's theory of the text considers its man-made nature to be important and authors' identities are a key element of the creation of collective narrative identities, I also provide the name of the author(s) whenever identifiable through the by-line.[26] This also helps making visible the similarities and continuities in coverage across the 2000-2012 period. A list of the 117 identified authors (journalists and guest commentators), together with information about their educational and professional background (if available) and an index, is provided in appendix 4.

The 1,023 visual items (images, graphs, maps etc.) published together with the articles in the corpus were not considered in the analysis as this represents a semiotic system of its own (Fulton 2005c: 260) that would require a different approach to narrative analysis. Most of the images, moreover, are portraits of the perpetrators, victims and politicians or symbolic images, all of which are used repeatedly, especially after the discovery of the NSU.

The archival work proceeded as follows: I initially searched all issues of the six papers in the four week period after each of the 26 key events before November 2011 (the ten murders 2000-2007, the fourteen robberies 1998-2011, and the 2001 and 2004

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[25] See also guideline 2.6 of the German Press Codex (Deutscher Presserat 2015: 2-3).
[26] In the case of the *BILD* this is difficult, however, because it often does not provide the author's name at all, or a set of articles published on the same page is linked to a consortium of authors, often four or more. Many *Spiegel* articles are also authored by more than one journalist.

Cologne bombings) as well as all of the issues published after the bank robbery in Eisenach on 4 November and the subsequent discovery of the perpetrators in the years 2011 and 2012. Since the series of robberies and the 2001 Cologne bombing, however, were not covered by any of the papers before November 2011 and also hardly after the discovery of the NSU, I do not consider them as a separate story (-line) in the empirical discussion.

The *FAZ* was searched on microfilm, while the *FAS* was only available in print. However, since both *FAZ* and *FAS* are also available online (but only searchable through key words), I took note of relevant articles that I found in the print editions and downloaded these as PDF from the *FAZ/FAS* online archive (access through library network of the SBB). Complete issues of the *SZ* since 1998 can be browsed as PDF through the *Süddeutsche Zeitung Archiv Library Net*, also accessible through the SBB. *BILD* and *BamS* were only available as the Berlin/Brandenburg edition and in printed form and therefore had to be searched manually. Images of relevant articles were taken and catalogued. Although the articles of all *Spiegel* issues are available individually online (except for the most recent year), I searched the magazine manually as well to make sure no relevant article would be overlooked.

However, for the pre-November 2011 period this search strategy yielded very few results and the articles indicated that the media had covered the crimes in between the periods that I had searched. The papers that were available online (*SZ*, *Spiegel*, *FAZ* and *FAS*) were therefore additionally searched based on a list of key terms (see Appendix 2)

that I inferred from the articles already collected.[27] If at least one article was found in any

of these four papers, the *BILD* and *BamS* issues for the relevant month were searched

manually as well. This method resulted in the collection of 1,061 articles detailed in

appendix 3.

40.6% of these 1,061 articles are from the *SZ*, 29% from the *FAZ* and 5.5% from

the *FAS*, 17% from the *BILD*, 2.7% from the *BamS* and 5.2% from *Spiegel*. The

comparatively high number of articles in the *SZ* and *FAZ/FAS* can be attributed to the

regional concentration of the crimes indicated above: five murders were committed in

Bavaria and one in Hesse. The eighth murder in Dortmund and the Cologne bombing also

happened in close geographical proximity to the *FAZ* and *FAS*' headquarters in

Frankfurt/Main. The length of articles, however, varies considerably: while the *BILD* and

*BamS* often include very short articles of a mere 30 words, the weekly magazine *Spiegel*

often publishes articles with a length of several thousand words, based on long-term

investigative research. The average for *SZ* is 525 words per article, 470 for *FAZ*, 804 for

*FAS*, and 1,185 for *Spiegel*. For *BILD* and *BamS* an electronic work count is not available,

the article length can only be determined based on the average number of lines per

article: 44 (ca. 175 words) and 55 (ca. 250 words), respectively. Since not all issues

published between December 1998 and March 2012 were searched manually, this

collection may not be exhaustive. Nevertheless, the extensive search both in print and

online ensures that the collection is at least very close to this ideal. An overview of the

178 articles cited in the main body of the empirical discussion is provided on pages 380-

385.

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[27] Articles that appeared in the online search but had not been published in the print issue were not
included in the final text corpus.

My unit of analysis is the text as a whole because my interest lies in how the media compose coherent stories over time out of heterogeneous events. I first approached the empirical material through a pilot study of articles published in the *SZ*, *FAZ* and *Spiegel*, which could be accessed most easily, in November 2011 – the transition period during which the individual detective stories are transformed into the story of the NSU. In doing so, I acquired an overview of the relevant conceptual network of action, paying particular attention to the following elements and the relationships between them: perpetrators (individually and as a group as well as their supporters), victims (and their personal network), security authorities, witnesses, prosecutors, politicians, places, methods, motives, and intentions. This list of network elements was developed inductively with the help of NVivo (Nodes), a software application for qualitative research, and subsequently applied to the analysis of the evolving NSU story in all six papers, beginning with the *SZ*, between September 2000 and March 2012. I then used NVivo to store the substantial amount of data, but conducted the analysis itself through multiple readings of all articles, making extensive comments on specific paragraphs or whole articles. I read the articles with their conditions of production in mind and a view to the directedness of detective stories towards the identification of the perpetrator(s) – already known as the NSU – based on the key questions "What?", "Who?" and "Why?".

**Conclusion**

Taking narrative criminologists' work on offenders' stories as a basis, this chapter has applied Paul Ricœur's textual hermeneutics and narrative theory to the print news media

as a space for narrative discourses of violent crime. I have argued that news media texts are an avenue for investigating contemporary perceptions of Germanness, a notion that relates to both national identity and social cohesion. Authors, characters within the stories and the readership are all part of the hermeneutic cycle that creates and sustains a collective narrative identity. The detective stories that the media tell draw on narrative resources such as tropes, memories and stereotypes, and are shaped by the specific features of periodic and institutionalised narration: 24-hours (or 7-day) news cycles, the reliance on official sources, the audiences journalists write for and re-narration dynamics. I have introduced the reader to my empirical material and post-structuralist, inductive method of narrative analysis. The subsequent four chapters apply this analytical framework to the empirical material with the aim of answering the key research questions of this thesis: What notions of Germanness are negotiated through the narration of violent crimes and the NSU between September 2000 and March 2012, and what narrative resources does this process draw on and why?

# CHAPTER 4

## STORIES OF VIOLENT CRIME SEPTEMBER 2000-OCTOBER 2011 AND THE NARRATIVE CREATION OF THE *NATIONAL SOCIALIST UNDERGROUND*

**Introduction**

In this chapter I explore how the 2000-2006 murder series, the 2004 Cologne bombing and the 2007 (attempted) murder that are now attributed to the NSU were narrated in the news media before the group's discovery in November 2011. I also analyse the subsequent transition period in early November 2011 that triggers the re-narration of these acts as the doings of a right-wing extremist group. The analysis focuses on the conceptual network of action and narrative resources that the news media draw on to tell the stories over this eleven-year period. The discussion is based on the 174 texts that were published between 11 September 2000 and October 2011, and 19 texts that appeared between 8 and 12 November 2011 after the group committed its last bank robbery in Eisenach on 4 November and was subsequently discovered. 42.5% of these texts are from the *SZ*, 26.9% from the *FAZ*, 3.1% from the *FAS*, 17.6% from the *BILD*, 3.1% from the *BamS,* and 6.7% from *Spiegel*.

I first discuss the three distinct detective stories that were told separately before November 2011: the story of the nine serial murders that were committed between 9 September 2000 and 6 April 2006 in Nuremberg and Munich (both Bavaria), Hamburg, Rostock (Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, MWP), Dortmund (North Rhine-Westphalia, NRW) and Kassel (Hesse); the story of the explosion of a nail bomb that went off on 9 June 2004 in the Keupstraße in Cologne (NRW); and the story of the (attempted) murder

of two police officers on 25 April 2007 in Heilbronn (Baden-Wuerttemberg). Additional crimes have been attributed to the NSU since November 2011, including the second bombing in a shop in Cologne in January 2001 and a series of fourteen armed robberies of supermarkets, post offices and banks in the East German cities of Zwickau, Chemnitz (both Saxony), Stralsund (Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania) and Arnstadt (Thuringia) between December 1998 and September 2011. However, these acts were not covered in the selected print media prior to the group's discovery in conjunction with the final bank robbery in Eisenach (Thuringia) on 4 November 2011 and are therefore not subject to my analysis.

As I will show, the three detective stories exhibit very similar narrative patterns, despite the fact that they are narrated independently of each other, and in all three cases the labels "political violence" and "terrorism" are precluded, but for different reasons. This discussion provides the basis for the analysis of the narrative transition period in November 2011. This transition is provoked by the misfit between these stories and their eventual conclusion. The latter results from the (narrative) transformation of the "unknown perpetrator(s)" in each case into the "National Socialist Underground" as the perpetrator of all these crimes. In the final section I draw initial conclusions concerning the link between narrating violent crime and negotiating Germanness and prepare the ground for the discussion of the dynamics of the re-narration process in chapters 5 to 7.

**Murder Series September 2000 – April 2006**

Dynamics in Coverage

A total of 73 articles were published on the murder series between September 2000 and October 2011. The first murder on 9 September 2000 (Enver Şimşek, 38), the second one on 13 June 2001 (Abdurrahim Özüdoğru, 31) and the fourth one on 29 August 2001 (Habil Kılıç, 38) were committed in Nuremberg and Munich, respectively, and quickly identified as belonging to a series based on a key element of the perpetrators' way of operating (*modus operandi*): the weapon, a Česká 83 calibre 7.65 mm, that was used in all cases (Keppel and Birnes 2009: 2-6).[1] *BILD*, for instance, reported on 6 September 2001 that "the police in Bavaria are hunting for a serial killer" whose "victims are Turkish businessmen" ("Serienkiller erschoss drei Geschäftsleute", p. 13). The third murder in the city state of Hamburg on 27 June 2001 (Süleyman Taşköprü, 31) was confirmed as part of the series only on 31 August 2001 (Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 498), but this information may not have been released immediately by the police, so only on 10 November 2001 did the *SZ* title: "Mysterious murders of Turkish businessmen. The police are searching for a perpetrator who killed in Munich, Hamburg and Nuremberg with the same weapon" (p. 53). The fifth murder in the northern German city of Rostock on 25 February 2004 (Mehmet Turgut, 25)[2] only appeared in the story after murders six (İsmail Yaşar, 50) and seven (Theodoros Boulgarides, 41) had been committed on 9 June 2005 and 15 June

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[1] A second weapon was used for the murders of Enver Şimşek and Süleyman Taşköprü (Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 496).

[2] The victim had adopted his brother's name, Yunus Turgut, to escape military service in Turkey. The change of name was reported to the police in March 2004, but since his social contacts knew him as Yunus, the name was kept throughout the investigation process (Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 493).

2005, respectively, again in Nuremberg and Munich. However, in this case the link to the other murders based on the weapon was made already on 11 March 2004 (Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 504), but regional bias of news production may have prevented the inclusion of this geographically distant event.

While the *SZ* covered the series in detail from the very beginning (five of the nine murders, including the first two, happened in Bavaria), the *FAZ* only began telling the story after murders six and seven in June 2005, and the *Spiegel*, *BamS* and *BILD* (with the exception of the September 2001 article mentioned above) published the first texts on the series only after the last two murders had been committed on 4 April 2006 in Dortmund (Mehmet Kubaşık, 39) and on 6 April 2006 in Kassel (Halit Yozgat, 21). The *FAS* did not report the murder series at all before November 2011. The discussion below is thus predominantly based on the coverage from 2005 onwards. These dynamics in coverage are illustrated in figures 4.1 and 4.2.
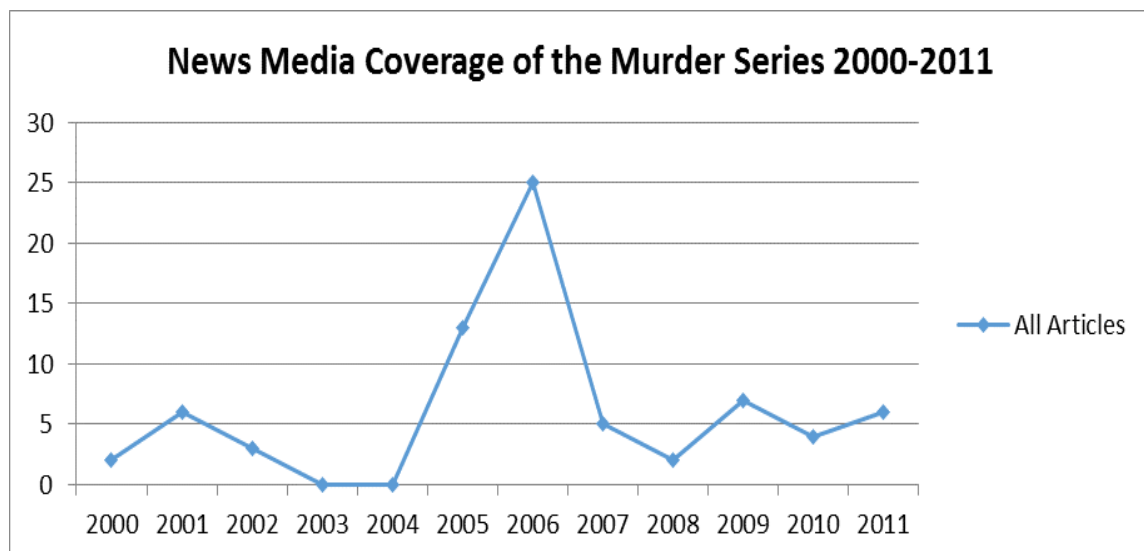


*Figure 4.1: Total Number of Articles Covering the Murder Series, 2000-October 2011*

**News Media Coverage of the 2000-2006 Murder Series (per medium)**

Legend: SZ, FAZ, FAS, BILD, BamS, Spiegel
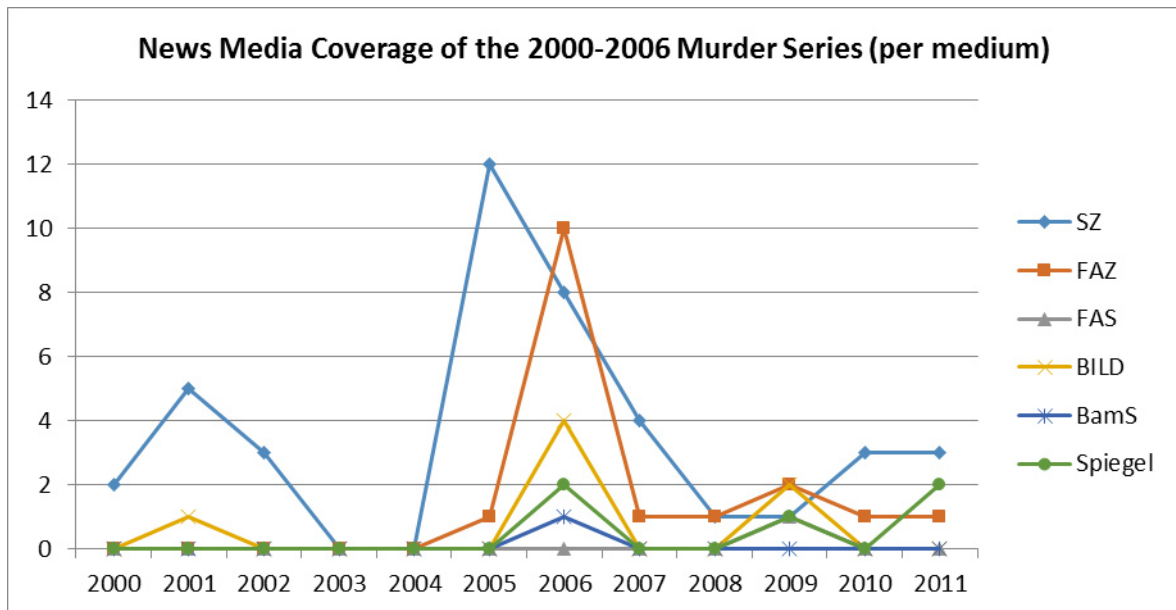
*Figure 4.2: Number of Articles Covering the Murder Series by Medium, September 2000-October 2011*

The peak in mid-2001 corresponds to the identification of the first four murders as a series. The *SZ*'s interest then declined considerably and no articles were published between November 2002 and May 2005. This corresponds broadly to the gap between the fourth murder in August 2001 and the fifth murder in February 2004, a rather long, but not unusual time interval between spatially distant serial homicides (Osborne and Salfati 2015: 189-190). This interval, however, is not addressed by the papers and amplified by the *SZ* and *FAZ* not covering the Rostock murder until 2005. Between June 2005 and August 2006 the news media cover the series most intensively as it grows from six to nine murders and the police develop new key hypotheses in July and August 2006. The peaks in coverage in 2001, 2005 and 2006 are also due to the fact that the *SZ* and *FAZ* cover the murders in Nuremberg, Munich and Kassel intensively in their respective local sections which I included in the data collection. These two papers first frame the murder

series as a pan-German phenomenon because it is no longer geographically limited to one or two German states.[3]

Establishing the Serial Murder Script

Considering that not only the weapon, but also time of day and victim characteristics are key elements of a serial offender's method of operating (Keppel and Birnes 2009: 5), it is important to look at the links that the media establish between the victims. All of them are described as male, as owners or employees of small businesses, and – with the exception of Theodoros Boulgarides – as "Turkish" or "of Turkish descent". Gender, occupation and ethnicity are thus key elements of defining the victims as a group. The murders are committed by the method of shooting and in daytime, i.e. during business hours; the crime scene is the victims' workplace – meaning that the perpetrator travelled long distances to kill the victims at the encounter site, selecting them based on specific criteria. With the exception of the last murder in an internet café in Kassel on 6 April 2006,[4] there are no other people present. Descriptions such as the following are therefore dominant, in particular after murders six and seven in June 2005 when the intensity of coverage increases. The *FAZ* writes with reference to the *ddp*:

> For five years the mysterious series of murders has been leaving a bloody trail through Germany. At least seven murders of foreign [*ausländische*] small businessmen from Munich, Nuremberg, Hamburg and Rostock have been committed by the murderers so far. All victims – six Turks and a Greek

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[3] See e.g. *SZ*, "Vier Städte suchen einen Mörder", 18 June 2005, p. 12.
[4] Five customers were using the internet café at the time of the murder, but none of them witnessed the crime (Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 495-496, 533).

– were shot with the same weapon, a Ceska [*sic*] gun, Calibre 7.65. (*FAZ*, "Neue Phantombilder der Soko 'Halbmond'", 20 June 2005, p. 9)

The murder weapon is seen not only as an element of the modus operandi that links the murders together, but also as part of the perpetrator's "signature", his personal expression (Keppel and Birnes 2009: 10). In the only *BamS* article on the murder series published before November 2011, Aysun Bektas, Kazim Dogan and NRW reporter Uwe Wojtuschak cite the Nuremberg police as follows:

> "We assume that an organisation is behind the series of murders. The perpetrators intentionally use the same weapon every time", says [Nuremberg police spokesman Peter] Grösch, "it is their signature. They want to deliberately put down a marker." (*BamS*, "Mein Vater war das erste Opfer", 16 April 2006, p. 19)

This inference that the series is the doing of a criminal organisation, because the weapon is used for all crimes, is reinforced with reference to the victims' identity as businessmen which in turn is connected to revenge as a motive. Guido Kleinhubbert and Conny Neumann, editors in the Germany and Munich departments respectively, write in the *Spiegel* that

> [i]t seems as if the perpetrators were deliberately laying a trail in this cruel game: the Ceska [*sic*]. The weapon and the brutal method make the Special Commission feel certain: The gunmen are professionals. Presumably they are acting by order of an international organisation. But what the police are missing is a motive. After all, there are apparently no points of contact between the victims at all. None of the men were politically or religiously active, there are no leads on drugs, smuggling or money laundering. […] To whom had the retailers become such a threat that they had to die? Who wanted to take revenge on them and for what? (*Spiegel*, "Die Spur der Ceska", 17 April 2006, p. 46/50)

The victim selection pattern identified – male, "foreigner", involved in business activities – thus leads to further assumptions about the past behaviour of the victims and the motive of the perpetrators: a perception of the victims as a threat. This story implies that the victims provoked the murders to some extent, following a pre-established relationship to the perpetrators. This interpretation defines the serial murders as a violent strategy within the milieu of organised crime rather than as the doing of a typical serial murderer, although some of the latter's features (e.g. victims and perpetrator are strangers) apply, while others (e.g. vulnerable victims such as children, prostitutes and the elderly) do not (Fox and Levin 1998). The next section discusses what narrative resources shape this particular narration of the serial murders, one that is established early on and based on very limited information.

German Discourses of Integration and the Homogenisation of the Victim Group

The narration of the murder series is shaped by the perception that the victims are of the same or similar ethnicity and share an occupational status. With regards to their ethnicity, the homogenisation of the victims ensues in spite of the considerable differences between them:[5] Enver Şimşek and his family lived in Schlüchtern (Hesse) and had been resident in Germany since 1985. Abdurrahim Özüdoğru came to Germany in 1972 to study, while Süleyman Taşköprü followed his parents as a child to Germany in the early 1980s and Habil Kılıç his wife in 1989. Mehmet Turgut had entered Germany illegally from his home country Turkey as a minor in 1994 and was deported; he returned in 1998 and applied for asylum, but the application was rejected in January 1999. İsmail Yaşar came to

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[5] All biographical details are taken from Deutscher Bundestag (2013: 71, 493, 496, 731) and Mair (n.d.).

Germany in 1978, whereas the Alevite Mehmet Kubaşık fled to Germany in 1991 together with his family to escape religious persecution. Their asylum application was granted and the family naturalised in 2003. Halit Yozgat was the child of Turkish immigrants who had come to Germany in 1970; he received German citizenship on his 18th birthday. The Greek citizen Theodoros Boulgarides, who was married to a German, came to Munich in 1973, completed his A-levels (*Abitur*) there and trained as a retail salesman. While the media often mention his Greek background, they include him in the group of Turkish victims by association through references such as "B. had many Turkish friends" (*Spiegel*, "Die Spur der Ceska", 17 April 2006, p. 50) or "Turkish-looking small businessmen" (*FAZ*, "Serienkiller", 1 August 2007, p. 36). The terminology that the news media use interchangeably to describe the victims – "foreigners" (*Ausländer*), "immigrants", "Turkish-born", "of Turkish/Greek descent", "German-Turks" and, very rarely, "German",[6] often in combination in one and the same article – accounts for these differences in legal status, migration history and ethnicity only to a very limited extent.

Similarly, the victims are generally described as "small businessmen", although there are considerable differences with regards to their occupational status, too. Enver Şimşek worked in factories for six years before starting his own business as a flower wholesaler, eventually owning several shops and stalls across Germany. Abdurrahim Özüdoğru was a shift worker and ran his alteration shop part-time together with his wife. Süleyman Taşköprü and Habil Kılıç had their own greengrocer's shops, both family businesses, in Hamburg and Munich, but Kılıç mostly worked at the central market. Since

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[6] E.g. *FAZ*, "Neuntes Opfer des Dönermörders", 11 April 2006, p. 9; *FAZ*, "Verfassungsschützer unter Mordverdacht", 15 July 2006, p. 9. The *FAZ* and *FAS*' tendency to be more accurate with regards to Halit Yozgat's legal status might be attributable to the papers' local focus on Hesse and the Rhein-Main area.

Mehmet Turgut's deportation to Turkey was immanent, he earned his money off the books by helping out at a friend's kebab stand where he was then shot. İsmail Yaşar had run different shops in Nuremberg before opening his kebab takeaway in 2002. Theodoros Boulgarides worked for the railway transport company *Deutsche Bahn* before he opened his key-cutting service together with a business partner two weeks before his death. Mehmet Kubaşık had worked as an unskilled labourer and a builder before opening his family's kiosk in June 2004, less than two years before he was murdered. And Halit Yozgat attended evening school while running his own internet café in Kassel with the help of his father. Overall, the similarities between the victims are therefore, in fact, rather superficial, but the media nevertheless define the victims as a homogeneous group and as a key element of the conceptual network of (criminal) action.

From Guest Workers to "Persons with a Migration Background"

The dominant interpretation of who the victims are stands in context of Germany's struggle to conceive of itself as a country of immigration. As David Horrocks and Eva Kolinsky have argued (1996: xx-xxi), this struggle is not only rooted in the idea of national and cultural homogeneity of the "Germans", but also in the homogenisation of non-German minorities. Immigrants from Turkey or Greece and their descendants are two of the biggest minority groups in Germany since guest worker agreements were reached between these countries and the FRG (and, to a lesser extent, the GDR)[7] in 1960 and 1961, respectively, when West Germany was considered an emigration rather than an

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[7] The GDR invited guest workers from socialist countries, in particular Hungary, Poland, Vietnam and Cuba, but in much lower quantities and fewer of them settled permanently (Zwengel 2011: 3-8).

immigration country in the aftermath of WWII.[8] The recruitment was a way of sustaining West Germany's post-war economic growth in light of a shortage of domestic male workers and therefore guest workers were, first and foremost, seen as the solution to an economic problem (Chin 2002: 50). Although the programme was also a means of demonstrating an openness towards the "non-German" that had been completely destroyed by the racial policies of the National Socialists and the crimes committed in their name (Triadafilopoulos and Schönwälder 2006: 11-13), (male) guest workers were not understood as individuals with their own complex cultural, religious and political identities that they brought to the FRG. In fact, the 1965 Foreigner Law (*Ausländergesetz*) stated that their residence in Germany could only be granted "if the foreigner's presence [*Anwesenheit des Ausländers*] does not adversely affect the interests of the Federal Republic of Germany", meaning that they were tolerated as long as they fulfilled their key purpose: to be economically useful (Chin 2002: 52, author's translation).

However, the continuous renewal of work and residence permits and the absence of a rotation scheme for economic and diplomatic reasons questioned the notion of "guests" from the outset (Triadafilopoulos and Schönwälder 2006: 2) and resulted in the eventual settlement of many workers (Chin 2002; 52; see also Green 2013). At the same time, the number of family reunifications grew steadily based on a revised recruitment agreement with Turkey in 1964 that reflected the view that a restriction of workers' family reunification rights would "raise unwanted criticism and damage West Germany's efforts to enhance its image abroad" (Triadafilopoulos and Schönwälder 2006: 8). After

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[8] Before the building of the Wall in August 1961, 3.8 million people of East Germany fled to the FRG for political and economic reasons. They were generally welcomed by the West German State, mainly because of their utility as cheap labour to support the economic miracle (Jarausch 2006: 242).

the end of recruitment in November 1973 (*Anwerbestopp*) following the global oil crisis and subsequent economic recession in Germany, there were 2.6 million foreign workers in Germany, among them 605,000 Turks (Jarausch 2006: 243). Due to further, long-term settlement in an improved economic situation by workers and their families, the latter figure rose continuously over time, reaching just over 1.5 million in 1981 (Statistisches Bundesamt 1983: 66). Since by then these migrants were no longer perceived through the lens of their economic utility, but had become "unexpected immigrants" (Jarausch 2006: 243), the focus shifted towards their cultural Otherness in addition to their non-German citizenship. The term "foreigner" (*Ausländer*), rather than "guest worker", subsequently became dominant in public discourse in the 1970s (Bauder 2008: 97), locating any socio-economic problems associated with these immigrants *outside* German society qua labelling (Koopmans 1999: 634).

Throughout the period of recruiting guest workers the German citizenship law, dating from 1913, continued to construct a historically grown "organic image of the German people" based on the principle of *ius sanguinis*, or blood descent. Only after reunification was a more active and inclusionary immigration policy pursued (Mushaben 2010: 76, 82; Bauder 2008: 96-98) which also ended the competition of defining German citizenship that had prevailed between the FRG and GDR in connection with their respective claims to being the legitimate successor state of the German Reich (Williams 2015: 120-121). The new citizenship law introduced in 2000 granted citizenship also based on place of birth (*ius soli*), albeit with restrictions.[9] Simultaneously, the statistical

[9] Following legal changes in 1990 and 1993 and based on the new citizenship law, adults can be naturalised if they have been resident in Germany for at least eight years (later lowered in connection with language acquisition), have sufficient language skills, adhere to the Basic Law, are economically self-sufficient and

category "persons with a migration background" (*Personen mit Migrationshintergrund*) was introduced to account for this change. This includes

> all foreigners and those who were naturalised, everyone who came to Germany after 1949 as a German, as well as all those who were born as Germans in Germany and have at least one parent who migrated to or was born as a foreigner in Germany. (Statistisches Bundesamt 2015: 5, original translation)

The category thus includes immigrants with and those without German citizenship, effectively rendering the binary between "Germans" and "foreigners" obsolete, while assuming that even those with a personal or second generation history of integration who are German citizens, either through naturalisation or by birth, continue to have a (statistically) higher need for integration.

The legal changes represented an attempt to re-approach the formative process of building the nation state from a more integrative perspective. German society had become increasingly diverse over time due to successive immigration waves which included guest workers, but also EU migrants, late resettlers (*Spätaussiedler*) after the end of the Cold War and asylum seekers, in particular during the Bosnian War (Green 2013: 333, 344; Mushaben 2010: 79; Bauder 2009: 267). Preceded by the introduction of a German Green Card in 2000 (discontinued in 2004), the new citizenship law was followed by other major integration initiatives: a new immigration law in 2005, the establishment in 2006 of the German Islam Conference (*Deutsche Islam Konferenz*) and

have a clean police record (in 2008 a naturalisation exam and citizenship oath were added). Children who are born in Germany to parents who are not themselves German citizens automatically receive German citizenship. If they were born before 2000, they need to decide between the German and their other citizenship between the ages of 18 and 23. Since the reformation of the law in 2014, children born in Germany in or after the year 2000 can now keep both citizenships if they have lived in Germany for at least eight years or went to school there for at least six years before their 21st birthday. Double citizenship is not tied to any conditions if the second citizenship is that of another EU state or Switzerland (§29 StAG).

an Integration Summit (*Integrationsgipfel*) as top-down consultation bodies situated at the interface between state and society (Musch 2012).

In 2014 just under 16.4 million "persons with a migration background", 20.3 percent of the total population, lived in Germany, among them 2.9 million with a Turkish migration background and around 394,000 with a Greek migration background – around 3.5% and 0.5% of the total population, respectively (Statistisches Bundesamt 2015: 38, 208). While statistics reveal that persons with a migration background continue to have a lower educational level than those without, and those with a Turkish migration background are even at the bottom of this group (Woellert and Klingholz 2014: 27-31; Sachs et al. 2016: 14), they have contributed to German society in major ways. The most visible contribution is perhaps the "ethnic economy" (kebab stands, grocery shops, etc.) that developed once the number of jobs for guest workers in the heavy industry and construction sectors began to decrease in the early 1980s (Mushaben 2010: 81). In 2014, the German migrant economy (solo entrepreneurs and employers with a migration background and those employed by them) provided jobs for around 2 million people (out of a total of 39.9 million), mainly in the service sector (Sachs et al. 2016: 19, 24). With the exception of Mehmet Turgut, all of the murder victims contributed to this booming migrant economy through their own businesses.

The news media's struggle with the question of where to locate the victims within German (national) society qua labelling and the dominance of the notion of "Turkish and Greek small businessmen" is connected to these dynamic political, legal and discursive changes. The stereotyping is reinforced by the seriality of the crimes as it abstracts from

the individual act, and hence the individual victim (Hickey 2010: 33), and makes the similarities and differences between them the focus of the investigation.

Narrating Difference and Labelling

The categories ethnicity ("Turk") and "occupation" ("small businessmen") provide the key for the media's understanding of the perpetrator's victim selection. There is an increasing conflation of the victims' individual identity over time as (male) "foreign workers" who are per se *different* from "the Germans". This perspective is also reflected in the labels attached to the murder series as a whole. These include the names "Soko Crescent" (established after the fourth murder in August 2004) and "Soko Bosporus" (created after the seventh murder in June 2005) for the two investigative teams based in Nuremberg, neither of which the media comment on, as well as the media label "kebab murders" that becomes dominant in summer 2005.

The crescent is a historical symbol originating in the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires and was adopted for the national flag of Turkey in 1936. The label "Soko Crescent" therefore suggests that the crimes are firmly located within a "Turkish" context. "Soko Bosporus" further reinforces this image: it refers to a strait that divides the city of Istanbul in the far northwest of Turkey and is often seen not only as the geographical border between Europe and Asia, but also as the frontier between the "(European) Self" and the "(Asian) Other" (e.g. Pocock 2002: 56-57). Both labels create a spatial distance between "us" (Germans) and "them" (the victims) as the "immigrant 'Other'". This is connected to the idea that the guest worker programme amounted to an "active importation of a traditional geopolitical other within the boundaries of German

society", following a history in which "Ottoman Turks represented the primary social and cultural other that served to define and consolidate Western Europe as a historical whole" (Chin 2002: 51; see also Soykut 2003). Because of the settlement of guest workers discussed above, this "Other" became a permanent element of German society, a development that was not accounted for on the political level. Hence guest workers acquired the hybrid status of what Georg Simmel has called the "stranger": someone who, other than the "outsider" or "wanderer", lives in a group and engages in constant interaction with it – most notably through his activity as a (mobile) trader of goods, which applies to four of the nine victims[10] – yet is perceived as distant from it. S/he blurs the boundaries between inside and outside, order and chaos, the known and the unknown and therefore arouses suspicion (Bauman 1991; Banks 2012). The category of the stranger, simultaneously near and remote in relation to the group, is by definition a generalised category that disregards the differences between individuals because they are identified predominantly *through* their strangeness (Simmel 1971 [1908]), in this case through their migration background.

The third label "kebab murders", originally created by the local *Nuremberg Zeitung* in August 2005 (Virchow, Thomas and Grittmann 2015: 6) and adopted by *SZ*, *FAZ* and *BILD*, demonstrates, amongst other things, the need for reductive language due to space restrictions in print and a requirement to make (the excessively available) news as digestible as possible, thereby encouraging stereotyping (Fulton 2005b: 238). It refers to the above mentioned "ethnic economy". In Germany the kebab is considered an ethnic

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[10] This applies to Enver Şimşek, Süleyman Taşköprü, Habil Kılıç and Mehmet Kubaşık; Abdurrahim Özüdoğru, Theodoros Boulgarides and Halit Yozgat offered services; Mehmet Turgut and İsmail Yaşar were in the gastronomy business.

food that is predominantly associated with the Turkish diaspora (Rudolph and Hillmann 1998). In addition to this emphasis on the victims' Otherness, the label also constructs a close relationship between the perpetrator as a specific individual and his (the perpetrator is assumed to be male throughout the coverage) victims as a distinct group: "Mysterious murder series: for years the police has been hunting a 'kebab murderer' who shoots owners of snack stands" (*SZ*, "Tod am Dönerstand", 9 April 2008, p. 12).

While these labels therefore reveal the generalisations ("Turks") and stereotypes that journalists draw on to narrate the murder series (Virchow, Thomas and Grittmann 2015: 7, 36-37), the narrative analysis shows where these stereotypes originate from – public discourses about persons with a Turkish/Southeast European migration background as "guest workers" and (then) "foreigners" since the 1960s – and how they drive the process of narration. The next section discusses how the media connect this Otherness of the "stranger" to the Otherness of the "deviant", even in the absence of concrete crimes (Banks 2012).

The Victims as Deviants

The search for the perpetrator is shaped by a general suspicion towards the nine men and their families because of their migration background. On the one hand, there is repeated mention that an involvement in the drug dealing business or human trafficking is a possible scenario,[11] but this does not develop into an actual story at any point. Assumptions about non-criminal deviance, on the other hand, shape the narration

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[11] See e.g. *SZ*, "Ramersdorfer Mordfall – es waren Serientäter", 12 October 2002, p. 39; *FAZ*, "Verfassungsschützer unter Mordverdacht", 15 July 2006, p. 9; *SZ*, "Chiffren eines tödlichen Codes", 7 August 2006, p. 3.

noticeably, suggesting that *as* immigrants the victims are generally vulnerable and/or

have insufficiently adapted to German "mainstream" society. This is reflected by

references, particularly frequent in *SZ* and *FAZ*, such as "[s]ome of the victims had […]

considered a withdrawal from business" or "none of the victims were wealthy" (*FAZ*,

"Neun Tote, eine Pistole und kein Motiv", 12 April 2006, p. 57), claims that are apparently

simply adapted from police sources. In some articles this is taken as evidence that profit-

oriented motives are unlikely: "Sales were way too low for a protection racket" (*Spiegel*,

"Die Spur der Ceska", 17 April 2006, p. 50). This vulnerability, it is suggested, has led to

the men's victimisation, and it is a *relative* vulnerability vis-à-vis "Germans". This view is

prevalent especially in the *SZ*. Northern Bavaria correspondent Olaf Przybilla quotes the

chief of the Soko Bosporus:

> *The* Turkish shopkeepers, the criminal division chief [leader of the Special
> Commission "Bosporus" Wolfgang Geier] explains, "do not care two figs
> about *our* kind of bookkeeping". On the slips of paper that were seized one
> could only track the "bizarrely unprofitable deals" some of the victims had
> made. (*SZ*, "Hilflose Suche nach einem Phantom", 24 July 2006, p. 10, my
> emphasis)

This characterises the victim group indirectly through a habitual act of omission: they do

not do what is *expected* of them, namely to practice proper (i.e. "German") bookkeeping.

It also suggests that (some of) the victims' alleged failures as businessmen are connected

to this omission and, ultimately, to their death. Przybilla leaves Geier's interpretation

uncommented, and neither the *SZ* nor the *FAZ* consider alternative explanations for

economic struggle, in particular for immigrant entrepreneurs (e.g. a "glass ceiling", see

Sachs et al. 2016: 27-33).

The papers thus identify a hierarchal relationship between "Turks" and "Germans" as essentialised identities. They link the deviant behaviour of the victims prior to their deaths, whether in a criminal or non-criminal sense, to the criminal behaviour of the perpetrators, committed *within* an overall "deviant foreign milieu" in which the nine men are both victims and offenders. They therefore do not constitute what Christie (1986) has called an "ideal victim", a status that requires not having put oneself at risk deliberately – as in, for example, crime motivated by racial hatred – and evoking sympathy from others (Green 2007: 95, 100). This trope of "deviant foreign milieus" that implies stories of perpetration and victimhood simultaneously is particularly relevant for the narration of both the murder series and the 2004 Cologne bombing.

Immigrants as Victims and Perpetrators

The ambiguous portrayal of the victims appears to merge two narrative traditions with regards to the portrayal of the (former) guest worker as a "foreigner" in Germany: in the 1970s and 1980s guest workers had been seen as vulnerable and pitiful, an image that became particularly visible in the *Gastarbeiterliteratur* and *-filme* that focused on social victimisation (Fischer and McGowan 1996: 3-5). Simultaneously, they stood for economic productivity during the German economic miracle, albeit under exploitative circumstances. During the 1980s this victim image gave way to portrayals of guest workers-turned-immigrants, in particular those with a Turkish background, as incapable of integrating themselves and prone to criminality (Jarausch 2006: 244). A period of emancipation, represented in the literary and cinematic work of second and third generation migrants in the 1990s followed, focusing on the creation of "a 'third space'

between the celebration and the denial of otherness" and thus a hybrid form of German-Turkish identity (Burns 2007: 364-367). At the same time, however, their status as victims was reinforced by the arson attacks on houses of contract workers and asylum homes in Hoyerswerda (September 1991) and Rostock (August 1992), as well as on houses of Turkish families in Mölln (November 1992) and Solingen (May 1993) with eight fatalities and twenty-four injured persons. These events, which were seen as one manifestation of the resurgence of ideas of German cultural homogeneity after reunification, triggered an immediate wave of public acknowledgements of Germany's status as a multicultural country, a rejection of right-wing extremist ideas and violence by the economic and political elite under the conservative-liberal Kohl government as well as by civil society, and a change in the legal assessment of arson attacks.[12] However, the questions of how to deal with multicultural realities, achieve social acceptance rather than just preserving social peace (Horrocks and Kolinsky 1996: xv-xvii), and retain Germany's integration capacity were not answered[13] and only small steps (e.g. introduction of a language test in 1993) were made. At the same time, although the restriction of the basic right to asylum (Art. 16 GG) in May 1993 (see Bosswick 2000) reduced the number of incoming refugees, the number of legal foreigners in Germany grew constantly (Jarausch 2006: 252-257).

After Gerhard Schröder's victory in the federal elections in 1998 and the subsequent establishment of a coalition between the SPD and the Greens, the oppositional CDU/CSU initiated a debate about the country's "foreigner policy" in

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[12] Federal Supreme Court (*Bundesgerichtshof*), 4th Criminal Division, Verdict 105/94, 7 June 1994 regarding "conditional intent to kill in case of arson" (*Bedingter Tötungsvorsatz bei Brandanschlägen*), https://www.jurion.de/Urteile/BGH/1994-06-07/4-StR-105_94 (last accessed 5 June 2016).

[13] The ongoing struggle to respond to these realities is well captured by the *Spiegel* cover on 14 April 1997 (Issue No 16), which reads "Dangerously Foreign. Foreigners and Germans: The Failure of the Multicultural Society" (*Gefährlich Fremd. Ausländer und Deutsche: Das Scheitern der multikulturellen Gesellschaft*).

response to tentative plans of the new government to institutionalise Germany's de facto status as a country of immigration that eventually resulted in the legal changes and initiatives mentioned above. The conservative-led debate pitted the idea of a dividing multiculturalism against the notion of a *Leitkultur* ("guiding culture"). It was introduced in October 2000, less than ten months after the entering into force of the new citizenship law, by MdB Friedrich Merz (CDU). Merz' demand followed on from MdB Jörg Schönbohm's (CDU) earlier rejection of granting German citizenship purely on the basis of compliance with constitutional rules. While he did evoke the Habermasian notion of constitutional patriotism as a basis for a Europe-focused German *Leitkultur*, the concept was nevertheless connected to the idea that some cultures were too different from each other and should therefore remain separated as conflict would otherwise be inevitable. This implied a new drawing of boundaries between "Germans" (us) and (non-European) "immigrants" (them) based on culture (*ius cultus*) rather than ethnic descent (Pautz 2005: 40-47) as well as a general "suspicion of detachment and divided loyalties" by immigrants in Germany (Horrocks and Kolinsky 1996: xi; Pautz 2005: 45-47). This tendency to suspect that those who were perceived as "culturally different" might potentially behave in a deviant ("un-German") way was then further reinforced by the Islamist terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 in New York, on 11 March 2004 in Madrid and on 7 July 2005 in London which established an image of ethnic minorities and immigrants, in particular those of Muslim faith, as perpetrators (Bauder 2008; Mythen and Walklate 2006). This was also reflected in the 2005 immigration law, which included provisions for the deportation of non-citizens deemed to be a potential terrorist threat (Pautz 2005: 51).

Silence and Invisibilities in Parallel Worlds

Based on this dominance of stories that reinforce the idea of "deviant foreign milieus",

the media consider the mistrust of the German police towards the murder victims to be

justified. This is expressed in particular by the notion of "silence" as it relates to the

behaviour of the victims' family members whose questioning is a routine part of criminal

investigations (Innes 2003b: 3). In the *SZ* we read the following in an article by Joachim

Käppner, head of the local news office:

> The investigators encountered an alien [*fremde*] world of *the Turks*. And
> silence. In the midst of Munich, Nuremberg and Kassel there is this world
> with its own rules. When the police come, they are sceptical. *The Turks*
> brought the caution towards the authority of the state with them *from
> home*. "One cannot simply walk in on a Turkish retailer's home and ask
> questions", says officer [Albert] Vögeler: "That doesn't work *with them*."
> (*SZ*, "Chiffren eines tödlichen Codes", 7 August 2006, p. 3, my emphasis)

While investigators are trained to expect "the worst" of people because they deal with

uncertain information (Innes 2003b: 11), this text illustrates an understanding of

immigrant communities as living in "parallel worlds". This is an essentialising notion that

signals scepticism towards multiculturalism in context of the integration debates outlined

above (Schiffauer 2008; Schönwälder and Triadafilopoulos 2016: 370-371).[14] It suggests

that the victims and their families as "the Turks" have different values and follow

different rules than "the Germans" due to their ethnic origins, regardless of how long

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[14] In 2004 the expression "parallel world" came second place in the *Association for the German Language*'s
choice of words of the year that dominated public discourses, see URL: http://gfds.de/aktionen/wort-des-
jahres (last accessed 31 July 2016).

they have been resident in Germany,[15] and hence cannot be trusted (see also Virchow,

Thomas and Grittmann 2015: 49). This is corroborated by Olaf Przybilla in the *SZ*:

> In view of the wall of silence, [Special Commission chief Wolfgang] Geier
> says he sometimes has the impression that "*the Turks* have not yet arrived
> in this society". Of course there is fear. Of course the wives and the
> immediate family circle often do not know about the business activities.
> "But often", says chief prosecutor Walter Kimmel who is involved in the
> Bavarian cases, "my guts tell me: Someone knows more – but he doesn't
> want to tell us." (*SZ*, "Hilflose Suche nach einem Phantom", 24 July 2006, p.
> 10, my emphasis)

According to Przybilla, investigators do not have access to this "parallel world";

happenings within it remain invisible to them. He also follows a stereotype that is both

ethnicised and gendered by depicting business activities as being limited to the "head of

the family" within Turkish culture – despite the fact that, for example, Özüdoğru's wife

initially ran the alteration shop on her own, and both Kubaşık's Kiosk and Yozgat's

internet café were run with the support of their families.

The silence of the victims' families is thus understood as an act of deliberate

resistance and connivance, rather than as a sign of innocence or lack of knowledge: the

agents *behind* the serial murders – almost all of which were committed in cities with a

high immigrant population[16] – are, so the assumption, known within the Turkish

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[15] This perception of guest workers and their descendants as well as (former) asylum seekers as
"foreigners", regardless of their long residence in Germany, has traditionally been contrasted with the
perception of "resettlers", immigrants of ethnic decent from the former Soviet Union and East European
countries, who came to Germany after the end of the Cold War and were granted citizenship immediately
based on *ius sanguinis* – a paradox of "native foreigners and foreign Germans", as Koopmans (1999) puts it.
However, the privileges for ethnic Germans regarding naturalisation have been considerably curtailed in
recent years as part of the liberalisation of Germany's nationality policies (Williams 2015).
[16] According to the *Land Statistical Office Berlin-Brandenburg*, the percentage of persons with a migration
background in four of these cities is as follows (2011): Nuremberg 37%, Munich 36%, Hamburg 27%, and
Dortmund 29%, see URL: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/148820/migrantenanteil-in-

community, but intentionally kept secret from the German police (see also Kleffner 2015: 4). *Spiegel* editors Guido Kleinhubbert and Conny Neumann continue their article as follows:

> Some of the investigators believe that families or friends could provide answers to these questions to some extent. But they only say the minimum: wives allegedly never concerned themselves with the business, friends suddenly describe the acquaintances as rather casual. None of the family members of one of the Nuremberg victims wanted to talk either, a young relative only said: "We don't know anything, but we are pretty scared. Who knows what else will happen." (*Spiegel*, "Die Spur der Ceska", 17 April 2006, p. 46/50)

Families and friends have something to say, but refuse to do so in expectation of further retaliation ("Who knows what else might happen"). In the *BamS* Bektas, Dogan and Wojtuschak's also consider this idea of retaliation. They quote Şimşek's daughter Semiya as follows:

> Out of grief and fear of the perpetrators no one from the family has so far commented on the crimes. In BamS Semiya S. (20), the daughter of the first victim, talks about her feelings for the first time – and her fear of the killers. […] "After the murder we kept going through all of the scenarios, searched for the why", says daughter Semiya. "But we did not find an answer. And that scared us even more." […] "After all we didn't know if they had only been after him, or after our family. When would it be our turn? After the murder I was terrified of going outside on my own, often felt as if I was being followed." […] The [decisive clue] could come from within the milieu of the Turkish retailers, but has so far failed to materialise. The people keep silent out of fear. (*BamS*, "'Mein Vater war das erste Opfer", 16 April 2006, p. 18-19)

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deutschen-grossstaedten-waechst. The percentage for Kassel was 35% in 2010, see URL: http://www.kassel.de/imperia/md/content/cms04/zukunft/i-konzept_gesamt_druck_mit_anlagen.pdf. Rostock is an exception with only 6.7% share in 2011, see URL: http://rathaus.rostock.de/sixcms/ media.php/1068/Integrationskonzept_HRO.pdf, p. 5; all last accessed 26 September 2016.

Both of the quotes above take the silence of the families as a media event in itself in order to keep the story of the murders alive, given the absence of investigation results (Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2008: 41-42). Although Semiya Şimşek claims that her family does not know why her father was shot, the *BamS* nevertheless suggests that it is the milieu of Turkish retailers that is likely to know the answer. Moreover, the feeling of being terrorised that she describes, provoked by the idea that "it could have been me", is strictly limited to the Turkish community (see also Virchow, Thomas and Grittmann 2015: 38). Guido Kleinhubbert and Conny Neumann's *Spiegel* article supports this notion of fear within the "parallel world of the Turks":

> Everyone is scared now, but perhaps it is not always just the diffuse fears of a phantom with a Czech automatic pistol. Investigators believe that there has to be some kind of relationship between the murdered and the murderers, and a vague idea among *their fellow countrymen*. But no matter how big the fear may be – nobody lets the police in. The almost impenetrable parallel world of the Turks protects the killers. Special Commission chief Wolfgang Geier admitted that the investigations had made the officers realise "how little the police actually knows about *foreign* [*ausländische*] parts of the population and *their* mentality in *our* country." (*Spiegel*, "Die Spur der Ceska", 17 April 2006, p. 50, my emphasis)

The opposition between the "Germans" and the "Turks", which integration policy in the early and mid-2000s tried to tackle, is reinforced here. This strict separation appears to prevent the media from linking the terrorising element to "terrorism" as a violent strategy or to the effects of a "hate crime".

Overall the murder series is thus not seen as a case of *intra-societal*, but *intra-milieu* violence that happens to be committed in Germany, but does not emerge from within, but from outside the "community of Germans" – from the deviant milieu of

"foreigners" or "immigrants". It is defined as the expression of immigrants' unwillingness or inability to integrate into German society. In light of this, it is not surprising that none of the papers cover the protest march in Kassel on 6 May 2006 and the silent protest in Dortmund on 11 June 2006, initiated by Mehmet Kubaşık's wife (see also Virchow, Thomas and Grittmann 2015: 70): both addressed the German authorities and the public to demand greater efforts to find the perpetrators and prevent further deaths (see also Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 496).

The assumption of deviant behaviour on the side of the victims prior to their death is thus a key element of the story based on pre-judgements about "Turks". It questions their (moral) innocence, while the criminally deviant behaviour of the perpetrator(s) as murderers is not explicitly addressed.


Between Trust and Suspicion: The Difference-Deviance-Nexus

Notwithstanding the media focus on "deviant immigrant milieus", it also needs to be pointed out that all papers include references to individual victims as "hardworking, ordinary, well integrated" (Kleinhubbert and Neumann in *Spiegel*, "Die Spur der Ceska", 17 April 2006, p. 46) and explicitly characterise them as friendly individuals. For example, Olaf Przybilla writes in the *SZ* after the seventh murder in June 2005:

> Meanwhile pupils from the Scharrer School have turned the aluminium hut [of the kebab stand] into a notice-board where they share their grief about the death of the salesman who is said to have been "a good man" [*ein guter Mann*] and often gave the children an ice pop for free. He did so until Thursday last week; at 9.50am little Murat had waved at the imposing fifty-year-old with the walrus moustache one more time. Fifteen minutes later

> Ismael, the good person from the Scharrer Street, was dead. Executed by a serial killer." (*SZ*, "Vier Städte suchen einen Mörder", 18 June 2005, p. 12)

The implicit intertextual reference to the fate of prostitute Shen Te in Brecht's *The Good Person of Szechwan* (*Der Gute Mensch von Sezuan*) appears to have been chosen deliberately by the author to assist İsmail Yaşar's depiction as a "split character" who struggled with the incompatibility of his kindness and the rules of the (Turkish) world in which he lived, making him vulnerable and eventually leading to his death. Bektas, Dogan and Wojtuschak (*BamS*) also portray Enver Şimşek as a hard-working father of two as seen through the eyes of his daughter Semiya who was fourteen when Şimşek was murdered:

> "He worked a lot and hard and sadly had very little time for us children", Semiya recalls. "Because we complained, he promised in spring 2000 that he would spend the whole summer holidays with us." Enver S. travelled with his children through Germany for six weeks. The young woman [says] sadly: "It was very nice, but it was our last holiday together." One week later Enver S. was shot. (*BamS*, "'Mein Vater war das erste Opfer'", 16 April 2006, p. 19)

Rather than being a contradiction between favourable and unfavourable portrayals of the victims, this ambivalence suggests a peculiar relation between approaching immigrants as individuals and as communities. The media see the murder series as an event that reveals something that is usually hidden from view: behind the "façade of integration" and regardless of positive individual qualities such as being hard-working and responsible (traits often seen as stereotypically "German"), the structures of "immigrant milieus" that have developed over decades but were only put on the political agenda in the early

2000s, still exist, cementing immigrants' detachment from German society. This implies

that integrated individual immigrants are not the exception to the rule as Virchow and his

colleagues conclude (2015: 70), but rather a defining element of Germany's society

(Schönwälder and Triadafilopoulos 2016: 375-376). However, notions of deviant

immigrant communities continue to exist and are met with suspicion. Individual

immigrants with diverse migration backgrounds and immigrant communities are thus

assigned separate, yet connected roles in German society, with the latter, rather than the

former, being the "stranger".

What is discernible from the stories, then, is a general suspicion that being

ethnically and (therefore) culturally different involves a potential for behaving in a

deviant way because that which is "strange" remains partially inaccessible. I suggest

terming this phenomenon the "difference-deviance-nexus". It appears to be the result of

the ambivalent approach towards "immigrants" in the early 2000s: on the one hand,

immigration was restricted in fear of being "overrun", especially on the part of the

CDU/CSU, while on the other hand, integration was promoted, leading to a situation in

which Germany became a country of "immigration without an immigration policy"

(Jarausch 2006: 262). I will discuss these ideas further in chapter 5.

Taken together, until 2006 the news media stories exhibit the following narrative

dynamics: they interpret the murders as acts of retaliation based on a pre-established

(business) relationship between perpetrators and victims. The latter's previous deviant

behaviour is assumed to have led to their victimhood, rather than passive victim*isation*.

The focus on the victims' own agency as the trigger for the violent acts means that serial

murder is considered to be a strategy employed by the milieu of organised crime,

implying that the victims are not (morally) innocent. In this story, victim and perpetrator are not clearly opposed to each other, but are expected to be part of the same ethnic and, these texts imply, criminal milieu. The result is that the acts of violent crime as a whole are "othered" since they are located within an "alien", "non-German" world. Moreover, while the acts remain defined as elements of a murder series, the perpetrator is predominantly assumed to have acted on behalf of a criminal organisation. Given that serial murderers typically operate locally within an area that is familiar to them (Norris 2014: 11), this reading of serial murder as organised crime also makes it possible to explain the geographical spread of the murders.

A (Temporary) Change in the Story

Even after two (white) men with bikes are identified as suspects following the sixth and seventh murder in Nuremberg and Munich in June 2005 and facial composites are issued by the police,[17] the reading of the murder series as "crime within the immigrant milieu" remains dominant. The stories subsequently keep mentioning the unknown, male perpetrator(s). After the eighth and ninth murder in 2006, the absence of investigation results that can support the story of "serial murder as organised crime" becomes increasingly apparent. This is illustrated, for instance, by *FAZ* trainee Timo Frasch who writes that

> [a]ll victims were shot with the same weapon, a "Ceska" [*sic*] gun, calibre 7.65, type 83 [...]. All victims had links to Turkey: Six were Turks, one victim was Greek who came from "the Turkish dominated part of Greece",

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[17] E.g. *FAZ*, "Neue Phantombilder der Soko Halbmond", 20 June 2005, p. 9; none of the papers publish the composites, however.

according to the Nuremberg police. The other victims were Germans of Turkish origin. In addition all victims worked as small businessmen: Kiosk owner, kebab stand operator, owner of a key-cutting service. What they have in common beyond this currently still separates them: none of the victims could be linked to the other ones so far, in none of the murder cases is the motive obvious, let alone clear. The Special Commission Bosporus has compiled a motive catalogue with thirteen possible motives, from drug trade to human trafficking to right-wing radicalism. Targeted murder is possible, but it might also be that the victims were selected arbitrarily. (*FAZ*, "Verfassungsschützer unter Mordverdacht", 15 July 2006, p. 9)

The above quote indicates that the notion of "deviant immigrants" as a dominant narrative resource does not lead to a coherent story six years after the beginning of the murder series; the perpetrator-victim relationship is still unclear. This is perhaps also the reason why Frasch's descriptions of the victims' migration backgrounds are more accurate than in previous articles.

There are two (temporary) changes that respond to the challenge of telling a coherent story by shifting the focus from the victims to the perpetrator: first, it is reported on 14 July 2006 that two weeks after the murder of Halit Yozgat in his internet café in Kassel, an agent of the VerfS in Hesse, whose name is not revealed, was arrested as a suspect because he had been in the café during the murder, but then disappeared and did not react to any of the calls for witnesses.[18] Despite this reluctance to cooperate, other witnesses' testimonies that support the suspicion,[19] the agent's work for the VerfS department for "foreigner extremism" (*Ausländerextremismus*)[20] and the discovery of

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[18] E.g. *BILD*, "Verfassungsschützer unter Verdacht!", 14 July 2006, p. 11.

[19] The agent, so the story, was anxious not to reveal his sexual interests that he pursued online. Witnesses are quoted as saying that he carried a plastic bag – an item that is assumed to have been used to carry the weapon and catch the bullet casings after each of the murders (see e.g. *Spiegel*, "Seltsame Neigungen", 17 July 2006, p. 44).

[20] See the website of the VerfS in Hesse, URL: https://lfv.hessen.de/extremismus/ausl%C3%A4nder extremismus/merkmale-des-allgemeinen-ausl%C3%A4nderextremismus (last accessed 31 July 2016).

literature about serial murders in his apartment, the accusations do not shape the story-telling process for long. However, considering that the VerfS is a direct expression of Germany's post-1945 constitutional ethos as a "defensive democracy", charged with the protection of the democratic system against its enemies (Langenbacher 2015: 89), doubts about the agent's innocence are nevertheless raised initially. The *FAZ* quotes the Senior Prosecutor based on *dpa* information as follows:

> "If an employee of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution does not come forward after such an incident, it is indeed suspicious", says Kassel chief prosecutor Hans-Manfred Jung. The official claims that he left the premises one minute before the fatal head shots hit the Turkish operator of the internet café and only learned of the crime later in the newspaper. […] "We do not have any leads that he was at the other crime scenes", says Jung. (*FAZ*, "Mordserie: Agent verdächtig", 15 July 2006, p. 70)

Since it is the task of the VerfS to collect information and identify threats in order to prevent efforts that are directed against the liberal-democratic basic order, constitution and/or existence of the FRG and its states,[21] the agent's behaviour has the potential of establishing a problematic non-antagonistic relationship between the previously othered "milieu crimes" and the German state, putting the investigators and the intelligence service at opposite ends of the righteous/criminal continuum. *Spiegel* editors Guido Kleinhubbert, Conny Neumann and Sven Röbel express this as follows:

> A strange smell will probably persist as long as some questions remain unanswered: will it be possible to prove that R. was not in the internet café on official business? Did the Criminal Investigation Department stumble

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[21] Federal Constitution Protection Act (§3), URL: http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bundesrecht/bverfschg/gesamt.pdf (last accessed 7 August 2016).

upon a secret operation and the tale of R.'s bizarre double life is only a distraction tactic? (*Spiegel*, "Seltsame Neigungen", 17 July 2006, p. 46)

These questions, however, remain unanswered and the story is not followed beyond July 2006, illustrating the media's tendency to accept accounts offered by political officials in neglect of their watchdog function. The only post-2006 exception is another *Spiegel* article published on 22 August 2011 ("Versteck in der Schweiz", p. 32-33) that again questions the agent's accidental presence in the café, pointing to the magazine's greater focus on investigative journalism rather than daily news.

In August 2006, the *BILD* and *SZ* publish a couple of articles that present a new, but short-lived perpetrator-focused hypothesis based on an operative case analysis.[22] It abstracts from the agency of the individual victim and instead considers the victims' representativeness for Turks as an ethnic group. Jörg Völkerling writes in the *BILD*:

So far the police have had no good leads. But now the investigators are confident: The "kebab killer" is a lone perpetrator. His motive: a diffuse hate of Turks! Profiler Alexander Horn (33) from Munich: "Perhaps he had a fight with a Turk or a negative encounter during holidays in Turkey. Or a Turk pinched his wife, took away his job." The investigators no longer believe that perpetrator and victims were involved in criminal affairs with money or drugs. The dead business men did not have contacts to criminal organisations, most of them lived on the breadline. The profiler: "They were chosen randomly!" […] The investigator [criminal division chief Wolfgang Geier]: "A serial murderer usually only operates locally. An exception are deeds linked to high professional mobility." A rep? A courier driver? A trucker? An employee of a moving company? (*BILD*, "Polizei sicher: Döner-Killer ein gemeiner Türken-Hasser!", 8 August 2006, p. 9)

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[22] As the report of the first federal enquiry committee states, this was the second operative case analysis. The first one, also developed by Alexander Horn in Munich, was presented already in August 2005 and suggested organised crime as the most likely hypothesis. A right-wing extremist motive was not discussed (Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 529).

Again taking the allegedly weak economic situation of the victims as a basis, the serial

murderer, according to this story, is a lone perpetrator guided by hate for Turks as a

specific minority group. His crimes express overt emotions, but also suggest that he

operates in a strategic manner and travels routinely as part of his job – an alternative

explanation for the geographic spread of the murders. Völkerling continues his article as

follows:

> The profiler: "We are not looking for a crazed lunatic. One also cannot
> picture the perpetrator as being like Hannibal Lector from "Silence of the
> Lambs". When perpetrators like him are identified one usually says: This
> nice neighbour, I could not have imagined him doing such a thing…" (*BILD*,
> "Döner-Killer ein gemeiner Türkenhasser", 8 August 2006, p. 9)[23]

Völkerling assumes that the perpetrator rationalised his deeds and is "normal" to the

extent that he is socially involved, a characteristic that, contrary to popular depictions,

applies to many serial murderers (Osborne and Salfati 2015: 192). In this *SZ* article

Joachim Käppner references the historical development of modern criminal psychology

whose founding fathers

> described their hunt for serial murderer and sex offenders, not without
> pathos, as a journey into the darkness of the human soul. They wanted to
> bring light into it, explore the perpetrator's feelings in order to catch him.
> [Profiler] Alexander Horn is trying precisely that. (*SZ*, "Chiffren eines
> tödlichen Codes", 7 August 2006, p. 3)

Not only does Käppner present a fictional, dramatised image of the practice of profiling

that sees it as a form of psychoanalysis rather than evidence-based analysis of the crime

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[23] In an earlier article, the *FAZ* had also quoted a criminal psychologist as saying that "No psychopathic killer
is behind this", see "Neun Tote, eine Pistole und kein Motiv", 12 April 2006, p. 57.

scene and the perpetrator's behaviour (Herndon 2007; Osterburg and Ward 2010: 121). It is also striking that this is the only time that the "killer" is explicitly defined as a (lone) "serial murderer"; otherwise the focus is on serial murder as a method used by organised criminals. In this version of the story, characteristics of stereotypical serial murderers – spatially restricted, socially involved and leading a "double life" (Osborne and Salfati 2015) – are used as a resource to narrate the crimes and to make sense of the perpetrator's motives and behaviour.

While the victims' belonging to a specific social group is thus understood as the factor that explains the perpetrator's victim selection, the series is not (explicitly) defined as a case of "hate crime" and hence as expressing a right-wing mindset or extremist ideology. This would point to the perpetrator's own inner conflicts that produce a hate for all that is "strange" (Bohleber 1995: 334). Instead, his xenophobia is seen as the result of personal unpleasant experiences with members of the victim group. That is, the murders are not seen as a manifestation of a power imbalance between the social group that the perpetrator identifies with (in this case most likely "white Germans") and the victim group, which would imply their interpretation as an expression of a larger socio-political problem, e.g. racist violence, either committed from within or independent of the right-wing extremist milieu (see also Virchow, Thomas and Grittmann 2015: 27). Instead, the crimes continue to be narrated as acts of revenge – if not in return for criminal, then for "immoral" behaviour of members of the victims' social group.

The story abstracts from the identity of the individual victim, but it does not identify a message to the victim group, let alone German society as a whole. Instead, the murders are seen as the expression of exceptional, deviant behaviour by an otherwise

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"normal" person, which trivialises and de-politicises them. Whereas the life stories of the victims had previously been told *through* their death, as if it was "bound to happen", the perpetrator's social identity is separated from his criminal identity. This takes us back to the fact that distinctively racist, xenophobic or otherwise misanthropic motives as an aggravating factor for any type of crime were not integrated into the German Criminal Code before 2015, reflecting the lack of acknowledgment concerning Germany's diversification and reluctance to explicitly condemn victimisation based on (ethnic) difference (Chakraborti and Garland 2009: 13).

It is, of course, important to acknowledge that the image of the victim group as "morally guilty" is *attributed to* the perpetrator, who is only implicitly defined as a German, by Völkerling (*BILD*), Käppner and Wimmer (both *SZ*). However, they do not challenge this notion of "previous negative experiences with Turks" in any way either. Käppner even states that "there is no evidence for a right-wing extremist [perpetrator] whatsoever. It is probably rather connected to personal experience" (*SZ*, "Chiffren eines tödlichen Codes", 7 August 2006, p. 3). The general suspicion towards the victims as a group therefore continues to guide the narrative process. While the story implies that victims and perpetrator are no longer assumed to be part of the same social milieu and are hence more opposed to each other, the process of "othering" the victims is reinforced further. The violent response of the perpetrator to his own negative experiences is explained with reference to the behaviour of the targeted group itself. The dichotomy of "German lone perpetrators" and "foreign gangs" that this narration suggests has also been observed by other empirical studies (Jäger 2016).

Neither the hypothesis of the involvement of the VerfS in the murder series, nor that of the perpetrator as a "Turk hater" are pursued by the news media beyond summer 2006. On the contrary, there is a return to the story of "serial murder as organised crime". In mid-December 2009, for instance, the *BILD* and *Spiegel* publish articles that locate the crimes within the betting milieu, combining prejudices against Turks, the notion of revenge and the alleged financial problems of the victims. It is again reporter Joachim Völkerling who asks in the *BILD*:

> Were the victims, eight Turks and one Greek, really in trouble with the betting mafia? Did they want to become rich with sports bets? Or did they borrow money from the mafia and not pay it back? The murder victims were all killed with the same weapon. Like a warning: "He who does not pay, dies!" The investigators of the Special Commission "Bosporus" to BILD: "Two victims definitely had gambling debts. They frequented Turkish Clubs, took part in gaming rounds. It was a Turkish gamble." (*BILD*, "Ermordete die Wettmafia diese 9 Männer?", 14 December 2009, p. 11)

This story sees the weapon as a symbol of threat, connected to gambling debts as a motive. Although it is revoked already the next day in both papers, the story demonstrates again how quickly the media take recourse to negative stereotypes of persons with a Turkish migration background in Germany, not only in the tabloid press. In the *Spiegel* editors Conny Neumann and Andreas Ulrich place the murder series in the context of the "Turkish deep state", a "network of ultranationalist, military officers, politicians and the judiciary", stating that "the perpetrator or perpetrators remain a phantom" ("Düstere Parallelwelt", 21 February 2010, p. 64). A few months later the same authors return to the story of "serial murder as organised crime", this time with reference to organised nationalist groups in Turkey:

The murders, that much the investigators know, are the price for debts from criminal deals or revenge on renegades. […] During their investigations the Nuremberg Special Commission "Bosporus" came across Mehmet, a man from the milieu in question. Mehmet has lived in Germany for a long time. He told the officials that he was smuggled into the Federal Republic for the organisation in order to complete tricky jobs on the ground. They came to trust each other, the informant was considered a good source. Internally the Special Commission leaders commended that Mehmet's testimony "fits the pattern". (*Spiegel*, "Versteck in der Schweiz", 22 August 2011, p. 32-33)

The story of the serial murders as events within the deviant milieu of immigrants therefore continues to shape the narration process until November 2011, by which time the murder series has long acquired the status of an unclosed serial narrative (Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2008).

**Cologne Bombing June 2004**

On 9 June 2004 a nail bomb exploded in the Keupstraße in the district Mülheim in northeast Cologne, roughly three months after the fifth serial murder was committed in Rostock, injuring 22 people. While the murder series received intensive coverage, albeit unevenly as shown above, media attention for the 2004 Cologne bombing was much more limited. Except for a *Spiegel* article in July 2006 that mentioned the bombing briefly, all other 32 texts were published between June and October 2004 – a clear illustration of news fatigue. However, all papers except for the *FAS* covered the event to some extent, most extensively again the *SZ*:
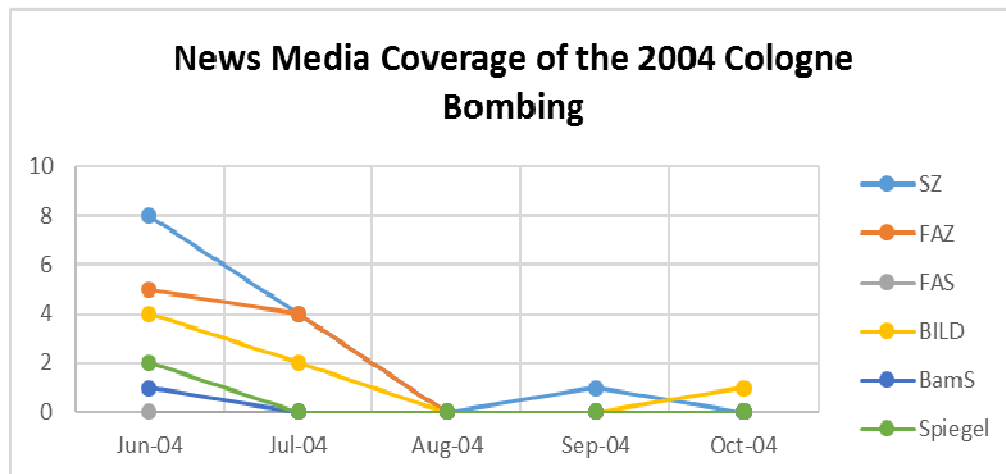
*Figure 4.3: Number of Articles Covering the 2004 Cologne Bombing, June-October 2004*

The limited media attention for the bombing, despite the fact that it is a spectacular case of violent crime, seems to be the result of a combination of three factors: first, the bombing is a one-off event without fatalities; secondly, there is a lack of investigation results to develop a story beyond the first few months following the event; and thirdly, the media narrate it as the result of conflicts that are specific to the Keupstraße, rather than as the expression of a larger socio-political problem. In this section I will focus on the third factor.

"Terrorism" between Keupstraße and 9/11

The narration of the bombing is shaped by two plot elements in particular: the violent method itself that is apt to target a bigger group of people rather than individuals, and the Keupstraße as a specific location for the attack. The former provokes the immediate consideration of "terrorism" as a specific violent strategy. The *Spiegel*, for instance, indicates that the explosive material is linked to specific types of criminal actors:

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According to vague findings, the utilised explosive could be TNT – an explosive that in the past has been used "in the generally criminal milieu" (an investigator) and by terrorists alike. (*Spiegel*, "Fahndung nach dem Sprengstoff", 14 June 2004, p. 21)

It is also the random character of the public setting of the act that is linked to "terrorism".

*SZ* correspondent in NRW Hans-Jörg Heims reflects on the crime scene:

Indeed, who does something like that? Who leans a bike, on which a bomb spiked with nails is mounted, against a house wall on a sunny afternoon in the middle of a busy residential and shopping street? That is the question that the investigators are also asking themselves (*SZ*, "'Wer tut nur so etwas Entsetzliches?'", 11 June 2004, p. 12)

Nevertheless, only the *BILD* asks explicitly on the day after the attack: "Was it terror that reached Cologne at 3.58pm? [...] The background of the attack is entirely unclear, CID and state security forces have no trace of the assassins." ("15.58 Uhr explodierte die Nagel-Bombe", 10 June 2004, p. 13) The question implies that "terror" is used synonymously with "terrorism" and not linked to the effects that the violent act has on victims and witnesses, but to the perpetrator's identity and intention. Neither the *BILD* nor any of the other papers pursue this version of the story further. Instead, they quickly establish a story of the bombing as organised crime and later, based on the self-made style of the bomb,[24] petty crime. Already two days after the bombing the *BILD* writes with reference to the VerfS and chief prosecutor:

The investigators are confident: It was revenge, but not an act of terror! A spokesperson of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution: "The investigations point to organised crime". The explosive charge filled with

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[24] See e.g. *SZ*, "Köln: Bombenleger war bei Explosion in der Nähe", 16 June 2004, p. 14.

ten centimetres long carpenter nails was fixed to a bike. Chief prosecutor Rainer Wolf: "The perpetrator wanted to strike as many people as possible!" (*BILD*, "Die Nagelbombe explodierte auf diesem Fahrrad", 11 June 2004, p. 11)

Although the explosion did not target specific individuals and was designed to have the maximum destructive effect, it is nevertheless not seen as an act of terrorism. With reference to the type of bomb NRW correspondent Peter Schilder makes clear in the *FAZ* that, if at all, the bombing constitutes *Islamist* terrorism within the local Islamist milieu:

> Apparently the explosion [...] has no terrorist background. As chief prosecutor Rainer Wolf advised on Corpus Christi Day, [...] a "generally criminal background" is being considered. Federal Minister of the Interior [Otto] Schily also confirmed this [...]. The design of the attack could also have resulted in many fatalities, said Schily. [...] For initial speculations had indicated that it could indeed have been a terrorist attack. There is a certain sense of relief in Cologne that it was probably not a terrorist attack which would have carried the conflicts with radical Islamists into their own backyard. (*FAZ*, "'Allgemeindeliktischer Hintergrund'", 11 June 2004, p. 9)

These texts indicate that the story of organised crime is linked to the second key plot element: the location of the act, the Keupstraße, as a Muslim neighbourhood. Three months after the bombing, *SZ* correspondent Heims accepts that the police did not seriously consider a terrorist attack from Islamists because of the location of the bombing:

> But strange: None of the officials anticipates that it was a terrorist attack. Even though it has been only three months since Osama bin Laden had his terrorists bomb Madrid. An Al-Qaeda attack? "That did not fit the location", says [department head Tobias] Clauer. That it is more than a gas explosion, however, quickly became clear to him as well [...]. (*SZ*, "Die unheimlichen Nagelbomber", 3 September 2004, p. 10)

Given that, as the author points out, the bombings in Madrid on 11 March 2004 happened a mere three months earlier and considering that the attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 with its almost 3,000 victims had been interpreted as the beginning of the era of mass terrorism, this interpretation begs the question *why* exactly the Keupstraße as a crime scene precludes a terrorist attack. Two reasons can be discerned from the texts. The first one is that the victims are not seen as fitting the image of terrorism dominant in 2004 in the aftermath of these major attacks in the US and Spain because the people who inhabit "this place" are, mostly implicitly, defined as Muslims and therefore fit the post-9/11 perpetrator image better than the victim image. This international dimension of narrating the act, which played hardly any role in the reading of the murder series, is evident, for instance, in the following description of the crime scene by Heims in the *SZ*:

> Diagonally across the scene of crime a red poster hangs in the window of a residential house. "No war, no war in Iraq, no war for oil", is written on it. But the day after the bloody bomb attack one part of the Keupstraße in the Cologne district Mühlheim still almost brings to mind images of destruction from Bagdad or Najaf. (*SZ*, "'Wer tut nur so etwas Entsetzliches?'", 11 June 2004, p. 12)

According to Heims, the crime scene resembles the scenes of the war in Iraq that had begun in 2003 – a war that the US branded a struggle *against* Islamist terrorists in response to the attacks of 9/11. Heim's article also speaks of the Corpus Christi procession on 10 June 2004 as a religious practice that stands for the divide between the German and the Turkish population of the neighbourhood. *FAZ* correspondent Peter

Schilder reinforces his focus on the allegedly Islamist milieu of the Keupstraße by continuing his article as follows:

> Even the residents are unable or unwilling to make sense of it. Some preclude an Islamist background because there are hardly any radicals among the neighbourhood's Muslims, and very few followers of the "Caliph of Cologne", Metin Kaplan, live there. […] But all of this is guesses and speculations. (*FAZ*, "'Allgemeindeliktischer Hintergrund'", 11 June 2004, p. 9)

Similar to the coverage of the murder series that extends until two years after the Cologne bombing, Schilder deliberately mentions the possibility that the local residents are unwilling to explain what happened, thereby distancing himself (and the reader) from "this place" and its residents – both of which had already been the focus of German media coverage in the aftermath of the Madrid bombings because of Kaplan's activities as a local fundamentalist Islamic leader.[25] This immediate response to the events seems to confirm what Spalek has observed with regards to the notion of Islamist terrorism as one of the "new terrorisms". It includes

> the construction of Muslim minorities as comprising 'suspect communities' who should be monitored by state agencies, casting new questions about citizenship, identity and loyalty. Young Muslim men in particular have been viewed as constituting a 'problem group' and a 'fifth column enemy within' by media, politicians, the security services and agencies of the criminal justice system […]. (Spalek 2008: 211)

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[25] Kaplan had been resident in Germany since the 1980s, first with a tourist visa, later as an asylum seeker. He was eventually deported to Turkey in October 2004 where he was convicted of having planned a bomb attack on the Atatürk Mausoleum in Ankara in 1998. See *Spiegel* Issue 24/2004, "Der Fall Kaplan oder: Wie der Staat sich von seinen Gegnern vorführen lässt", and Trautmann (2006).

An increasing hostility towards Muslims in Germany following 9/11 has also been documented in long-term sociological studies (see Leibold et al. 2012). We thus find the same general suspicion towards the victims here as in the narration of the murder series, based on the post-9/11 perpetrator-image of ethnic minorities. However, in this context it is specifically the trope "Muslims as perpetrators" that dominates as it is connected to post-9/11 stories of terrorism as an outside attack *on* non-Muslims *by* Muslims. This speaks against narrating the Cologne bombing as a terrorist attack. It is telling that none of the articles mention any of the, at the time, fairly recent cases of domestic terrorism by White Supremacists, in particular the Oklahoma City bombing in April 1995 by Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols and the nail bombs placed by David Copeland in London in April 1999. This further illustrates how much (German) terrorism discourses were shaped by the events of 9/11.[26]

The second, closely connected dimension of the non-application of the "terrorism" label is a perception of the Keupstraße as a place that, again, generally represents the "immigrant other" within Germany society. Heims (*SZ*) writes further:

> The Keupstraße is part of a neighbourhood that any integration officer would be wary of. Here Germans and Turks live in parallel next to each other. […] Only a few steps further down "Little Istanbul" begins. The houses here may not look different than in the part of the street that is mostly inhabited by Germans. […] But hardly any German lives or runs a shop in this part of the Keupstraße. (*SZ*, "'Wer tut nur so etwas Entsetzliches?'", 11 June 2004, p. 12)

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[26] The report of the first Federal Enquiry Committee, however, points out that the Federal VerfS did compare the attack to the bombings in London, but inferred from the fact that the nail bomb was constructed differently and mounted on a bike that the perpetrators were locals (Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 707-709).

Germans and Turks, whose Otherness is predominantly defined through their ascribed identity as "Muslims",[27] are again separated as ethnic groups – as the author suggests, the German character of some parts of the Keupstraße is but a façade by now. Peter Schilder (*FAZ*) is even more explicit in his judgment. Picking up on the "parallel societies" narrative that dominates the story of the murder series as well he writes:

> There is also the other side of the colourful oriental flair of Keupstraße, namely gambling, protection rackets, drug dealing and power struggles between Turks, Kurds, Albanians, Serbs and Bosnians. Occasionally there are shootings in Cologne too. Investigations are not easier than in the terrorist milieu. Criminal organisations are often "closed societies" that are hardly accessible for German security authorities. (*FAZ*, "'Allgemein-deliktischer Hintergrund'", 11 June 2004, p. 9)

Schilder suggests that the "colourful oriental flair" is but one side of the coin, the other one being gambling, protection racket, drug dealing and competition between ethnic groups. That is, "immigrant communities" necessarily involve positive and negative, more specifically criminal, aspects. Similar to how the papers treat the families of the victims of the murder series, the victims of the Cologne bombing are also marginalised in favour of a close coverage of the police work (see also Virchow, Thomas and Grittmann 2015: 50). Apart from a couple of witness testimonies, only three of the 32 articles published in 2004, two in the *SZ* and one in the *FAZ*,[28] include or refer to interpretations of the event

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[27] Koopmans (1999: 638-639) has stated that ethnic minorities in Germany, due to the immigration and integration policies pursued throughout the second half of the 20th-century, traditionally identify themselves and are identified by others predominantly as "foreigners" through their nationality or ethnicity. This stands in contrast to other countries, e.g. Britain, where racial and religious groups are more important.

[28] *SZ*, "Wer tut nur so etwas Entsetzliches?", 11 June 2004, p. 12; *FAZ*, "'Allgemeindeliktischer Hintergrund'", 11 June 2004, p. 9; *SZ*, "Für einen Haftbefehl reicht der Verdacht nicht", 12 July 2004, p. 12.

by victims or local residents. The alternative story offered by the locals, which Heims refers to as well, is one of right-wing extremist violence:

> "It was right-wing extremists", many said in their immediate response that is shaped by shock and horror. But following the evaluation of the first traces, a xenophobic motive is also out of the question for the police. […] Understandably enough the residents put the blame outside their own milieu, after all it took a long time before the Keupstraße was rid of its reputation as a den of vice. Ten years ago a criminal scene of drug trade, prostitution, gambling and protection rackets dominated the neighbourhood. Germans and Turks fought it together. […] But it is not as if the police are no longer called to the narrow street. Time and again Turkish, Kurdish or Albanian gangs carry out their territorial fights with knives and guns. It would be a new quality if it turned out that the opponents were now also waging war against each other with bombs. […] Little Istanbul is not supposed to become the Bronx. (*SZ*, "Wer tut nur so etwas Entsetzliches?", 11 June 2004, p. 12)

As this excerpt indicates, the stories told by the residents of Keupstraße, to the limited extent that they appear in the papers at all, are disregarded, in spite of previous joint successes in improving the neighbourhood's image and a lack of investigation results that could further substantiate the story of petty or organised crime within the milieu. While details about the residents of Keupstraße are mentioned (for instance that the bomb exploded in front of the hair salon of Yildrim Ozcan), they are not considered as a reliable source, even though they witnessed, and are directly affected by, the event. Instead, the media rely on politicians and investigators as socially powerful actors. The consequence of this process of story-telling is, again, the "othering" of this act of violent crime as a whole through its definition as an event within an "alien, non-German world". This narration corroborates the findings from the previous section: the dominant narrative is that difference in an ethnic, cultural and religious sense, while also carrying positive

connotations, implies a *potential* for deviant behaviour. "Little Istanbul" may thus become a symbol of social decay and dominated by gang violence, similar to the ethnically and racially mixed New York City Borough of the Bronx.

In summary, the media take recourse to a repertoire of stories signified by two tropes: "deviant foreign milieus" and, more specifically, "Muslims as perpetrators". This implies that the media do not see an identitarian link between the residents of the Keupstraße as the victims and German society. As a consequence, one of the key criteria of the concept of "terrorism" discussed in chapter 2 is not fulfilled. This perspective might be attributable to the effect that 9/11, as a major and consequential terrorism event, had on German society because it reinforced the nexus between difference and deviance, while at the same time stereotyping Muslims as "new terrorists" who were aiming at the highest possible level of destruction. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann observed the following in 2002:

> Until the attacks in America, Germans had experienced remarkably few problems living together with [Muslim] Turkish immigrants. […] After September 11, however, the Germans became aware of the potential for conflict in their own country, a potential perhaps made more apparent by the fact that three of the perpetrators of the attacks had lived and studied in Hamburg for a long time prior to the attacks without drawing any attention to themselves. (2002: 309)

Indeed, 9/11 initiated a shift towards a definition of immigrants based on their religious, specifically Muslim, identities and an idea of Islam as a threat to social cohesion, which again contributed to a homogenisation of those originally from a "Muslim country", regardless of their actual religious practice or beliefs (Spielhaus 2006; Brubaker 2013).

The beginning of this shift seems to be observable in how the news media narrate the Cologne bombing. The murder series, however, began before 9/11 *and* involved the killing of individuals with a firearm which is likely to have prevented its narration as acts of terrorism.

Reflecting the theoretical assumptions behind terrorism as a communicative strategy discussed in chapter 2, the consequence of the lack of the media's identification with the victims is that the bombing is not interpreted as a message crime that aims to communicate political demands because it is the neighbourhood of Keupstraße itself that is seen as the audience – a conflict between intra-milieu groups that the majoritarian "we", represented by the news media, is not involved in. Consequentially, a terrorising effect is not transported from the news media to its general readership. Instead, fear as a side effect (rather than as a primary goal) of the bombing is, similar to the murder series, limited to the Turkish community itself. Correspondent Heims (*SZ*) writes in another article:

> At first glance everyday life has returned to Keupstraße. Only the damage to the front of house number 29 is reminiscent of the bloody nail bomb attack that shocked the neighbourhood mainly inhabited by Turks in Cologne Mühlheim a month ago. But Ali Demir who knows all the people in the street, knows that appearances are deceptive. Many were afraid that such a horrible deed might repeat itself as long as it is unclear who committed the attack, says the chairman of the Community Interest Group Keupstraße. (*SZ*, "Für einen Haftbefehl reicht der Verdacht nicht", 12 July 2004, p. 12)

The dominance of these specific narrative resources prevents a narration of the bombing as "terrorism", although other plot elements, such as the method, randomness and time of the act (during the day) could indeed support this story.

An Alternative Story

After the initial narrative response to the bombing – one that involves the explicit rejection of reading the attack as "terrorism" and focuses instead on organised or petty crime within the (Turkish) milieu – another plot element is added to the story: the implicit or explicit characterisation of the perpetrator(s) as "German". Already a couple of days after the bombing a suspect is identified on a CCTV recording. While all of the papers cover this development, only *SZ* and *BILD* publish the actual image. It shows a male person pushing the bike which presumably carries the bomb. This piece of evidence subsequently becomes a key plot element. The *Bam*S writes:

> After the nail bomb attack with 22, in some cases severely, injured people the Cologne police are still looking for the unknown perpetrator. In the meantime further tip-offs relating to an approximately 30 year old man with presumably blond hair have been received. A good lead is not yet among them. (*BamS*, "Kölner Attentäter weiter flüchtig", 13 June 2004, p. 9)

The *SZ*, with reference to the *dpa*, emphasises that this blond man is not necessarily a suspect: "But a police spokesperson emphasised: 'We are not looking for the man as a perpetrator, it is also possible that someone put the explosive device on his bike.'" ("Erste Spur nach Nagelbombe", 12 June 2004, p. 12) This reluctance to draw conclusions about the (blond) perpetrator is striking given how quickly assumptions about a "foreign"

perpetrator were made in the case of the murder series, although in both cases the news

media seem to simply follow the police interpretation. A few weeks later it is reported

that in total three suspects have been arrested and released again. In the *SZ*

correspondent in NRW Hans-Jörg Heims identifies the first one as a German, while

keeping its focus on the story of petty crime that is now, however, located outside the

Turkish milieu:

> After a tip-off from among the population the police has arrested a 23-year-old man on suspicion of having carried out the bloody nail bomb attack in Cologne Mühlheim a month ago. […] The suspect is apparently a German who lived in Cologne until a few years ago, but now lives in northern Hesse. His apartment there was searched. There are no findings regarding contacts to the right-wing extremist scene. According to the police the lead points towards the "generally criminal milieu". (*SZ*, "Festnahme im Fall der Kölner Nagelbombe", 10 July 2004, p. 12)

In the *FAZ*, which had identified the other two suspects as being of Turkish descent in an

earlier article ("Zwei Festnahmen im Fall 'Nagelbombe'", 13 July 2004, p. 7), Peter

Schilder corroborates this interpretation:

> The two men, 28-year-old twin brothers from Cologne, had been arrested on Monday afternoon; they were released again on Tuesday morning. As police circles revealed, the investigators became aware of the men following tip-offs from the population. Apparently there is a connection to the 23 year old man who was interrogated on Friday and released as well. All three of them are regarded as petty criminals. This indicates that the police suspects that the initiators of the attack are from within this milieu and the milieu of the Keupstraße. Political motives, such as right-wing extremism and Islamism, are still not precluded, however. There is no really good lead yet. (*FAZ*, "Weitere Verdächtige in Köln wieder frei", 14 July 2004, p. 7)

The story of petty crime is pursued further when the media confirm on 31 July 2004 that the police are continuing to look for two (German) perpetrators, both of whom had been caught on camera shortly before the act.[29] While a right-wing extremist background as previously suspected by the victims and residents themselves is ultimately rejected, a fear of the "foreign" that has grown into hatred is considered as a motive. However, as in the case of the murder series, this is not linked to a political ideology. Instead, the crime is also interpreted as exceptional, abnormal behaviour of "German" perpetrators. This is evident, for example, in the following police quote provided by Hans-Jörg Heims in the *SZ* that sees the suffering produced by the bombing not as the perpetrators' intention, but as an incidental consequence that the perpetrators are willing to tolerate to achieve their actual goal, personal excitement:

> According to the experts of the State Office of Criminal Investigations the wanted persons are not "classic recognisable dangerous criminals". There is in fact a lot of evidence that they are "rather ordinary", says leading investigator Markus Weber. The crime had been planned very well though. […] There are still no leads on the motive. The investigators precluded a terrorist background or a crime in the milieu of organised crime. "We assume that the two men are not part of an organisation", says Weber. However, the agents do not want to rule out a xenophobic motive completely. The men had probably wanted a "kick" and were willing to accept the death of many random victims, said prosecutor Rainer Wolf. They "continue to pose a major threat". (*SZ*, "Fahndung nach zwei Männern", 31 July 2004, p. 5)

In a later article, the same *SZ* author – similarly to what the papers do in the coverage of the murder series – connects the xenophobic motive to the notion of revenge. It implies

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[29] E.g. *SZ*, "Fahndung nach zwei Männern", p. 5; that the perpetrators of the murder series and the Cologne bombing might be identical (and hence story-lines of a bigger story) is only mentioned once in the *SZ* which quotes the police as saying that this is "virtually impossible" (*SZ*, "Sieben Morde, aber keine Spur", 28 June 2005, p. 48; see also Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 524-525).

that the perpetrators, this time specifically in the local context of the Keupstraße, have

had negative experiences with "foreigners" or "Turks":

> By now a lot suggests a crime motivated by hatred of foreigners [*Ausländer*]. […] "It was a personal act of revenge", says [Superintendent] Weber about the motive. "Perhaps against Turks, against foreigners, against the Keupstraße. Perhaps something happened there at some point." But what? (*SZ*, "Die unheimlichen Nagelbomber", 3 September 2004, p. 10)

The bombing is thus also not defined as an act of "hate crime" that would connect it to

bias-led violence against minorities, but instead as the doing of lone perpetrators with

idiosyncratic motives against a naturally deviant milieu.

The *BILD* reports on 23 October 2004 that the police continue to search for the

perpetrators within or near the district of Cologne-Mühlheim, assuming that they are

local and hence operating within familiar territory ("Nagelbomber: 2500 Männer zum

Verhör", p. 11). After October 2004 no articles are published, with the exception of a brief

mentioning of the bombing in a *Spiegel* article from 10 July 2006 ("Exotische Klänge", p.

44-45). This is a portrait of Armin Laschet, the first state Minister for Integration in NRW,

appointed in 2005 – an institutional innovation in the politics of integration (Green 2013:

345). The minister describes the Keupstraße as a "problematic neighbourhood" where

"unknown perpetrators fired a nail bomb and Turkish businessmen were afraid of

German violent criminals" (p. 44). The story of crime motivated by unspecified hate and

the idea that fear is restricted to the Turkish community are therefore stabilised over

time.

The narration of the 2004 Cologne bombing thus moves from terrorism, to organised/petty crime within the milieu to a story of personal revenge committed by outside, "German" perpetrators on "Turks" in the Keupstraße itself. While the availability of the facial composite as a key plot element moves the focus to the latter very shortly after the event, the overall narrative dynamics are comparable to those of the murder series where no such clues about the perpetrator's identity are available: they also take recourse to the Otherness of "Turks" *and* "Muslims" as both strangers and deviants, and interpret "hate of foreigners" as idiosyncratic and non-political. The separate analysis of the 2004 Cologne bombing therefore corroborates the findings of the previous section.

**(Attempted) Murder April 2007**

Compared to the 2004 Cologne bombing with 22 victims that is covered in a total of 33 articles, the shooting of two police officers – Michèle Kiesewetter (22), who died at the crime scene, and Martin Arnold (24), who fell into a coma but survived – in Heilbronn, Baden-Wuerttemberg, on 25 April 2007 is covered extensively. 68 articles in total, only five fewer than in the case of the murder series with nine victims, are published between April 2007 and March 2010. Most of these appear in the first three months following the event (April-June 2007) and in March 2009 when the most important piece of evidence that guides the search for the perpetrator, a DNA trace, turns out to be misleading, resulting in a renewed media attention cycle. Figure 4.4 illustrates these dynamics:
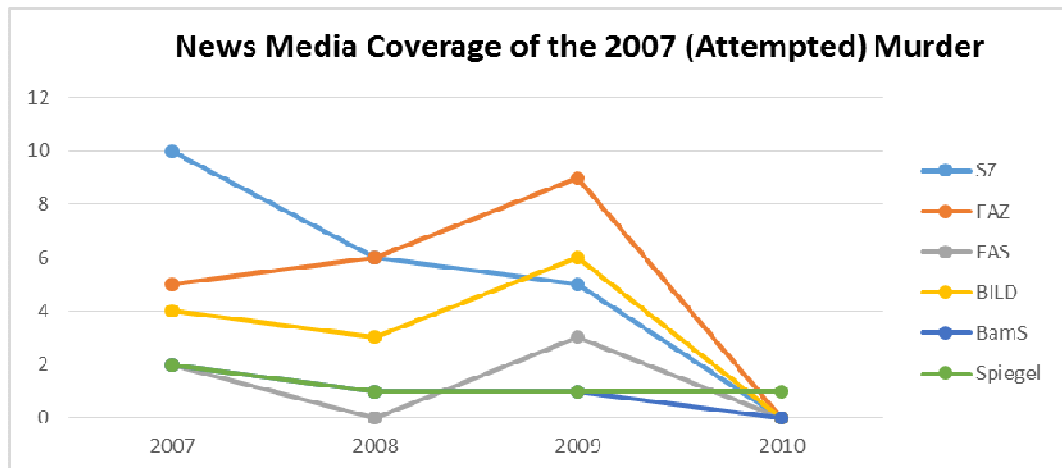
*Figure 4.4: Number of Articles Covering the 2007 (Attempted) Murder, April 2007-March 2010*

The comparatively high media interest in the story, focusing on Kiesewetter as the murder victim, may be explained by the victims' professional identity, considering that police murders are seen as particularly serious and entail an intense search for the perpetrator and use of the media as an investigative resource (Innes 1999: 271-272). Whereas both the story of the 2000-2006 murder series and that of the 2004 Cologne bombing are dominated by the victims' ethnicised (professional) identity, the story of this (attempted) murder is shaped by the victims' occupation as members of the German police who were on patrol when the crime happened – a difference that finds its expression already in the dominant label "police murder".

As members of the police, the victims share in the responsibility to secure the state's monopoly on legitimate violence which defines the FRG's boundaries as a democratic socio-political entity. They are therefore symbols of state authority. Drawing on this very stable narrative of the police as the protector of valid socio-legal rules and norms, the media do not cover the (attempted) murder as a mere legal offence, but also as a moral transgression, based on the idea that violence against the police is tantamount

to an attack on the legitimacy of the German state itself (Little 1984: 68). In addition, the papers point out repeatedly that those who investigate the crime are themselves members of the (criminal) police and therefore identify with the victims. Stuttgart correspondent Simone Kaiser and editor Andreas Ulrich (*Spiegel*), for example, write: "Last week police divers searched the Rhine for the gun. No effort seems to be too big for the investigators. After all this is about a dead colleague." (*Spiegel*, "Die Frau ohne Gesicht", 25 June 2007, p. 39) The victims are seen as having sacrificed themselves on behalf of the police force, and hence civil security, which implies their innocence. In the *SZ* correspondent in NRW Bernd Dörries tells the following story to support this interpretation:

> Last year an open drug scene was threatening to emerge in the Harmony Park downtown. The police began to infiltrate the scene with undercover agents and tried to smash it. Today the park is cleared which is also the result of the killed police-woman's work. (*SZ*, "Quälende Ungewissheit", 23 May 2007, p. 12)

By contrast, the perpetrators are clearly defined as the antagonist in a story of good and evil, for instance when the *SZ* quotes the police based on *dpa* information: "Although the exact circumstances are still uncertain, this deed also proves how dangerous it is to be an officer, said the federal chairman [of the German Police Union] Wolfgang Speck." ("Polizistin erschossen", 26 April 2007, p. 10) The immediate link between victims and the German state implies a particular political responsibility for reinstating the social equilibrium by finding the perpetrators. The major dragnet operation that follows the incident, absent in the other cases discussed above, thus appears to be a logical

consequence. Baden-Wuerttemberg correspondent Rüdiger Soldt reports in the *FAZ*: Ccontrol points and road blocks were set up in Heilbronn, traffic came to a standstill. A helicopter also searched for the perpetrators who are on the run." ("Polizistin erschossen", 26 April 2007, p. 9) Moreover, several high-ranking politicians and officials on the state level become part of the story, offering their condolences to the family and speculating about the perpetrators' motives and intentions. Dörries (*SZ*) quotes Baden Wurttemberg's Minister President Günther Oettinger (CDU) who

> told Southwestern Broadcasting [SWR] that perhaps the crime was a targeted attack against the police: In light of the cold bloodedness we have to "assume an act of revenge and perhaps a crime that has nothing to do with the location." (*SZ*, "Erste Spur nach Polizistinnenmord", 27 April 2007, p. 12)

According to Oettinger, the physical assault of the two officers was meant to symbolise an attack on the police as a whole; the victims fulfilled a representative purpose, implying that any member of the (local) police force could have been the victim. The media mention that several commemorative acts are organised for Kiesewetter, including a public funeral procession and service. In addition, a condolence book is on display in Heilbronn's Town Hall and a memorial plaque installed.[30] This illustrates the representative character of the victim and the political responsibility associated with the crime. Contrary to the murder series and Cologne bombing that remain tied to a specific ethnic and local milieu, the (attempted) murder is seen as the expression of a wider social problem: violence against the police.

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[30] E.g. *SZ*, "Mehr als 200 Hinweise", 28 April 2007, p. 12; *BamS*, "Gedenktafel für getötete Polizistin gestohlen", 3 February 2008, p. 13.

Similar to the 2000-2006 murder series, the attack is described as an "execution", a sudden killing without a chance of self-defence for the victims, and, as indicated by Oettinger above, as an act of revenge, committed by strategic and determined perpetrators.[31] However, in this case, the revenge motive is linked to the murder victim's work in crime control against the drug dealing business, i.e. her norm-stabilising rather than deviant behaviour. The *Spiegel* tells the story as follows:

> So far it is known about her deployments [in the drug dealing milieu] that among other things the police-woman had bought drugs undercover twice in Heilbronn. The Special Commission responsible for resolving the crime also continues to pursue the theory that the murder of the police-woman and the shots at her colleague, who is in a coma, could be linked to the officer's previous deployments. There are no suspicious facts that point concretely towards this, however. (*Spiegel*, "Tod beim Essen", 26 May 2007, p. 18)

The story of "organised crime within the milieu" is therefore evoked here as well, but with a clear emphasis on the victim as being outside this milieu, rather than part of it herself. At the same time, it is suggested that the perpetrator(s) is/are foreign. The *FAZ* speculates three days after the murder based on *dpa* information:

> The background of the police murder in Heilbronn may lie in the field of organised crime. According to information from the German Press Agency on Friday it was about drugs. The police are *therefore* also conducting investigations in Eastern Europe. They are starting from the assumption that it was a crime "that was not necessarily committed by a German", said the Federal Chairman of the German Police Union, Wolfgang Speck. (*FAZ*, "Ging es um Rauschgift?", 28 April 2007, p. 7, my emphasis)

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[31] E.g. *SZ*, "Blutspuren einer Unsichtbaren", 25 June 2007, p. 3; *BILD*, "Polizistin (22) mit Kopfschuss getötet", 26 April 2007, p. 14.

This media focus on foreign perpetrator(s) and organised crime, again following information provided by the police, continues until 2009. Almost two years after the attack Rüdiger Soldt comments on the unsuccessful investigations in the *FAS* as follows:

> [Frank] Huber's Special Commission has turned almost the whole city of Heilbronn, which is – statistically speaking – the safest one in Baden-Wuerttemberg, upside down. He has checked the unskilled labourers and carousel brakemen who were busy setting up the funfair on Theresienwiese, he had the brothel with the East European whores and pimps located on a train subway, only a few meters away from the parking lot, turned on its head. Huber's people still spend a lot of time in pubs frequented by Albanians and Slovaks. (*FAS*, "Nicht zu fassen", 1 February 2009, p. 14)

Not only is the Special Commission directed by Huber given the neutral label "Soko Parkplatz" (*parking lot*), but unlike with the other murders and the bombing, victims and perpetrators are also clearly opposed to each other from the beginning, reflecting the legal and moral innocence associated with members of the police as crime victims. Stories connected to the trope "deviant foreign milieus", moreover, are also evoked here to reinforce this victim-perpetrator-opposition.

Searching for the "Phantom"

Although several witnesses claim to have seen a man smeared in blood escaping from the crime scene and the circumstances suggest that two perpetrators were involved,[32] it is the notion of the perpetrator as a (female) "phantom" that becomes key to the story-telling process between June 2007 and March 2009. This suspect identity is built on a

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[32] E.g. *FAZ*, "Fahndung nach zwei Tätern", 27 April 2007, p. 9; *SZ*, "Erste Spur nach Polizistinnenmord", 27 April 2007, p. 12.

DNA trace that links the police murder to other crimes. As Bernd Strehlau and NRW chief reporter Frank Schneider first write in the *BILD* on 18 June 2007 ("Überführt dieser Keks die Polizisten-Mörderin?", p. 17), this trace is found at several dozen crime scenes across Europe – murders, robberies and burglaries in Germany, France and Austria – both before and after 25 April 2007. Based on this evidence, the perpetrator is characterised as a female serial offender ("unknown female person") who operates as part of a transnational network of criminals. However, the story of the female phantom is difficult to tell due to the geographical spread and variety of the deeds that define the perpetrator as a versatile serial offender, which hampers crime linkage (Tonkin 2015). Dörries, for example, writes in the *SZ*:

> The question is how that goes together: a stolen guitar and a police murder? A cookie with a bite taken out of it in a garden hut and three dead Georgians? "This goes beyond anything we have experienced before", says Peter Lechner from the Heilbronn police. […] It is all very mysterious. […] How it happened in actual fact cannot be inferred from the numerical series of the DNA. (*SZ*, "Die Frau, die nicht zu fassen ist", 29 March 2008, p. 2)

This struggle relates also and in particular to the notion of a *female* serial offender that is emphasised in all papers, illustrating how gender influences the process of narrating violent crime. Kaiser and Ulrich, for instance, write in the *Spiegel*:

> The police murder of Heilbronn is remarkable in several ways. Rarely has an officer been killed so cold-bloodedly, rarely did the investigation take so long. It is also unusual that a woman is involved, in particular because she might be a serial murderer. […] Until the woman is caught all speculations are therefore allowed. She may be young or old, a strong, coldblooded

> killer or a lanky drug addict, she may be the boss of a gang or a gangster's floozy. (*Spiegel*, "Die Frau ohne Gesicht", 25 June 2007, p. 36-39)

This suggests that the perceived brutality of the deeds, in particular the 2007 murder, is seen as being untypical for women, even for female violent criminals. Indeed, most serial murderers are male (Hickey 2013: 6), but the authors connect this statistical fact to stereotypes of womanhood, in particular the idea of women as (sexually) dependent on a man ("gangster's floozy"), and their deviant, masculinised opposite ("boss of a gang", "coldblooded killer"). Since witnesses state that there was no woman at many of the crime scenes,[33] the perpetrator's assumed biological identity as a woman is later contrasted with her criminal identity, which reflects the media's tendency to define female violent perpetrators as exceptional deviants. In the *BILD* reporter Kai Feldhaus describes the phantom as follows:

> Age, eye colour, height, weight – all of this cannot be determined. "We can only say that it is female genetic material", so Special Commission spokesperson Lechner. The woman may look very manly. Or be a transsexual. "One cannot exclude any possibility." (*BILD*, "Die Phantom-Killerin", 9 April 2008, p. 12)

This masculinisation of violence is rooted in a German discursive tradition of seeing the violent woman as a threat to women's role as caring life-givers, particularly evident in the context of RAF terrorism (Bielby 2010; Bielby 2012; Fronius and Linton 2008).

The feminising of the victim, on the other hand, is particularly strong in the *BILD*, reflecting the paper's tendency for gender stereotyping and focus on human interest stories. Two days after the murder, Martina Meckelein and local chief reporters Tina

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[33] E.g. *SZ*, "Blutspuren einer Unsichtbaren", 25 June 2007, p. 3.

Gaedt and Alexandra zu Castell-Rüdenhausen write about Kiesewetter that she was a "young, beautiful girl" and "family person" who had "just recently fallen in love." They continue:

> Other girls want to become a princess. Or a veterinarian. Michelle K. (22) always wanted to become a police officer. Now she has died in her uniform, executed by shots to the head by brutal killers in Heilbronn (Baden-Wuerttemberg). (*BILD*, "Die hingerichtete Polizistin", 27 April 2007, p. 11)

The authors contrast supposedly "girly" attributes associated with the job descriptions of a "princess" and a "veterinarian" – looking pretty and being kind to animals – with the "boyish", rough job of a police officer who symbolises the authority of the state in order to characterise the victim as courageous and strong, while the large-size portrait photo that accompanies the article underlines her characterisation as a "young, beautiful girl". This helps to emphasise Kiesewetter's innocence and presents her as an ideal victim that readers can empathise with. Apparently the media find it easier to narrate violent crimes perpetrated *against* women as victims than violent crimes perpetrated *by* women as perpetrators because the former corresponds better with dominant cultural images. That the murder victim is originally from Thuringia, more specifically from Oberweißbach, however, does not shape the process of story-telling until November 2011 in any significant way, although it is mentioned a couple of times in both *BILD* and the *FAZ*[34] which indicates that her "East Germanness" is at least considered to be worth mentioning.

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[34] E.g. *BILD*, "Die hingerichtete Polizistin", 27 April 2007, p. 11; *FAZ*, "DNA-Spur nach Anschlag auf Polizisten", 18 June 2007, p. 9.

Due to the story of the attack as an act committed by foreign criminals against the German police, the silence of those who are seen as potential accomplices is, again, interpreted as an act that is directed *against* the German police and as a sign of complicity. This is evident, for example, in the following excerpt from a *Spiegel* article by editor Andreas Ulrich:

> [...] [B]y now there are some people who should be able to give testimony – but they don't want to. A Pole and a Serb are among the people who could identify the phantom: In July 2006 they broke into an electronic market in Upper Austria, and the DNA of the woman without a face was secured at the crime scene. But the putative accomplices remain silent. With great effort German investigators in the Balkans had blood samples of women from within the milieu of the two burglars taken – to no avail. (*Spiegel*, "Haare, Schweiβ und Speichel", 31 March 2008, p. 54)

That the alleged accomplices may simply not be able to reveal anything is not considered by the media. The continued focus on the "phantom" illustrates that the narration of violent crime is not only shaped by a rich repertoire of backstories, but also driven by the basic need to identify the perpetrator of a crime. The notion of "phantom" itself, meaning an apparition without material substance,[35] however, is problematic as it implies the inability to tell a plausible story. It is a counter-intuitive phenomenon that makes the violent crime appear less "real" because the key question "*Who* did this" cannot be answered. At the same time, this notion is necessarily a temporary one precisely because the narrative logic implies that all acts of violent crime are based on a distinct relationship between a victim (or victims) and a perpetrator (or perpetrators). This is also evident in

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[35] "Phantom, n. and adj." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press. URL: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/ 142204?rskey=Q58Oj9&result=1 (last accessed 25 October 2016).

the dominant metaphor of "linking the DNA to a face" as used in the quote above. The

story will eventually be told, it is only a question of time.


A (Permanent) Change in the Story

However, in March 2009 the story makes an important turn when the media report that

the DNA trace belongs to an employee of the company that produced the cotton buds

that the different investigative teams used to secure evidence. As a consequence, the

phantom is officially declared non-existent. Again it is local correspondent Rüdiger Soldt

who writes in the *FAS*:


> "The puzzle of the phantom has been solved", said Klaus Hiller, President
> of the State Office of Criminal Investigations in Baden-Wuerttemberg on
> Friday evening. "The DNA is not from the unknown female person, it is
> definitely from another woman." A department head even spoke of a
> "success" because the contamination was not caused in the Office's
> laboratory and they now had certainty about the false clue. Equally
> unapologetic was the interpretation by Office President Hiller who initially
> said: "It was a woman. We looked for her. And we found her." (*FAS*, "DNA
> aus Tettau", 23 March 2009, p. 12)


The story therefore needs to be re-told as previous assumptions about a transnationally

operating, versatile female serial offender are not plausible anymore. The different

crimes that were ascribed to the "phantom", including the 2007 murder, are not causally

linked anymore – they are not part of the same story. Dörries writes in another *SZ* article:


> The DNA was always right. Inspectors who listened to their guts and had
> doubts had no say anymore. […] On Wednesday evening the State Office of
> Criminal Investigations Baden-Wuerttemberg officially conceded for the

first time that the many DNA traces of the unknown person "were no longer plausible" […]. Now investigators in three countries are no longer looking for a woman who was at 40 crime scenes, committed murders and left behind nibbled cookies. They are looking for 40 different perpetrators and have to start from the very beginning. (*SZ*, "Phantom-Schmerzen der Ermittler", 27 March 2009, p. 2)

As a result, the story of the phantom ceases to exist. But the process of investigation and narration continues, after all "the phantom did not exist, but the crimes did" (Dörries in the *SZ*, "Spuren der Erinnerung", 25 April 2009, p. 12). The new story, however, continues to focus on organised crime, explaining the stealing of the officers' weapons and handcuffs as peculiar perpetrator behaviour. The following *FAZ* article by Soldt, Hesse correspondent Thomas Holl and political editors Karin Truscheit and Axel Wermelskirchen illustrates this:

Even before the results of the DNA analyses from the molecular biologists are available, new hypotheses about the murder of the police officer Michèle Kiesewetter are surfacing. Because it still could not be clarified where the police weapons of type Walter P2000 and the handcuffs are, some believe it might have been an initiation murder committed by youth criminals in order to be admitted to the circles of organised crime. (*FAZ*, "'Das konnte nicht sein'", 27 March 2009, p. 9)

A conclusion to the story is only provided in November 2011.

It is striking that, despite the fact that Kiesewetter, and by implication Arnold, is considered to have a representational function and is therefore closely linked to German society as a whole, this targeted (attempted) murder is not defined as an act of "political violence" or associated with the term "terrorism", although law enforcement representatives have been specifically targeted, for example, by right-wing extremists in

the past (Koehler 2017: 86-87). No comparisons between the female suspect and prominent female RAF members are made either, despite the fact that 2007 marked the year of the 30-year-anniversary of the "German Autumn"[36] which the print media covered extensively ("anniversary journalism"), and of two former RAF terrorists appealing for clemency (Bielby 2010: 139; Bielby 2012: 190). While the published material does not provide much evidence that allows us to draw conclusions about the reasons for this narration as "common crime", it is reasonable to argue that it might be a combination of the notion of revenge not going beyond the immediate victim group (the local police), no separate verbal or written statements by the perpetrators being available, the victims' low rank within the police force and the robbery of their weapons. The victims do not seem to be representative *enough* to be perceived as a target of violence with a political motivation and/or intention.

Before I summarise and assess the findings in the conclusion, the final section of this chapter discusses the articles that the papers published between 8 and 12 November 2011, a period during which the crimes are identified as the doings of the same perpetrator, a small group of right-wing extremists. This narrative transition period initiates the process of re-narration.

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[36]The "German Autumn" refers to a series of terrorist acts committed by the so-called second generation of the RAF that followed the assassination of Attorney General Siegfried Buback on 7 April 1977 and the killing of the head of the Dresdner Bank Jürgen Ponto on 30 July 1977. It includes the abduction of the President of the German Employers' Association, Hanns Martin Schleyer, on 5 September and the hijacking of the Lufthansa plane *Landshut* on 13 October 1977 with the support of the Palestinian group PFLP. On 18 October 1977 the hijacking ended in Mogadishu, Somalia, with the death of all but one of the hijackers. On the same day three of the leading figures of the first generation RAF, Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin and Jan-Carl Raspe, committed suicide in prison. Schleyer was killed by the hostage-takers in retaliation the next day.

**Creating the NSU: November 2011 and the Process of Re-Narration**

Until early November 2011, the German news media tell the stories of the 2000-2006 murder series, the 2004 bombing and the 2007 (attempted) murder separately from each other. The narration follows the process of investigating violent crime with a view to identifying the perpetrator(s) in correspondence with the search for his/her motive and/or intentions, based on a reconstruction of past events. Since the stories cannot be concluded by following the investigation process, their full meaning is not yet clear, the balance that was disturbed by the crimes has not been re-established, and the expectations that the reader has built up while following the stories have not yet been confirmed (Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2008: 33-34).

In the second week of November 2011, however, a chain of events brings these stories to an abrupt end. After the discovery of two dead bank robbers in a caravan in Eisenach, Thuringia, on 4 November 2011, *BILD* Thuringia editor Oliver Löhr, Dresden reporter Luisa Schlitter and senior editor Malte Wicking establish the link to the 2007 police murder and an act of arson in Zwickau, Saxony:

> We see the photo of a caravan that is engulfed in flames several meters high – and the police believes: The two murderers of the young police officer are burning in this fire wreck! On 25 April 2007 police constable Michèle K. († 22) was executed by a shot to the head in a Heilbronn parking lot, her colleague Martin A. (24) was severely injured. Their duty weapons disappeared. The Special Commission could not resolve the crime until today. […] Who are the dead? Uwe B. and Uwe M. were 34 and 38 years old – and had been involved heavily in crime up until their harrowing death. Already 13 years ago they built bombs and planned attacks as members of the right-wing extremist "militant Thuringian Homeland Security". Since then they had been considered missing. Now they were active again! […] The bank robbers lived together with a 36-year-old

woman in an apartment in Zwickau, Saxony. This apartment exploded three hours after the explosion of the caravan! The flatmate has vanished without a trace! (*BILD*, "Verbrennen hier die Mörder der schönen Polizistin?", 8 November 2011, p. 10)

The accidental discovery of the perpetrators of the 2007 murder immediately changes the story from "organised crime" that had dominated again in early 2010, to one of "right-wing extremist violence". It connects the murder to stories about the "Trio" – Uwe Mundlos, Uwe Böhnhardt and, it will be confirmed, Beate Zschäpe – and their disappearance in 1998.

After the link between the murder in Heilbronn, the suicide of Mundlos and Böhnhardt in Eisenach and the house explosion in Zwickau caused by their female accomplice has been established, the news media report that the woman has turned herself in, while the murder weapon has been found in the house.[37] Finally, on 12 November 2011 it is reported that evidence found in the house in Zwickau reveals that the "Trio" had organised itself as the "National Socialist Underground" (NSU); that the bank robbery in Eisenach is part of a series of robberies that began in the late 1990s after the "Trio" had gone underground; and that the NSU is also the suspect in the 2000-2006 murder series because the Česka gun that was used in all nine cases has been found in the house.[38] This discovery prompts the *SZ* to write that "Neo-Nazis are suspected of terror" on its cover page on 12 November 2011, thereby laying the ground for the subsequent use of the term "right-wing terrorism" that is central to the re-narration process as chapter 6 will show.

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[37] E.g. *SZ*, "Ende eines realen Krimis", 9 November 2011, p. 10; *BILD*, "Elf Waffen im Haus des Killer-Trios!", 11 November 2011, p. 12.
[38] E.g. *FAZ*, "Mutmaßliche Polizistenmörder auch der ‚Döner-Morde' verdächtig", 12 November 2011, p. 1.

Judged from the perspective of Ricœur's narrative theory, the result of this chain of events is the following: the detective stories of the 2000-2006 murder series, the 2007 murder and, eventually, also the 2004 Cologne bombing, that had hitherto been told independently of each other are not only given new impetus, but merge into a new, grand story because they now share a key plot element: the NSU as the putative perpetrators. This element provides these stories with a shared conclusion, thereby transforming them – together with Mundlos' and Böhnhardt's suicide, the series of robberies and the arson in Zwickau – into connected story-lines, i.e. into "intermediary units" between the sequences of events and the "story of the NSU" as a whole (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 16). In a sense, this process is the reverse of what we saw happening with the story of the 2007 murder where a series of different crimes committed in places across Europe could, after all, *not* be attributed to the same perpetrator, which required a re-conceptualisation of several story-lines as individual stories.

The "Trio" that had disappeared in January 1998 and since been searched for by the police and state security forces thus resurfaces as the "NSU" in November 2011. This shifts the focus from narrating individual acts of violent crime to narrating the story of the Trio-turned-NSU as a "right-wing terrorist group" *through* a re-narration of the stories of violent crime that were told before the discovery of the perpetrators. At the same time, the conclusion that the perpetrators are right-wing extremists rather than foreign petty criminals, organised gangs or "ordinary Germans" means that the news media need to tell new stories that fit with this conclusion. Thuringia correspondent Claus-Peter Müller and political editors David Klaubert and Axel Wermelskirchen express this in the *FAZ*, writing that "the story, that much is certain, is far from being finished" ("Die schlimmste

Mordserie der Nullerjahre aufgeklärt", 12 November 2011, p. 8). While this new story

begins to develop in mid-November 2011, it refers to events that reach back several years

and are therefore not "news" themselves. Instead, it is the requirement of telling a story

in light of the new conclusion itself that constitutes the news. These narrative dynamics

are depicted in figure 4.5 below:
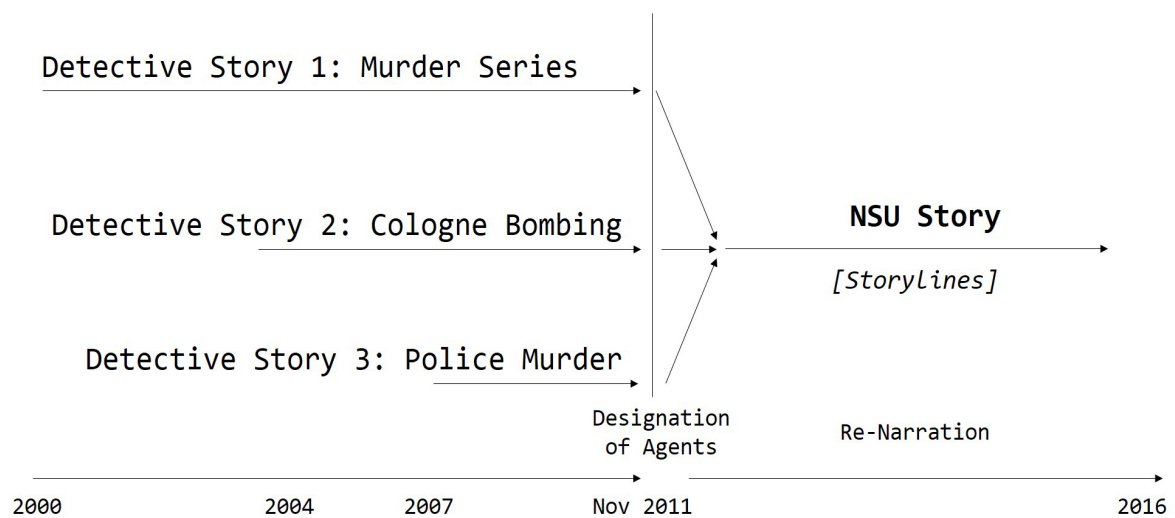


*Figure 4.5: Schematic Illustration of the Narrative Dynamics relating to the NSU*

Having identified the perpetrators as the "NSU" is therefore only a *quasi*-conclusion

because it does not bring closure to the detective stories. The perpetrators' self-

revelation means that there is a gap in the story-telling process: The actual conclusion is

fundamentally different from the previously imagined conclusion that the different

stories were directed at. The conclusion, to use Ricœur's words, does not match the

expectations, it was not possible to *follow* the story to its conclusion and hence it is not

acceptable (Ricœur 1981: 277). Unlike in other detective stories, solving a crime by

identifying the perpetrator is not tantamount to concluding the story in this case. This

results in a process of *re-narration*.

As indicated in chapter 3, the notion of re-narration is implied in many studies of journalistic story-telling, but has not been systematically theorised and applied empirically so far. It has, however, been used in studies of conversational remembering as a communicative process within a social group. In this context it refers to "[t]he narration of stories from the biographical past of other persons" (Welzer 2010: 6) and therefore to the complex relation between past and present where

> [a]cquisitions and applications of pasts always follow the needs and demands of the present, and in this way individuals as well as memory communities always choose those aspects from the endless inventory of existing historical narratives and images that make the most sense for them in the real time of narrating and listening. (Welzer 2010: 6)

The same approach is taken by narrative criminologists who acknowledge that "[n]arrative references the past but is always tailored to the present, and specifically to the moment of narration." Offenders' self-narratives portray them as complex characters who are able to change rather than simply as deviants. As narrators they are always more moral than the protagonist in their story (Presser 2009: 179-180). Drawing on experiments by psychologist Frederic Bartlett, Welzer studies the selective narrative process in the context of how personal stories of National Socialism are transmitted within German families. He finds that

> stories can become so altered that in the end they have undergone a complete change of meaning. This reconfiguration generally functions to turn grandparents into people who always possessed moral integrity, according to today's standards and normative appraisal. (Welzer 2010: 7)

Human beings make sense of their present by creating a new past "that has, in functional terms, the highest value in terms of their focusing on the future." (Welzer 2010: 15) From a criminological point of view, this means that "[t]he telling of stories allows violent offenders to present themselves in the best possible light and aids in contextualizing their acts (i.e. stories can excuse or justify violence)." (Sandberg, Tutenges and Copes 2015: 1172) Welzer uses the term "Wieder-Erzählung" (Koch and Welzer 2004), but considering the substantial changes that many stories undergo over time, "Neu-Erzählung" appears to be a more appropriate translation of "re-narration" as it implies that a story is not simply told *again*, but *anew*.

The re-narration dynamics that I describe in chapters 5 to 7 share many of these features: the stories need to be told anew because they do not fit the requirements of the present; the way in which they were told does not match the assumed right-wing extremist identity of the perpetrators. This mismatch is in conflict with the historically grounded expectation of a particular sensitivity towards this type of violence in Germany. Similar to individuals who re-tell the stories of their grandparents in order to support the conclusion that "Grandpa was not a Nazi" (Welzer, Moller and Tschuggnall 2002), the news media need to tell a new story of the NSU that fits the conclusion that these crimes were committed by Neo-Nazis – and explain why this could not be discovered earlier. In this case, however, it is not a transgenerational process, but the same institutionalised narrator, and often the same journalists, who does both the narrating and re-narrating.

Given these circumstances, re-narration is problematic for the news media because constructing a new, coherent and plausible story of the NSU requires them to challenge the legitimacy and validity of the supposedly reliable repertoire of cultural

stories that they had drawn on to narrate the events previously, in particular the notion of "deviant immigrant milieus". The challenge to re-narrate the events is well illustrated by the framing of the transition in early November 2011 as an unlikely film script. In the *SZ* Thuringia correspondent Christiane Kohl and political correspondent for Baden-Wuerttemberg Roman Deininger, for example, compare the developments to the popular (originally West) German TV *Tatort* series, broadcast since 1970:

> If a scriptwriter came up with the idea to turn the story into a Tatort movie – his text would probably get rejected because the facts would sound too complicated and also too unlikely. […] Thuringian police officers and prosecutors are currently working to bring light into the dark of this real crime movie. (*SZ*, "Ende eines realen Krimis", 9 November 2011, p. 10)[39]

According to this account, one's productive imagination would not have sufficed to create a true detective story such as the one emerging in connection with the NSU because its complexity goes beyond the imaginable. "Krimis", comprising both crime and detective films and novels (Hall 2016: 3), have a long tradition in Germany and many of the *Tatort* episodes in the past have dealt with social issues through the lens of crime, including cultural conflicts,[40] right-wing extremism[41] and terrorism,[42] in a distinctively German context (Simon-López 2015: 67-71). Referencing the *Tatort* as a fictional crime series

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[39] The film "Die Ermittler – Nur für den Dienstgebrauch" (*The Investigators – For Internal Use Only*), which is part of the "Mitten in Deutschland: NSU" (*In the Middle of Germany: NSU*) ARD trilogy, depicts the search for the "Trio", its eventual discovery and the aftermath as a detective film.

[40] E.g. *Wem Ehre gebührt* ("Whom Honour Is Due", 23 December 2007, NDR) and *Familienaufstellung* ("Family Line-Up", 8 February 2009, Radio Bremen) on honour killings, and *Baum der Erlösung* ("Tree of Salvation", 4 January 2009, ORF/RBB) on forced marriage, all situated within the "Turkish milieu".

[41] E.g. *Brandwunden* ("Burn Wounds", 26 April 1998, Radio Bremen); *Hydra* (15 October 2015, WDR); *Schwelbrand* ("Smouldering Fire", 21 January 2007, Radio Bremen)

[42] E.g. *Der Weg ins Paradies* ("The Way to Paradise", 18 December 2011, NDR) and *Zorn Gottes* ("The Wrath of God", 20 Mach 2016, NDR*),* both of which deal with Islamist terrorism; a searchable list of all *Tatort* episodes and summaries of their plots is available at URL: http://www.daserste.de/unterhaltung/krimi/ tatort/sendung/index.html (last accessed 26 October 2016).

whose stories viewers nevertheless perceive as realistic (Ortner 2007: 8) is thus not only

useful for providing readers with a starting point for understanding the events by

comparing it to scripts they are familiar with (each episode attracts an audience between

7 and 13 million),[43] but makes clear that this story deviates from these well-known scripts

due to its complexity.[44] Claus-Peter Müller, David Klaubert and Axel Wermelskirchen's

*FAZ* article also evokes the Krimi as a reference point and sees the unusual complexity of

the NSU story in its serial dimension, extending across several acts and driven by the NSU

as the protagonists:

> This is not the plot of a crime novel. It is the script for a whole crime series
> in which bank robbers and right-wing extremists act, in which the police
> and secret services appear and in which the public is surprised with every
> new act. It is a story that is set in the whole of Germany, between Zwickau
> and Heilbronn, between Eisenach and Munich, between Rostock and
> Dortmund – which makes the story, as the protagonists probably intended,
> only more confusing. (*FAZ*, "Die schlimmste Mordserie der Nuller Jahre
> aufgeklärt", 12 November 2011, p. 8)

Considering that the *Tatort* Krimis have been broadcast for more than 40 years and can

be seen as an "Atlas of the Federal Republic" due to the many different detective teams

operating in more than a dozen German cities (Vogt 2005: 115), the authors may also

refer to them to account for the spatial and temporal dimensions of the NSU story. While

they speak of a film script, they also draw on the semantic world of theatre and

performance to suggest that the NSU story presents a script for a stage drama that is

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[43] Statista, "Average Viewers of the Tatort Detectives between January 2014 and January 2016 (in Million)", URL: http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/169503/umfrage/durchschnittliche-einschaltquote-der-tatort-ermittler/ (last accessed 30 May 2016).

[44] In September 2012 it was revealed that a photo of Uwe Mundlos appeared as part of a fictional investigation file in the Tatort episode *Bestien* ("Beasts", 25 November 2001, WDR), see *SZ*, "Fahndung fiktiv", 14 September 2012, p. 35.

difficult to follow and (therefore) keeps the audience in suspense. As will become clear in chapters 5-7, the re-narration process that begins in mid-November 2011 focuses on creating a story that can be followed *after all*.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the process of narrating the investigation of three separate cases of violent crime – a murder series, a bombing and an (attempted) police murder – during the period September 2000 to October 2011. While the murder series was covered very unevenly by the different papers as well as over time, the Cologne bombing only received limited coverage between June and October 2004, and the (attempted) police murder in 2007 was covered extensively until early 2009 when the DNA trace turned out to be misleading. Different factors contributed to these dynamics: the availability of investigation results, a geographical bias, the different news values attributed to spectacular one-off and serial events, and the number of (fatal) victims and their social status.

I argued that the dominance of the label "Turkish small business owners" and the stories of "revenge within the immigrant milieu" connected to petty or organised crime evident in all three cases are rooted in Germany's ongoing struggle to conceive of itself as a country of immigration. The trope "deviant foreign (immigrant) milieus" that the media draw on points towards a complex repertoire of cultural stories that define "persons with a migration background" not only as different from "the Germans", but also as (potentially) deviant; they are constructed as perpetrators rather than victims. As a

group, the victims of the murder series and the bombing are seen as strangers in German society who arouse suspicion and are perpetually defined through their immigrant identity. As individuals, however, their legitimate contribution to German society is acknowledged. This points to an ambiguity of the notion of "immigrants" as an "Other" that I will explore further in chapter 5. Contrary to what scholars had hoped in the late 1990s and early 2000s, it does not seem as if, by late 2011, the changes in German immigration and integration policy had resulted in the country addressing all conflicts between the native and immigrant population within the German political community (Koopmans 1999: 644-5). Instead, during the first decade of this century questions of Otherness, at least to some extent, continued to be externalised by being located within the milieu of the "immigrants".

This positioning of the victims and, in case of the bombing, their (implicit) characterisation as "Muslims" in the post-9/11 era, moreover, seem to be the biggest factor in the non-application of the labels "political violence" or "terrorism". By contrast, to the extent that "Germans" become suspects, they are not subjected to the same generalisations. Instead their behaviour is defined as idiosyncratic, unpolitical and exceptional. While the violent acts are thus predominantly seen as expressing deviant structures and practices within immigrant communities, this is not considered to point to a larger socio-political problem that needs to be tackled. The acts are as separate from German mainstream society as the immigrant communities themselves. The narration thus reconfirms existing normative boundaries and reconfirms the status quo, which supports Virchow, Thomas and Grittmann's findings (2015: 69).

The narration of the (attempted) murder in 2007, moreover, corroborates other studies' findings that the German media in particular tend to depict women as victims (Kiesewetter) rather than as perpetrators (the "phantom"). At the same time, speculations about "political violence" or "terrorism" do not appear at all in this case, possibly due to the officers' low rank, the stealing of their duty weapons and the lack of symbols left at the crime scene – in spite of the fact that the latter in combination with an attack on law enforcement representatives is a feature of many acts of right-wing extremist violence.

The discussion so far demonstrates that the news media draw on a limited repertoire of cultural narratives to tell these detective stories, and that these narratives and certain features of the crimes (e.g. the violent method employed, the social status of the victims, the number of (fatal) victims, etc.) interact and compete with each other to create specific stories, while also impacting on the quantity of coverage.

This shows that violent crime as communication should not be conceptualised narrowly as the spreading of "terrorists'" aims to a wider audience, whether deduced from the crime itself or accompanying verbal statements. Instead, different audiences such as the news media narrate acts of violent crime based on their own interpretative code, building on assumptions about the perpetrator's motives and intentions, his or her relationship to the victim(s) and the position of both perpetrator(s) and victim(s) within (German) society. The interpretation of an act of violent crime as "political violence" or "terrorism" are but two possible results of this narrative process. Violent action, as Ricœur suggests, is autonomous and largely independent of the author's original intention.

The re-narration then sets in in early November 2011, triggered by the re-appearance of the right-wing extremist "Trio" and their identification as the perpetrators of all these crimes. The next three chapters will show how the news media respond to the challenge of re-narrating their own stories in light of the discovery of the NSU as their conclusion.

# CHAPTER 5

# THE NSU AS A GERMAN AFFAIR: OF RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS, IMMIGRANTS AND EASTERNERS

**Introduction**

The analysis of the pre-November 2011 stories of violent crime in chapter 4 revealed that the tropes "deviant foreign milieus" and "Muslims as perpetrators" function as narrative resources that point to familiar stories of the "non-German" as essentially different and, at least potentially, deviant. It also showed that, to the extent that the 2000-2006 crimes were temporarily defined as acts perpetrated against members of a specific minority group, this was seen as exceptional, idiosyncratic behaviour of German perpetrators rather than a form of hate crime. I also argued that the (re-)discovery of the right-wing extremist "Trio" in early November 2011 and the realisation that this group, having developed into the NSU, is the putative perpetrator of these and other crimes, initiates a process of re-narration that aims at providing this conclusion with a plausible story.

Chapters 5 to 7 address three overlapping dimensions of this process that imply a renegotiation of the relationships between victims, perpetrators, German society and the state, and hence Germanness: the right-wing extremist identity of the perpetrators, the notions of "terrorism" and "political violence", and the democracy-extremism-continuum. This chapter is concerned with the first dimension. The discussion in all the three chapters builds on 875 newspaper articles that were published between 12 November 2011 and 31 March 2012, a period that overlaps with the material presented in the final section of the previous chapter by one day (7 articles). 40.1% of these articles are from the *SZ*, 29.4%

from the *FAZ*, 5.9% from *FAS*, 17.1%% from the *BILD*, 2.6% from the *BamS*, and 4.8% from *Spiegel*. The graph below shows that in spite of its news value there is a typical decline of interest in the issue over time (Lule 1991: 125; Critcher 2003: 139), although overall coverage remains high with a total of 330 articles published between 12 and 30 November 2011, 189 in December 2011, 127 in January 2012, 137 in February 2012 and 92 articles in March 2012 (see figure 5.1 below). This sustained interest in the NSU is an example of what Schudson has described as a "running story" whose "ripples spread out into the past and the future, the reverberations to past and future become the new context for the story" (quoted in Patterson 1998: 60).
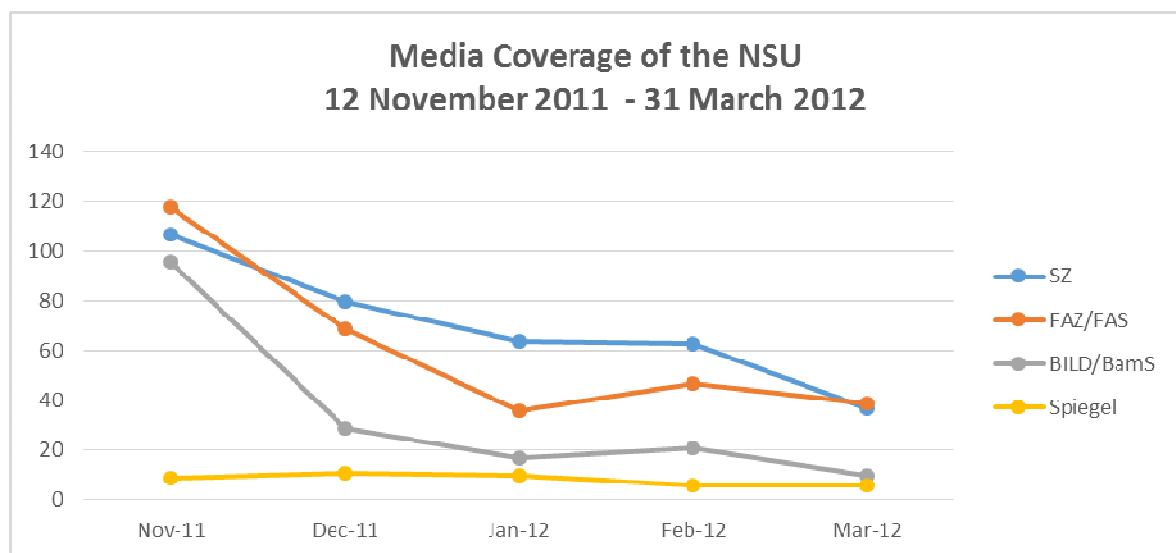


*Figure 5.1: Number of Articles Covering the NSU and their Crimes, November 2011-March 2012*

The discussion in this chapter proceeds as follows: I first look at the implications of having ascribed a right-wing extremist identity to the perpetrators. I then investigate how the 2007 murder (the crime that is first linked to the NSU by the media as seen in chapter 4), the 2000-2006 murder series and the 2004 bombing are re-narrated given this specific perpetrator identity. The conclusion summarises the findings with a view to the process of conceptualising Germany as a reunified country of immigration. The key argument

made in this chapter is that the post-November 2011 narration of the NSU crimes reveals a hierarchy of "Others" within German society: while right-wing extremists' worldviews and use of violence are unequivocally defined as incompatible with valid norms and values of German society, the narrative of immigrants as both "different" and "potentially deviant" continues to be perceptible even after the NSU's discovery, despite the fact that a new story of "vulnerable immigrants" is evoked explicitly. Moreover, a third "Other" is added to the story-telling process: the East German (*Ossi*).

**Right-wing Extremism as the "Other" in Past and Present**

From the "Trio" to the NSU

The discovery of the NSU is a novel event that puts the issue of right-wing extremism and its legitimisation of violence back on the news agenda. Since right-wing extremism is "old news" (Patterson 1998: 57), having dominated discourses in particular in the 1990s (see Esser, Scheufele and Brosius 2002), the German media can draw on an established repertoire of stories about its different manifestations, roots and consequences. The motivation for the crimes is now defined as lying in the perpetrators' right-wing extremist ideology – Ricœur's key question of "why" is given a new answer. Reflecting dominant assumptions about right-wing extremists' target groups (Koehler 2014: 54; Bjørgo 1995: 4), this is seen as largely synonymous with hate of (what the perpetrators perceived to be) "foreigners" and the political "establishment" as both would threaten the "ethnic

purity" of the German nation state. In the *Spiegel*, Germany editor Sven Becker et al.,[1] for example, define the right-wing extremist scene simply through its hate for "democracy, foreigners and anything alien" ("Der braune Terror", 21 November 2011, p. 21), reflecting hegemonic stories of right-wing extremist violence. Political editor David Klaubert makes a similar point in the *FAZ*, grasping the temporal dimension of the NSU story by speaking of the events, and the motivation *behind* them, as having been "hidden in the abyss":

> What began with the investigations of a bank robbery and a house fire one and a half weeks ago led the police and the public into an abyss of right-wing extremist terror. Since the year 2000 the group is said to have shot at least nine people with foreign roots and a police-woman, robbed banks and probably also planted several bombs in the whole of Germany. By all appearances they were driven by a right-wing extremist ideology, by their hate of foreigners and of the state. (*FAZ*, "Getrieben vom Hass", 14 November 2011, p. 3)

In another article, *Spiegel TV* editor-in-chief Thomas Heise and Germany editors Sven Röbel and Holger Stark re-interpret the fact that almost all of the victims were in their twenties or thirties as a selection pattern of racist perpetrators:

> In their victim selection the murderers apparently followed a racist mania. Notes found in Zwickau suggest that Böhnhardt and Mundlos, who often spied out their victims for days, focused on "non-Arian" men of reproductive age. In one case the perpetrators abstained from the planned murder of a Turkish business man in Dortmund; his shop was a "very good object" and the "person good, but old (above 60)." (*Spiegel*, 16 January 2012, "Sieg oder Tod", p. 34)

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[1] This also includes Berlin/Germany reporters and editors Stefan Berg, Markus Deggerich, Jan Fleischhauer and Gunther Latsch.

The ascription of a distinct criminal identity, based on available knowledge of who the perpetrators are, thus becomes the starting point for re-narrating the violent acts they committed as right-wing extremist crime. The narrative focus shifts from the individual acts of violent crime to the behaviour of the perpetrators, connecting the discovery of the NSU to stories of the "Trio" that were told in the mid- to late 1990s. This is an example of what Genette has called "analepsis" (retrospection) which may be explained as follows (see Rimmon Kenan 2002: 46-48): the narration returns to a past point in what is now considered to be the NSU story to provide information about the "Trio" as the origin of the story. It does so by covering a period that begins before the actual formation of the NSU in 2000/2001, but now joins this NSU story, thereby providing the latter with a beginning.

In March 2000 the *Spiegel* had mentioned the "Trio" in an article on the radicalised right-wing extremist scene. It speaks of them as the "bomb builders from Jena", members of the *Thüringer Heimatschutz* ("Thuringian Homeland Security"), a small group that was willing to resort to violence and served as a role model for other groups, but had gone underground in January 1998 after explosives had been found in their garage (*Spiegel*, "Druck von der Straβe", 20 March 2000, p. 33). The violent "Trio" that had built dummy bombs before 1998 (Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 114-118) *is* the NSU that committed the murder series, Cologne bombing(s), 2007 (attempted) murder and series of robberies after 1998 – the same individuals with a different group identity, connected through a process of radicalisation of beliefs and behaviours that led them from "right-wing extremism" to "right-wing terrorism" based on the use of ideologically motivated violence on behalf of their own in-group (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008).

The events of the late 1990s are therefore defined as the beginning of the story of the NSU, while the group's discovery in early November 2011 is its (provisional) ending. The head of the *SZ* investigation department Hans Leyendecker expresses this as follows: "Above all, the story of the NSU is the story of the two men and the woman who had gone underground in January 1998, and the investigators want to know every facet of this story" ("'Lass die Finger davon'", 20 February 2012, p. 6). The media follow this investigation, thereby also "following the brown thread through the labyrinth" as Leyendecker puts it in the *SZ* ("Ein brauner Faden im Schutt", 30 November 2011, p. 2).

The NSU as the German Self and "Other"

The news media find it difficult, however, to define the perpetrators as the "Other", because "right-wing extremism" – often replaced with the word "brown" as its symbol – intertwines stories of the German "Self" and "Other". The NSU is inherently German in two overlapping ways: first, their violent crimes are rooted in the ideology of National Socialism that defines "being German" in a racial sense, ideas that the FRG (and GDR) struggled to overcome after their establishment in 1949. The German state and society therefore need to formulate a response to the claim of right-wing extremists, such as the NSU, that they act on behalf of the German *Volk*. *BILD* chief columnist Franz Josef Wagner, for instance, refers to this challenge when addressing the families of the victims of the murder series:

> Dear victim families of the killer Nazis, it suffocates me when I offer you my deepest, sincerest condolences. As a German one wants to curl up and die

in the face of the pain that the killer Nazis have caused you. […] It is so terrible that Germans are hunting down foreigners, shooting them. I don't know what I should say in front of the victims. I am ashamed. (*BILD*, "Liebe Opferfamilien der Killer-Nazis", 15 November 2011, p. 2)

It is striking that Wagner defines himself and the perpetrators as members of the German ethnic community, while the victims remain "foreigners" (*Ausländer*) in spite of their very diverse migration backgrounds as discussed in chapter 4 – a first indication, discussed further below, that the opposition between "Germans" and "immigrants" continues to shape the narration process beyond November 2011.

Secondly, the NSU's actions are considered to be a product of the German division between 1949 and 1990. The media's response reveals an ambivalent narrative of the "normality of the West" vs. the "special case of the East" (Quent 2016: 101; Lessenich 2013). Since Mundlos, Zschäpe and Böhnhardt were born between 1973 and 1977, the media explain their radicalisation process with reference to their lives in the GDR, the events of the *Wendezeit* in 1989/1990 and the process of reunification. In particular the life story of Uwe Mundlos is addressed to illustrate that no one is born a criminal, extremist or terrorist. On the one hand, we find classic media narratives of failure and guilt connected to the dictatorial regime of and socialisation in the GDR (Kolmer 2009: 185). *SZ* parliamentary correspondent Constanze von Bullion explains Zschäpe, Mundlos and Böhnhardt's development with the dictatorial education style of the GDR:

Family was important in the GDR, shelter from state bullying, even more often a hotbed of ideological indoctrination. Looking back on this world, we are occasionally astonished at the cold-hearted manner in which parents raised their children. […] The search for traces leads to the virtues that already held together the first German dictatorship: idealisation of the

community, integration into authoritarian thought patterns, into the big picture, for whose preservation personal convictions, weak emotions and scruples had to be waived. (*SZ*, "Das Gift der Diktatur", 23 November 2011, p. 4)

This not only implies that Mundlos, and by implication also Zschäpe and Böhnhardt, is identified as distinctly *East* German, it also suggests a causal connection between specific virtues that characterise dictatorial societies, whether in the form of the Nazi regime (the "first German dictatorship") or the GDR, and the resorting to violence. Bullion's statement refers to an approach, popular in particular in the 1990s in context of the surge of anti-immigrant violence in East Germany after reunification, which sees authoritarianism as a key factor in explaining right-wing extremist dispositions (Frindte et al. 2016b: 43-45). In March 1999, criminologist and later Minister of Justice (SPD) in Lower Saxony Christian Pfeiffer had claimed in a *Spiegel* article that the authoritarian, distant education of children in the GDR produced xenophobia and a high readiness to assimilate to groups.[2] However, Pfeiffer also considered individual pathways towards radicalisation as a result of reunification (Schochow 2013: 179), and so do the media with regards to the NSU. Germany editor Christoph Scheuermann (*Spiegel*), for example, writes about Uwe Mundlos:

If the Wende hadn't come, his father says, if thousands of jobs hadn't been cut at [optics company Carl] Zeiss, Uwe would have had a job. Instead Uwe faced unemployment at 18. He cut his long hair, put on jump boots and a bomber jacket. Already in 1991 he defined himself as "national", but was apparently still far away from being a Nazi. [...] After 1993 Uwe's views became fixed, says his father. The town's whole right-wing extremist scene

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[2] See *Spiegel*, "Anleitung zum Hass", 22 March 1999, p. 60-66, URL: http://magazin.spiegel.de/ EpubDelivery/spiegel/pdf/10245923 (last accessed 21 October 2016).

became aggressive. (*Spiegel*, "Der braune Virus", 17 December 2011, p. 63-64)

Scheuermann suggests that *if* the political circumstances had been different in a key moment in Mundlos' life, at the age of eighteen in 1995, the (further) radicalisation of his beliefs could have been prevented. Similarly to the "blaming the GDR" narrative, this approach also makes Mundlos' story, and hence that of the NSU, a story of German reunification as the "specific German moment" (Michael Jeismann cited in Stuchtey 2002: 123). This approach is supported by various empirical studies. For example, survey results analysed by Friedrich (2001) suggest that an increase in right-wing extremist thinking and propensity towards violence among East German youth in the late 1980s to mid-1990s was linked to the insecurity and disintegration associated with the collapse of the system rather than anything distinct about the socialisation and education in the GDR. Based on these and other study results Friedrich concludes that the stereotype of an inferiority of the East Germans with regards to their character and mental capacities that von Bullion seems to evoke should be rejected (23). But as Ahbe (2004: 17), referring to both Pfeiffer and Friedrich, has pointed out, media discourses of East Germans continue to accept this causal relation between GDR socialisation and anti-immigrant sentiments and violence as given, despite this empirical evidence to the contrary.

Many authors also attribute the post-reunification increase in right-wing violence to an all-German failure to respond effectively to the reinvigoration of ideas of a "pure" German nation state in both East and West. Thuringia correspondent Claus Peter Müller, for example, writes in the *FAZ*:

The right-wing extremist structures developed unnoticed by the general public. They were German-German. "The militancy was nothing new in the GDR, but it could also be found in the West", says [the employee of the Coordination and Contact Point for the support of the "Round Table for Democracy" in Jena] Frau Patz. After 1990 the cadres from the West came to the East and provided support there. (*FAZ*, "Gegen Atomstrom, für Tierschutz und Adolf Hitler", 5 December 2011, p. 3)

Indeed, the prospect of re-inventing Germany as a nation state resulted in cooperation and convergence of the right-wing extremist scenes of the FRG and the (former) GDR after 1990. This questioned the idea that (violent) right-wing extremism was "typically East German" (Quent 2016; Quent 2012). Overall, the news media's narration of the NSU's East Germanness is ambivalent as they ascribe an important role to the perpetrators' socialisation in the GDR and the immediate reunification period, while also acknowledging the impact that the Nazi legacy has had on the FRG and the extremist structures that existed in West Germany before reunification. Both stories, however, shift the focus towards socio-political conditions rather than the responsibility of the individual perpetrator. It is striking that the media do not consider the factors of social disintegration that continue to provide the ground for ideologies of inequality today. In this context, Quent (2016: 114) recommends that right-wing extremism should not be "historicised as 'residual waste' of the GDR".

The NSU's violent campaign may thus have begun and ended in Thuringia, leaving its traces also in Saxony where the "Trio" went underground,[3] but the narrative goes beyond the idea of a "brown East". Rather, the life stories and radicalisation process of Böhnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe from criminal extremists in the mid- and late 1990s to

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[3] E.g. *FAZ*, "Die Stadt mit Loch", 24 November 2011, p. 4; *SZ*, "Zwickau, Frühlingsstraße", 2 February 2012, p. 3.

"right-wing terrorists" in the 2000s, it is suggested, are inextricably linked to the history of the final years of the GDR, reunification and today's FRG that emerged from it – an entangled history that becomes visible in the NSU's "bloody trail" that "leads through the country" as *FAS* Berlin correspondent Markus Wehner puts it ("Durch das Land führt eine blutige Spur", 20 November 2011, p. 2). This entanglement is also evident in the multiple references to the NSU as a "German affair", e.g. when the *BILD* speaks of "a German abyss" ("Sie schossen ihren Opfern direkt ins Gesicht", 14 November 2011, p. 12) or when the *SZ*, in analogy to the series of acts of violence committed by the RAF in 1977, refers to November 2011 as another "German Autumn" ("Deutscher Herbst", 19 November 2011, p. 3).

"Us" and "Them" in the Process of Working through the Past

While the media link the NSU closely to German history post-1945 to explain their emergence, they simultaneously deny them a normative belongingness to German society by taking recourse, often implicitly, to the moral opposition between right-wing extremists and the contemporary democratic, pluralist German collective. In a *FAZ* guest comment, then left-liberal Federal Minister of Justice Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger (FDP), for example, declares

> [t]oday we live in a liberal democratic state of law. We, who stand up for our democratic community, are the majority and those who think in a right-wing extremist and xenophobic way and are violent, are the minority. This minority cannot be given an inch of space. (*FAZ*, "Ein zweites Verfahren darf nicht scheitern", 22 November 2011, p. 10)

This strategy of "othering" the perpetrators is opposed to the one that was previously employed to "other" the victims, which attributed their deviant behaviour to their ethno-cultural identity. The two main types of community construction, one relying on shared political values and norms, the other one – enshrined in the German citizenship law until 2005 – on descent (Brubaker 1992), are both evoked in the context of the crimes to serve the purpose of symbolic exclusion. This indicates that ethno-cultural and political commitment as a basis for defining membership in the collective of "Germans" are still in competition with each other (Koopmans 1999).

The problematic notion that Germany has "successfully come to terms with its National Socialist past" also comes to the fore here. The NSU, so the story, shows that the process of "recivilising Germans" after what Dan Diner termed the "rupture of civilisation at Auschwitz" (Diner 1988) can indeed never be complete. Jarausch has described the civilising concept as a normative one which, other than the notion of "Westernisation", avoids "postulating a teleological progression from a bad past to a better present" in consideration of the "manifest imperfections of the democracies [that] illustrate a frustrating incompleteness of realizing their own ideals" (Jarausch 2006: 11-14). As Müller (2015: 217-218) points out, the notion of "working through the past" has therefore long been considered to be more appropriate. In this spirit, the *FAZ*, based on *dpa* information, quotes then Federal President Christian Wulff in context of the 70th anniversary of the Wannsee conference that took place on 20 January 1942:

> Federal President Christian Wulff has described the memory of the extermination of the European Jews during the time of National Socialism as a national task. "We should not forget that this unbelievable and

unimaginable event really happened", said Wulff during a commemoration ceremony on the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wannsee Conference on Friday in Berlin. At the same time Wulff expressed "shame and anger" about the murder series of the Zwickau Neo-Nazi Trio. Everyone – including the police and the security authorities – would not have considered it possible that something like this could still happen in Germany today. "We will do everything to make sure that terror and murderous hate of foreigners and the foreign will never have a place in Germany again", said Wulff. (*FAZ*, "Wulff: Scham über Neonazi-Morde", 21 January 2012, p. 4)

Wulff defends the German liberal-democratic basic order because, as head of state,[4] he represents (and simultaneously performs) the Germans as a political, national and ethnic collective through discursive acts (Langenohl and Rauer 2011: 76-79). Wulff continues a tradition in which the German Federal Presidents have used history, in particular that of the Nazi era, as a political argument in their speeches (Langewiesche 1992). In the case at hand, Wulff forms a credible political imperative for how to respond to the NSU based on historical experiences. The quote as presented by the *FAZ* suggests that the failure to prevent the NSU's crimes, specifically the 2000-2006 murder series, is due to society's inability to imagine this kind of hate-induced violence, *despite* the decades of commemorating the events and victims of National Socialism since the 1960s. The fact that Wulff links the NSU to the memory of the Holocaust in order to reconfirm Germany's responsibility to prevent ideologically motivated killing is evidence of the continued prominence of the NS period for German politics of history. However, it is not clear whether Wulff suggests that the non-discovery of the NSU shows the success (society has overcome the inhumane ideas of the National Socialist ideology and therefore could not

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[4] Wulff resigned from office on 17 February 2012 following accusations of having accepted advantages. The beginning of this news story in November 2011 coincided with the discovery of the NSU and competed with it for media attention.

imagine that anyone would commit a racist series of murders) or failure (society has been ignorant of the fact that "murderous hatred" continues to pose a threat to a democratic society and needs to be combatted actively) of Germany's process of working through the past and the "re-civilisation" of the Germans (Langenbacher 2010). The other articles in the text corpus support either of these interpretations.

*A Narrative of Progress*

Before November 2011, the possibility that the acts of violence expressed a right-wing extremist ideology was ruled out by the media, but it did not become clear for what reasons. In hindsight, the perpetrators' ideologically grounded hate of (who the media themselves partially stereotyped as) "foreigners" is defined as that which must not be true because it contradicts internalised beliefs of the success of the process of coming to terms with the past, referring to both the continued existence of extremist ideologies and their anchoring within German society. In the context of the state commemoration ceremony on 23 February 2012 in Berlin, itself a major media event, *BILD*'s Turkish columnist Ertugrul Özkök, for example, refers to the narrative of progress that Wulff's comment implies, calling the acts of violent crime committed by the NSU an attack on the "spirit of integration" of contemporary Germany, and hence on all of "us":

> Attacks do not always come from the outside. All too often violent criminals are members of our own society. […] The target that they [the murderers] shot at, was the spirit of integration in today's Germany. Turks, Greeks, Germans died. That is, the Nazi bullets did not ask for address and origin. That is why the entire German people commemorated the victims

on the Gendarmenmarkt. (*BILD*, "Der Geist des Gendarmenmarkts", 25 February 2012, p. 2)

In contrast to Wulff, Özkök refers explicitly to all ten victims of the murder series, taking the fact that they were of Turkish, Greek *and* German decent as evidence that the group targeted German cohesion more generally, rather than just "foreigners". According to this story, Neo-Nazism is not only normatively excluded from "our" society, but is *of* the past, whereas "we" have moved on, and this progress presents itself through Germany's memory culture. "Othering" the perpetrators as an essential dimension of the re-narration process is thus shaped predominantly by ideas of "who we are *not* (anymore)".

*A Narrative of Failure*

On the other hand, Wulff's comparison of the Jews in National Socialist Germany and immigrants living in the country today is based on their perception as "strangers" ("Hass auf Fremde und Fremdes"). This link between anti-Semitism and racism has been emphasised by the Turkish community in Germany, reinforced by the attacks in Mölln 1992 and Solingen 1993, "in order to create a common perception of struggle against discrimination and racism in the receiving country" (Yurdakul and Bodemann 2006: 45-47). It establishes a direct link between the "rupture of civilisation" by the Nazi crimes and the violent attacks against ethnic minorities in reunified Germany. The *Turkish Community in Germany* (TGD), an organisation that represents the interests of Turks and Germans of Turkish origin, explicitly makes this comparison in its report on the NSU with reference to existing prejudices within German society that, so the report, facilitated the

NSU crimes because they led to the police and public not questioning the story of "intra-milieu violent crime" before November 2011 (TGD 2013: 58).

This narrative of failure is also prominent in the news media coverage, developed in particular by politicians, academics and representatives from civil society writing as guest contributors after November 2011.[5] It suggests that xenophobic and racist views based on essentialist ideas of ethnicity, culture and/or race, which are simultaneously elements of a right-wing extremist worldview that espouses a homogenised, "pure" German nation state (Bohleber 1995: 340), *continue* to be widespread within German society, despite the country's status as a democratic, pluralist state. *SZ* author Andreas Zielcke, for instance, writes:

> He who wants to defend the state and the nation – and be it at all costs – he who wants to preserve the traditional "guiding culture", who wants to give pride to the ethnic majority, satisfy its need for security and strengthen the identity that underpins its state, shares, even if he resorts to repulsive measures in the eyes of the majority, the needs of that ethnic majority and fights for its cohesiveness. The fact that right-wing extremists blow this up to a heroism of perverted state authority does not keep many a citizen from mustering up a degree of patience and understanding for this misguided but "well-intentioned" defence of the allegedly endangered collective core identity. The right-wingers who stamp through the villages are often highly dangerous friends of the state, but friends of the state they are. (*SZ*, "Der Hort der Terroristen", 19 November 2011, p. 4)

The author seems to suggest that the boundaries between a conservative identity politics as represented by Merz' notion of a *Leitkultur* and a right-wing extremist ideology are fluid and that many people accept the latter's claim to act on behalf of the Germans as an ethnic community due to this overlap with conservatism, even if they may not welcome

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[5] See e.g. *BILD*, "Wir müssen Vorbild sein", 24 February 2012, p. 2; *FAS*, "Zerbrechliches Vertrauen", 26 February 2012, p. 12.

their violent methods. In a *Spiegel* interview with correspondent Ulrike Demmer and office head Dirk Kurbjuweit in Berlin, social scientist Wilhelm Heitmeyer from the University of Bielefeld offers a similar diagnosis based on more than a decade of research on group-related misanthropy:

> "The terrorists Böhnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe take their legitimation for violence from a pool of misanthropic attitudes in the population. [...] The endorsement of violence and the readiness of people who think in a right-wing populist way to use violence has increased by 16 percent between 2010 and 2011. For the social climate this is anything but encouraging." (*Spiegel*, "'Die Gesellschaft ist vergiftet'", 12 December 2011, p. 71-72)

Heitmeyer is referring to the findings of the tenth and final instalment of the long-term study "German Conditions" (*Deutsche Zustände*), published on the same day as the interview. It examines the concealed interactions between disintegration processes within society, misanthropy as a collective syndrome and right-wing populist and extremist movements (Heitmeyer 2012). Based on these findings, Heitmeyer suggests that right-wing populist thinking (shaped by xenophobia, "law and order" demands, anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism) that is espoused by 10-25% of the German population, depending on the strictness of the criteria applied (Klein and Heitmeyer 2012: 94), also facilitates the legitimation of violence and that an increase in this dynamic is observable.[6] *SZ* domestic politics editor and editor in chief Heribert Prantl appears to support this diagnosis when he writes the following with reference to Merkel's speech during the state commemoration ceremony in February 2012 in Berlin:

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[6] See also "Deutsche Zustände: Das entsicherte Jahrzehnt. Presseinformation zur Präsentation der Langzeituntersuchung Gruppenbezogene Menschenfeindlichkeit", URL: https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/ikg/Handout_Fassung_Montag_1212.pdf (last accessed 15 August 2016).

For 15 years – it began in the mid-1980s – German election campaigns built on the alleged foreign domination [*Überfremdung*] of Germany. What devastation did they cause? Now the Chancellor moans "words can lead to deeds". One recalls the old CSU expression of "racially mixed [*durchrasst*] society" and the letters to the editor that were indignant at the "ado about a few dead Turks": after all, foreigners in Germany had "killed many more Germans already". Is it only a coincidence that in such a climate the right-wing extremists from Zwickau grew up to be racists and murderers? (*SZ*, "Nostra culpa, unsere Schuld", 24 February 2012, p. 4)

In 1988, CSU General Secretary Edmund Stoiber had used the term "racialised society" in a critique of SPD politician Oskar Lafontaine's idea of a multicultural Germany. In 2002, CSU politician Norbert Geis was accused of using a similar rhetoric in a TV interview. Prantl thus creates a direct temporal and causal link between, on the one hand, collective fears of "foreign domination" and the political rhetoric of conservative parties like the CSU particularly dominant in the 1990s and early 2000s, and, on the other hand, the violent radicalisation of young people such as the "Trio" from Jena.

*SZ* parliamentary correspondent Susanne Höll and "Page Three"[7] reporter Thorsten Schmitz also support this image of a racist German society by telling the following story to illustrate the collective indifference towards racist thinking and behaviour of which Merkel warns in her commemoration speech:

On Monday [21 February] when the chancellor's staff were still polishing the speech, educator Gökan Akgün, a primary school teacher [,] and a good dozen ten- to eleven-year-old pupils of a fifth grade class sat in the S-Bahn on the way to the bowling alley. […] The pupils, of whom most have a migration background, were looking forward to bowling. Between the stops Ostbahnhof and Alexanderplatz anticipation gave way to consternation. A German man and a German woman abused the group.

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[7] "Page Three" (*Die Seite Drei*) is a special section of the *SZ* dedicated to extensive reports and background articles.

> "Only foreigners, wherever one goes", the woman hissed. The man said: "One should gas people like you! Back in the day people like you were transported to Auschwitz!" […] In the S-Bahn on Carnival Monday, Gökan Akgün says, "nobody said anything. Everyone heard what the two Germans said, but nobody said anything." (*SZ*, "Unter uns", 24 February 2012, p. 3)

According to this story, the anti-immigrant sentiments that guided the narration of the NSU crimes before November 2011 express themselves in everyday situations. This narrative of "widespread racism" is also reflected in the hindsight criticism of the label "kebab murders" which had anchored the murders firmly within the allegedly criminal Turkish milieu. On 18 January 2012 the media report that the label has been chosen as the "ghastly neologism" (*Unwort*) of the year 2011.[8] In an *SZ* article that has since gained some prominence,[9] Heribert Prantl comments on this choice as follows:

> "Kebab murders": For many years this word was, without being rebuked as a ghastly neologism, the supposedly handy shortcut for crimes against people of Turkish origin in Germany. It is a word that reflects contempt and demarcation, because it assumes that foreigners are only killed by foreigners. This word makes everyday racism tangible. But people only understood that after the Neo-Nazis had been unmasked as the murderers. […] In order to combat right-wing extremism, a new thinking is […] therefore, first and foremost, required – one that recognises that Islam and Muslims belong to Germany. (*SZ*, "Unwort, Untat, Ungeist", 18 January 2012, p. 4)

On 3 October 2010, during the official ceremony on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of German reunification in Bremen, President Wulff had famously stated that "by now

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[8] See URL: http://www.unwortdesjahres.net/index.php?id=35 (last accessed 21 July 2016); many of the neologisms selected since 1991 are related to the opposition building between "Germans" and "foreigners", e.g. *ausländerfrei (*"free of foreigners") 1991, *Überfremdung* ("foreign domination") 1993 and *national befreite Zone* ("nationally freed zone") 2000.

[9] Virchow, Thomas and Grittmann's study uses Prantl's phrase "Das Unwort erklärt die Untat" ("The ghastly neologism defines the misdeed") in its title – a play on the German "Un-Wort" and "Un-Tat" where the "un" prefix indicates an inconceivability of both the term and the actual deed. They adopt his argument that by using the label "kebab murders" the news media stories reveal an "impaired awareness" (2015: 7; 55).

Islam belongs to Germany as well".[10] This resulted in a public debate about Islam's

position in Germany as a social reality on the one hand and historico-cultural belonging

on the other hand (Langenohl and Rauer 2011: 88-90). Prantl echoes this statement,

focusing on the victims' assumed religious beliefs as an element that continues to be seen

as "foreign" and needs to be integrated into German society. While, as discussed in

chapter 4, the non-application of the terrorism label to the 2004 Cologne bombing was

connected to the assumed Muslim identity of the local residents, religious identities

played a very minor role for how the news media narrated the murder series before

November 2011. Indeed, religion only began to shape the general integration discourse in

Germany in 2008 (see e.g. Halm 2013 and Hierl 2012). Moreover, it is striking that, as

Prantl calls it, the "impaired awareness" (*gestörtes Bewusstein)* regarding immigrants'

belonging to Germany that this label is now considered to express is only diagnosed after

the discovery of the perpetrators. Before November 2011 neither the labelling practices

("kebab murder"; "Bosporus"; "crescent") nor the stories of violent crime themselves had

been rejected as "racist" or "xenophobic" by any of the print media that I analyse (see

also Virchow, Thomas and Grittmann 2015: 56). Instead, they continuously reinforced the

link between "difference" and "deviance".

The re-narration process differentiates explicitly, however, between those

members of German society who contribute to creating this xenophobic and racist

climate in which the NSU, so the story, could thrive and those who belong to the right-

wing extremist scene. In an expert opinion piece for the *SZ*, social scientist Naika Foroutan

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(Free University of Berlin) speaks of widespread "fears of the foreign" (which she appears

to equate with "racism") as being rooted in emotions, rather than ideological positions:

> We need to talk about racism in our country. We need to acknowledge it as a reality, as a threat to all of us – not only for people with a migration background. Instead we are persistently holding proxy debates. […] Again an opportunity was missed for us to talk about the central German question. About the reasons for the fears of a considerable part of the population of "foreign domination" [*Überfremdung*] that is now called cultural incompatibility, about the emotional refusal to accept Germany's diversity. (*SZ*, "Ein Angriff, der uns allen gilt", 23 February 2012, p. 2)

Foroutan suggests that the "central German question" that has not been addressed in the

aftermath of the NSU's discovery is how to understand why "major parts of the

population" do not accept Germany's diversity and how these "fears of the foreign" can

be overcome. It is implied here that the latter is different from a hate of "foreigners" that

is based on a coherent worldview rooted in an ideology of inequality and paired with

explicit (violent) hostility, constituting the separate political identity of "right-wing

extremists" (Rommelspacher 2011: 49-50). This suggested link between individuals' latent

extremist views, the society in which they grow up and extremist movements is the focus

of the publically funded *Leipziger Mitte-Studien* that have been published since 2002.

These studies are built on the assumption that (even) open societies like Germany

reproduce right-wing attitudes that threaten their openness, making it necessary to

observe the dynamic relationship between the "democratic centre" and the "extremist

margin" (Decker and Brähler 2016: 11-12). In order to uphold the opposition between

"good democrats" and "evil extremists", views of the "general population" need to be

discursively separated from the NSU and right-wing extremists as the "Other".

This closes the circle to the first narrative of success, the difference between the two being that Germany's self-perception as a country of immigration is emerging but not yet complete. Seen from this perspective, former President Wulff's link between commemorating the Jewish victims of historical National Socialism and the failure to prevent organised violence against persons with a migration background in today's Germany, in particular Turks and Muslims, points towards a past that (still) stretches into the present. However, regardless of whether the transformation of German society is seen as a success or a failure in light of the NSU affair, in both cases persons with a migration background who often have been excluded from the "German community of memory" (Şenocak 1993) become an element of remembering the German past.

The next two sections look more closely at how, beginning in mid-November 2011, the relationship between perpetrators, victims and German society is re-narrated with reference to the repertoire of cultural stories associated with "right-wing extremism". I first look at the 2007 murder and then the 2000-2006 murder series and the 2004 Cologne bombing.

**Re-Narrating the 2007 Murder: Right-Wing Extremism and the German East**

Three New Stories

The re-narration process continues to identify Michèle Kiesewetter, the victim of the 2007 murder, the solution of which coincided with the discovery of the NSU, as "the police-woman". However, whereas before November 2011 her membership in the German police defined her status as an innocent and hence "ideal" victim, the label is

much less dominant after the identification of the perpetrators. Three new versions of the story of her murder are told: the first one purports that Kiesewetter and her colleague were accidental victims because the perpetrators wanted to get hold of weapons in order to commit further crimes.[11] As mentioned in the previous chapter, the fact that the perpetrator(s) had taken the victims' handcuffs and weapons was emphasised repeatedly by the news media at the time, but only after the "phantom" turned out to be non-existent was this tentatively linked to organised crime.

The second version of the story is that the attack was motivated by the NSU's right-wing extremist ideology because the perpetrators saw the German police force as representatives of the state they hated.[12] This differs quite considerably from the earlier story of the attack as an act of personal retaliation for measures taken by the police, including the two officers, against the local drug-dealing milieu. While revenge as a motive remains relevant, this is no longer defined as personal, but ideologically motivated retaliation. Considering that the other victim of the attack, Martin Arnold, survived the head shot only by coincidence, these two versions of the story can explain why both of them were targeted.



*Figure 5.2: Map of Thuringia*

The third and most dominant version of the story focuses exclusively on Kiesewetter as the murder victim by emphasising her East German origin. Immediately

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[11] See e.g. *FAZ*, "Ist die Tat von Heilbronn nun wirklich aufgeklärt?", 9 November 2011, p. 9; *SZ*, "Die rätselhafte Frau Z.", 10 November 2011, p. 10.
[12] E.g. *SZ*, "Hinweise auf weiteren Anschlag der Terroristen", 15 November 2011, p. 1.

after the murder weapon has been found in the caravan in Eisenach, a link between

Kiesewetter and the perpetrators is established with reference to Kiesewetter's home

state Thuringia. The three NSU members grew up in Jena, a university city 70 kilometres

northeast of the victim's home town Oberweiβbach (see figure 5.2).[13] Perpetrators and

victim thus have roots in a part of Germany where right-wing extremist thinking, so the

head of the *FAS* Berlin office Eckart Lohse, is supposedly "nothing special" ("Die Angst vor

den wenigen Fremden", 27 November 2011, p. 7). This link prompts the development of a

story of acquaintance crime (*Beziehungstat*). Before November 2011 the personal

background of the victim did not have an impact on the narration of the story, except for

Kiesewetter's portrayal by the *BILD* as a young woman whose "dream job" it was to be a

police officer. Only once had the *FAZ* speculated about a personal relationship between

the victim and the perpetrator(s) during the search for the "phantom", but according to

the paper this assumption was precluded by the investigators, without any reasons being

cited (*FAZ*, "Eine Frau mit Vergangenheit", 12 February 2009, p. 11). In hindsight,

however, *FAZ* Baden-Wuerttemberg correspondent Rüdiger Soldt, who (co-) authored

nearly all of the 20 articles that the *FAZ* and *FAS* published on the 2007 murder, criticises

that the police did not consider an acquaintance crime further:

> The Special Commission shed insufficient light on the murdered colleague's
> circles: Because even if the Baden-Wuerttemberg police does not want to
> speak of an "acquaintance crime", it has become clear after the meeting of
> the home affairs select committee of the Bundestag on Monday that for
> several years the police-woman lived in close vicinity to a Thuringian hotel
> frequented regularly by Neo-Nazis who are linked to the right-wing
> extremist organisation "National Socialist Underground" (NSU). What kind

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[13] E.g. *SZ*, "Gruppenbild mit Mörder", 18 November 2011, p. 3; *FAZ*, "Wo alles begann", 26 November 2011, p. 44.

of personal contacts existed between the much younger police-woman and the right-wing extremists is subject to investigation. [...] Based on everything that is known since Monday Michèle Kiesewetter was by no means an "accidental victim". The police in Baden-Wuerttemberg will need to face the question of why it knew so little about the police-woman's life. (*FAZ*, "Von Phantomen und Zufällen", 23 November 2011, p. 2)

Similarly to the stories told about the victims of the 2000-2006 murder series before November 2011, Kiesewetter's life becomes relevant for telling the story of her murder, while her origins (albeit here in a geographical and hence socio-economic rather than an ethnic sense)[14] comes to dominate her professional identity as a police-woman as the guiding plot element. Subsequently, there are speculations about the exact relationship between the victim's family and the perpetrators. The *BILD*, for example, tells the story as follows:

Like the killers, Michèle Kiesewetter grew up in Thuringia, in the small village of Oberweißbach (1,800 inhabitants). In the same village her stepfather had a restaurant that was known as a stomping ground of the right-wing scene, according to "Süddeutsche.de". The father also wanted to rent another pub, but a close acquaintance of Uwe Mundlos († 38) who socialised here regularly won the bid. Did this result in a conflict between the Nazis and the family? Was the murder even an act of revenge? (*BILD*, "Killer-Nazi feierte im Dorf der Polizistin", 22 November 2011, p. 15)

Revenge as a motive is here only indirectly related to the perpetrators' ideology; it is the encounter of the victim's family with Neo-Nazi circles in a region where right-wing extremism is widespread that might explain, so this story, why Kiesewetter was attacked. However, this re-narration of the 2007 murder as an acquaintance crime with recourse to

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[14] The case of an East German accountant who sued a West German company on grounds of ethnic discrimination, ending with the labour court in Stuttgart ruling in 2010 that East Germans did not constitute an ethnic minority is, however, noteworthy in this context (see Howard 1995).

the "brown East" narrative is very speculative and the papers offer only very few plot elements that can support this story. This, again, has parallels to the narration of the murder series and bombing as deeds within the "criminal milieu of immigrants". In this case, a (more implicit) suspicion towards East Germany as a breeding ground for right-wing extremism and hence as something that is "(potentially) deviant", expressing itself in the victims' involvement with right-wing extremists, seems to override requirements of coherence and plausibility.

Although both the mayor of Oberweißbach and the victim's stepfather deny the claims about alleged personal contacts between the perpetrators and Kiesewetter,[15] the stories do not renounce this narrative, but instead offer other explanations for the quick resorting to the story of an acquaintance crime. *SZ* head of investigative research Hans Leyendecker, for example, points to the time pressure faced by investigators when trying to tell a new story that fits the conclusion:

> The President of the Federal Office of Criminal Investigations, Jörg Ziercke, an honourable man, responded to all of these failures in a bad way: He was too eager. He wanted to be very quick now; he was thereby too quick. Because there is no explanation for much of what happened in the past, he at least wanted to present a completely new theory to the parliament and also the public. The story of the young police-woman's murder was supposed to be rewritten. […] But one cannot make up for something immediately that was neglected for so long. The investigators need to have a lot of patience. There must not be any more premature results. (*SZ*, "Vor lauter Eifer schlecht", 24 November 2011, p. 4)

The narration, however, continues to follow this idea of an acquaintance crime beyond November 2011, in particular in the *FAZ*. It implies a de-politicisation of the murder: the

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[15] E.g. E.g. *SZ*, "Das kann doch alles nicht wahr sein", 23 November 2011, p. 6; *BILD*, "Zerstörtes Haus der Killer-Nazis wird abgerissen", 24 November 2011, p. 14.

victim is no longer predominantly defined as a member of the police and hence not seen as a representative of the German state. Instead, her origins in an East German state serve to compromise Kiesewetter's previously unquestioned innocence because, so the story, she was in some way involved with the local right-wing extremist scene that stands for the rejection of normative German political values as discussed above.

At the same time, similar to the pre-November 2011 portrayal of the other murder victims as individuals, Kiesewetter continues to be characterised as a young, innocent girl. It is her origin in the tendentially deviant east that makes her guilty only by association, just like the other victims by virtue of their belonging to the "immigrant milieu", even if the opposition between herself as a victim and the perpetrators is still more pronounced because she is not directly affiliated with the right-wing extremist milieu. Nevertheless, dominant stories linked to the trope of the "brown East" facilitate the re-narration process in a situation in which it is difficult to integrate heterogeneous events into a coherent story.

Overall, the media evoke a hegemonic story in which East German society, where both the victim and the perpetrators grew up, is still "lagging behind" vis-à-vis West Germany, not only in a socio-economic sense (see Hough and Kirchner 2009), but also because it has a higher potential for deviance in the form of extremism and violence (Pates 2013). The "catching up" process is not only lengthy, but – similar to the integration of persons with a migration background – a never ending story.[16] Contrary to what scholars had hoped in the 1990s and early 2000s, East Germanness is identified as a

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[16] This may be connected to a view of East Germans as immigrants who did not leave their country, but whose new country came to them, as freelance journalist Toralf Staud suggests, see *ZEIT Online*, "Ossis sind Türken. 13 Jahre Einheit: In Gesamt-Westdeutschland sind die Ostdeutschen Einwanderer", 2 October 2003, URL: http://www.zeit.de/2003/41/Einwanderer (last accessed 1 September 2016).

problem in the creation of an "all-Germanness" and "inner unity" that needs to be overcome (Grix 2002: 5, 12). This finding is in line with other studies that have observed a negativity bias of the (West) German media towards East Germany (Ahbe 2004; Wedl 2009; Kolmer 2009) and will become relevant again for the discussion in chapter 7.

The NSU and Split Delegitimisation

Another reason why the re-narration process focuses predominantly on the East German origins of the perpetrators and their victim seems to be that an ideologically motivated attack against the police as suggested by the second version of the story is not seen as plausible (enough) in light of the NSU's overall victim choice. Stuttgart chief reporter Alexandra Castell et al.[17] (BILD) consider the NSU's inconsistent modus operandi:

> Michèle Kiesewetter († 22, died in 2007 after a shot to the head) does not fit the murderous pattern of the killers. The Neo-Nazis took an enormous risk when they executed Kiesewetter. After all, police murderers are searched for particularly intensively because every police officer in Germany wants to bring the murderers of a colleague to justice. Among other things the murderers took Kiesewetter's handcuffs, kept them for years like a trophy. The only connection: The police-woman was from Thuringia just like her murderers. (BILD, "Die 5 größten Rätsel der Todes-Serie", 15 November 2011, p. 12)

In mid-February 2012 Spiegel TV editor-in-chief Thomas Heise et al.[18] also conclude that the NSU's behaviour – in this case the fact that more than four years passed before they committed their next crime, a bank robbery in Arnstadt, Thuringia, in September 2011 –

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[17] This also includes news reporter Maximilian Kiewel, Leipzig editor Martina Kurtz, freelance writer Carolin Lemuth, chief reporters Josef Ley and Julian Reichelt, M. Schwarz and senior editor Tania Winterstein.
[18] This also includes Dresden correspondent Maximilian Popp, Germany editors Sven Röbel, Christoph Scheuermann and Holger Stark.

might be related to the similarities between victim and perpetrators, specifically between

Kiesewetter and Zschäpe:

> But what happened after the police murder is strange. The cell stopped its activities, the series of brutal killings ended. Four and a half years passed before the next bank robbery. What happened during the year 2007? Did the members of the "National Socialist Underground" come into conflict with each other? Did Beate Zschäpe blame the men for having shot the police officer, a woman who was similar to Zschäpe in terms of origin, milieu and looks? Or were they simply afraid of being discovered because the police efforts had increased? The only one who could give an answer to these questions sits in Cologne and remains silent. (*Spiegel*, "In der Parallelwelt", 18 February 2012, p. 65)

In an article from December 2011 the *SZ* also quotes an investigator as saying that the

police murder might have led to conflicts between the group members because some

right-wing extremists would hold the view that members of the police are respectable

officials who must not be shot ("Aufbauorganisation 'Trio'", 5 December 2011, p. 6). That

right-wing extremists do not attack government targets out of respect for the entity of

the state or because this would involve too many risks, however, has been questioned

since the mid-1990s based on the observation that these actors blame government

officials for the overall socio-political situation in which "enemies of the nation" (Jews,

immigrants, leftists) could thrive – Sprinzak has called this a "split delegitimisation" of

minorities and the government as enemies (1995: 20; see also Koehler 2017: 14-15). In

the past, many right-wing extremists, specifically White Supremacists, even bombed

government buildings, including the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City

by Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols in April 1995 and the government quarter in Oslo

by Anders B. Breivik in July 2011. The latter stated in his "manifesto" that the political

elites in Europe had betrayed their own people and waged a war against them by allowing Muslims to "invade Europe", reproducing a pre-existing narrative of the anti-Islamic movement (Sandberg 2013: 74-75). That the news media nevertheless see the most plausible explanation in the shared East German origins of victim and perpetrators not only demonstrates an underestimation of the seriousness of right-wing extremist violence (McGowan 2014: 204-205). It also supports my point about the dominance of the trope of the "brown East".

The Narrative Competition Continues

The police murder is hardly mentioned in the NSU coverage throughout December 2011.[19] Eventually, on 24/25 December 2011, *SZ* and *BamS* report that the police have eliminated the idea of an acquaintance crime. Subsequently, the weapon-related crime script moves into focus again: the victims were chosen randomly after all to get hold of their weapons as suspected already in early November.[20] After December 2011, the crime receives again next to no coverage, apparently for the same reason that the series of bank robberies is marginalised: Ultimately, both are seen as a means to an end – to get hold of weapons or money to organise and finance the perpetrators' life in the underground – and not as an expression of the NSU's conflict with the state. The

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[19] But see *BILD*, "Haben Verfassungsschützer beim Polizisten-Mord zugesehen?", 1 December 2011, p. 16; *SZ*, "Zehn Morde, 2500 Asservate, viele Fragen", 2 December 2011, 5; *FAS*, "Die Sucht zu töten", 4 December 2011, p. 6.

[20] E.g. *SZ*, "Ermittler finden Motiv für Polizistinnen-Mord", 24 December 2011, p. 1; *BamS*, "Neonazis töteten Polizistin wegen ihrer Dienstwaffe", 25 December 2011, p. 9; see also Pfahl-Traughber (2012). In its final report from April 2016 the first enquiry committee in Baden-Wuerttemberg, however, states that "[t]he committee has certain doubts that the stealing of the duty weapons was indeed the only or decisive motive for the crime on the Theresienwiese because their own weapons were not reliable", because there would have been "simpler and less risky options to get hold of reliable weapons." (Landtag von Baden-Wuerttemberg 2016a: 882)

following excerpt from an *SZ* article by Peter Fahrenholz, deputy head of the Bavaria

department, and Susi Wimmer illustrates this perceived difference:

> Generally speaking, the State Office of Criminal Investigations now has the task to find out independently of the Special Commission Bosporus whether crimes with a right-wing extremist background to support the kebab murders were committed in Bavaria as well, i.e. whether the perpetrators, for instance, also committed bank robberies here to acquire money. (*SZ*, "Im Visier der Terroristen", 17 November 2011, p. 44)

However, in late March the *SZ* not only hints at new clues that would support

assumptions about the murder being an acquaintance crime ("Hardliner und

Waffennarren", 24 March 2012, p. 6), but Rüdiger Soldt also asks again in the *FAZ* whether

Kiesewetter knew her murderers:

> Ms Kiesewetter had allegedly been bullied by right-wing extremists already at the beginning of her training, in summer 2005 Mundlos is said to have been in Oberweißbach. The police-woman was from this village in Thuringia. [...] According to the paper's [*Stuttgarter Nachrichten*] research, Böhnhardt renewed the rental agreement for the caravan on 19 April 2007, i.e. on the day that the police officer visited her mother in Oberweißbach. The perpetrators were seen with this caravan on 25 April in Heilbronn. The perpetrators returned the caravan on 27 April. (*FAZ*, "Kannte Polizistin ihre Mörder?", 28 March 2012, p. 4)

In summary, the three versions of the story – weapon-related crime, acquaintance crime

and politically motivated crime – continue to compete with each other. Until March 2012

no clear focus on one or the other emerges.[21]

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[21] Despite the work of the enquiry committees in Baden-Wuerttemberg and the *Bundestag* since 2012, a coherent story of the 2007 police murder has still not been told and Mundlos and Böhnhardt have not been identified as the perpetrators beyond doubt. This is one of the reasons why the *Bundestag* agreed to

**Murder Series and Cologne Bombing: From Deviants to "*Our* Immigrants"**

While the re-narrated story of the 2007 murder remains incoherent and the bank robberies are not defined as a separate story-line, the serial murders and, to a lesser extent, the 2004 Cologne bombing occupy a central place within the re-narration process. As shown in chapter 4, the murder series had received the most coverage already before November 2011. Three things seem to account for the media's continued interest: first, the news media show a general fascination with the development of the story over time and the previous collective inability to "break the code"[22] that would have led to the identification of the perpetrators. Secondly, the human interest dimension is greatest here. This was already evident in the pre-November 2011 coverage where the emotional and intimate dimension of individuals' fate was an element of portraying the victims as the "immigrant and/or criminal 'Other'". The third reason is this earlier portrayal of the victims of both the murder series and the 2004 bombing because the victims' individual stories, and that of their families, need to be retold in light of the right-wing extremist background of the perpetrators. Again, the focus is less on the bombing because it did not result in any deaths.

Stories of Victimhood: From Guilt to Innocence

The narrative focus on the "othering" of the right-wing extremist perpetrators has a strong impact on the re-emplotment of the 2000-2006 victims within the new story. In

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appoint a third NSU Parliamentary Enquiry Committee in December 2015, working on the assumption that Kiesewetter was not an accidental victim after all (Deutscher Bundestag 2015b).
[22] E.g. *SZ*, "Jetzt übernimmt der Bundesanwalt", 12 November 2011, p. 12.

light of the view that the NSU's ideology is defined mainly through "hate of the 'Other'",

the victims are now seen as having been attacked *just* because they were (perceived as)

"foreigners". *SZ* investigative reporter Leyendecker writes: "Human beings were mere

objects in this maniacal system. Names and personalities did not matter – as long as it

was a foreigner." ("Detaillierte Todeslisten – spontane Morde", 31 January 2012, p. 5) By

implication, the victims are defined as innocent, their families become "victim families"

(*Opferfamilien*) and their secondary victimisation due to the police' suspicion is

recognised (see Doak 2008; Elliott, Thomas and Ogloff 2012). Assumptions that had been

made by victims, their families and friends, all of whom were narratively excluded before

November 2011, are now considered legitimate. In another *BILD* article by Alexandra

Castell et al.[23] Gamze Kubaşık, the daughter of the eighth murder victim, is quoted as

follows:

> Shortly after the murder [of Mehmet Kubaşık on 4 April 2006] speculations about protection money, the Turkish mafia and gambling debts appeared. [Daughter] Gamze: "Suddenly we were under suspicion. The police constantly searched for my father's fraudulent business contacts. The police did not take our suspicion that it might have been Neo-Nazis seriously." (*BILD*, "Jetzt klagen die Kinder der Opfer an", 15 November 2011, p. 13)

Another illustration of this new role as legitimate story-tellers is the account by *SZ*

parliamentary editor Stefan Braun of a meeting between Wulff and other high-ranking

German politicians with the victims' families:

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[23] This also includes news reporter Maximilian Kiewel, Leipzig editor Martina Kurtz, freelance writer Carolin Lemuth, chief reporters Josef Ley and Julian Reichelt, M. Schwarz and senior editor Tania Winterstein.

> In this very special German lesson one after the other told [them] how the security authorities – and not only they – had treated them for years, continuing to some extent even today: As family members of perpetrators, not of victims. […] The suspicion, the participants of the discussion say, was the same for all of them: the murdered must have been involved somehow. Time and again the bereaved repeated, demanded and even shouted out at demonstrations that the victims might simply be victims. They were heard only by individual agents and in absolutely exceptional cases. But it did not have any consequences. (*SZ*, "Deutschstunde", 25 November 2011, p. 5)

That the victims' innocence is no longer questioned now that the perpetrators' right-wing extremist identity has been established is also revealed by the news media coverage of the state commemoration ceremony in February 2012. In the *BILD* political editor Angi Baldauf links the very act of collective (belated) mourning to the victims' innocence:

> Germany bows down! In a moving memorial ceremony 1,200 guests commemorated the ten victims of the right-wing extremist murder series in the concert hall at Gendarmenmarkt yesterday. The flags on Gendarmenmarkt fly at half-mast. In the hall candles illuminate the stage where Chancellor Merkel is giving her address to the guests and in particular the relatives of the victims: "They are candles for people whose lives were erased by cold-blooded murder." […] There is complete silence in the hall. In the name of the country the Chancellor has bowed to the victims of the Neo-Nazis. (*BILD*, "Angela Merkel: 'Diese Morde sind eine Schande für unser Land'", 24 February 2012, p. 2)

The social reality of violence *against* (not *by*) those who are perceived as "different" is thus narratively constructed and acknowledged simultaneously. Unlike before November 2011 when, as discussed in chapter 4, the acts of violent crime had been othered in their entirety, while "hate of Turks" was ascribed to personal negative experiences of the perpetrator, (guilty) perpetrators and (innocent) victims now clearly oppose each other. Rather than happening within the "parallel world of the Turks", it is now the parallel

world of right-wing extremists living underground (*Spiegel*, "In der Parallelwelt", 18 February 2012, 60-66) that is associated with these crimes.

However, considering that, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, right-wing extremists as Germany's historical and contemporary "Other" are central to normative conceptions of the "German Self", the re-narration process is not only guided by the re-establishment of a clear opposition between innocent victims and guilty perpetrators, but also follows the idea that "our enemies' enemy is our friend". The next two subsections look at how the media tell a new story of the victims' position within German society that sees them as a vulnerable minority in need of protection and what impact this has on the difference-deviance-nexus that I described in chapter 4.

## Re-Narrating the Relationship between "Germans" and the Victims: Overcoming Difference?

It is striking that even after the discovery of the NSU the narrative distinction between the murder in 2007 on the one hand and the serial murders and the Cologne bombing(s) on the other hand is being upheld. The following two excerpts, one from the *SZ* and one from Angi Baldauf's *BILD* article, illustrate this:

> After the solution of the murder series of nine foreigners [*Ausländern*] and a German police-woman the German security authorities are under suspicion of having underestimated Neo-Nazi violence for years. (*SZ*, "Rechter Terror schockt Regierung", 14 November 2011, p. 1)

> Between 2000 and 2007 the nine Turks and the Greek as well as a German police-woman were outright executed by the members of the so-called

"Zwickau Cell". (*BILD*, "Angela Merkel: 'Diese Morde sind eine Schande für unser Land'", 24 February 2012, p. 2)

It is worth noting that the idea of "Germans" as an ethnic community is communicated by both German and Turkish politicians who are cited by journalists or write as guest authors. President Wulff, for example, is quoted as saying that "xenophobia has no place in Germany" and that "each and every one of us needs to make an effort to be open towards aliens [*Fremde*] in everyday life" (*SZ*, "'Kein Platz für Fremdenhass'", 24 December 2011, p. 5). Considering that almost all of the 2000-2006 victims had been resident in Germany for years, if not decades, and Mehmet Kubaşık and Halit Yozgat held German citizenship, this distinction between "each and every one of us" on the one hand and the victims as "aliens" (*xenos*) on the other hand illustrates that there is still a lack of reflection on the victims' individual identities and non-ethnic definitions of "being German" in the context of these violent crimes. Former Officer for the Integration of Foreigners in Berlin and ombudswoman for the NSU victims, Barbara John, also makes the distinction between Germany as a people (*Volk*) and a population on a state territory (*Bevölkerung*) when she is quoted as follows by *SZ* parliamentary correspondent Susanne Höll:

> Nine of the ten victims lost their life because they did not fit the German image of the Neo-Nazis. But even righteous citizens need to realise: "Our country will never look like it did decades ago. Immigrants are part of this country, just as they are", says John. And adds: "Enough with exclusionary terms and dictates to adjust according to the motto: integrate yourselves." (*SZ*, "Bleibt nur die Entschuldigung", 23 February 2012, p. 2)[24]

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[24] See also the distinction between "society" and "community" that Chancellor Merkel makes in her commemoration speech on 23 February 2012 (*SZ*, "'Kerze der Hoffnung'", 24 February 2012, p. 6; *FAZ*, "'Wir sind ein Land, eine Gesellschaft'", 24 February 2012, p. 4).

John's statement explicitly opposes "Neo-Nazis" and "righteous citizens", but it also reinforces the idea that "immigrants" are different from "us Germans" and that this difference is a key characteristic of the newly emerging unified German society.

The then Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu echoes these sentiments in an *SZ* guest contribution with reference to the 50th anniversary of the guest worker agreement between Germany and Turkey in 2011:

> The discovery of the terror network may have been only a coincidence. But this coincidence is nevertheless a chance to combat racism, xenophobia and the exclusion of those who are different. […] At the same time the feelings of belonging and friendship that were destroyed by this sick mindset should be strengthened again. In this way this coincidence could help the Turks, who have been living together with German society for 50 years, look into a peaceful future with a feeling of trust rather than with fear and worry. (*SZ*, "'Die Familien der Opfer warten auf Gerechtigkeit'", 8 December 2011, p. 2)

The focus here is again on the perpetrators who Davutoğlu explicitly defines as non-representative of German society and as disturbers of the German-Turkish friendship. As a Turkish state official Dovutoglu focuses on the German state's responsibility for protecting Turkish immigrants from racist violence. This also reinforces an understanding of "the Turks" as foreign bodies, an ambivalence that is, however, in line with the Turkish government's general stance towards the Turkish diaspora's role in Germany under then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: in a speech in front of 16,000 people in the Cologne Arena in February 2008, three days after a house fire in Ludwigshafen (Rhineland-Palatinate) with nine Turkish-born victims, he had declared that "assimilation" of Turkish immigrants to German values and culture was a "crime against humanity". At

the same time he defined the Turkish community, based on its contribution to the post-WWII rebuilding of Germany, as an "integral element of this country", thereby connecting a Turkish identity in Germany with ideas of agency and pride.[25] A few days later Chancellor Angela Merkel addressed the Turkish community by declaring that "I am your chancellor as well" (Langenohl and Rauer 2011: 81-82).

Overall then, "Germans" and "(Turkish) immigrants" continue to be considered as socio-culturally different from each other. However, following the discovery of the NSU, this difference is no longer seen as undermining "German" rules and norms, but as an integral and positively connotated feature of German society whose acceptance is a sign of successful, not failed, integration processes.[26] This is in line with an understanding of integration as the active promotion of difference under the umbrella of abstract political values that has shaped German integration discourses for years – a process of "integration through partial disintegration" (Jarren 2000: 29). The articles cited above thus indicate an idea of Germany's development into a country of immigration based on a transformation of its society, but not necessarily of the "Germans" as an ethnic community.

According to the dominant story, the perpetrators specifically chose peaceful, well-integrated people with a migration background in order to target the value-oriented "spirit of integration" as *BILD* columnist Özkök puts it. Wolfgang Nešković, former federal

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[25] The German translation of the speech is available here: *SZ.de*, "'Assimilation ist ein Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit'", 17 May 2010, URL: http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/erdogan-rede-in-koeln-im-wortlaut-assimilation-ist-ein-verbrechen-gegen-die-menschlichkeit-1.293718 (last accessed 30 July 2016).
[26] A similar understanding of the victims as "positive strangers" after November 20111 is also implied in some of the responses of Virchow, Thomas and Grittmann's interview partners (2015:64).

judge and then member of the *Bundestag* for the Left Party, tells a similar story in a *FAZ* guest comment:

> It was not the state that was supposed to be intimidated. It was not the economy that was meant to be frightened. The sick mind told them to sow fear and terror among the immigrants. They did not act randomly. They targeted people who were integrated as foreigners [*Ausländer*] in the public space and commonly accepted. These were the small businessmen of the street corners and markets: kebab sellers, owners of internet cafes and flower retailers. (*FAZ*, "Der kranke Sinn", 28 November 2011, p. 8)

Considering that before November 2011 the economic contribution that in particular the murder victims made to German society was questioned, it is striking that Nešković emphasises that it is the victims' business activities that define them as "integrated within the public space" and "accepted by all". Re-defining the murders and bombing as having targeted the very process of successful integration enables an interpretation of NSU violence as an "attack on all of us", with "us" referring to those who are supportive of integrating immigrants into German society. This becomes particularly apparent during the commemoration ceremony where the 2007 murder victim is juxtaposed with the nine victims of the murder series to conceptualise them as a group that represents pluralism itself.[27] *FAZ* Feuilleton editor Christian Geyer writes:

> [F]irst and foremost it was of course the Neo-Nazi murders of ten people that were commemorated, the attack on a specific group: Nine victims were of Turkish or Greek origin, the tenth a police-woman. He who speaks too quickly of an attack on society, understates the hatred of foreigners as

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[27] Angela Merkel speaks of the murders as a *Schande* ("disgrace") for Germany (see e.g. *BILD*, "Angela Merkel: 'Diese Morde sind eine Schande für unser Land', 24 February 2012, p. 2). Thomas Mann had used the word "Schmach", a synonym for "Schande", to describe the Nazi crimes in a German-language BBC broadcast on 8 May 1945.

a motive for murder. And obscures the conclusion: One can only murder people, not values. But this was precisely what was moving about the event in the concert hall on the Gendarmenmarkt in Berlin: that during the ceremony phase it was about the ten murdered people as individuals, while there was no doubt that the attack was "also" (Angela Merkel) an attack on our social order. This double violation expresses itself in the term "disgrace for our country" that the Chancellor repeated yesterday. (*FAZ*, "Die zehn", 24 February 2012, p. 31)

The author points out that the murders connect the individual victims with German society because the former *stand for* the German pluralistic order that includes both "Germans" and "immigrants". That this perspective constitutes a clear shift from their previous focus on immigrants' difference and potential for deviant behaviour, however, is not addressed by the media. They now approach the victims as "*our* immigrants" that need to be protected from those who aim to destroy the valid social order. This order, so the story, is represented by all of the victims – an ethnically German police-woman, nine men with different migration biographies, and an attack on residents and visitors of the Keupstraße as a multicultural space. But it is the victims with a migration background that are seen as weak and vulnerable vis-à-vis "Germans" and are therefore in need of protection. This paternalistic relationship is evident, for instance, when the former president of the Federal VerfS and the Federal Intelligence Service (BND), Hansjörg Geiger, says in an interview with Heribert Prantl (*SZ*):

"We are highly indebted towards the victims and their relatives. It is particularly painful that nine victims were immigrants, i.e. that a part of society is affected that belongs to the weaker ones, that often have not properly arrived in the state yet. They are particularly dependent on trust in the institutions of the state of law. This trust is impaired." (*SZ*, "'Jeder Stein muss umgedreht werden'", 14 February 2012, p. 5)

The idea, already developed before November 2011, that "immigrants" are "lagging behind" thus continues to exist, only this time in support of the victims' innocence, rather than their guilt. The parallel to the narrative that the NSU chose victims that it perceived to be inferior, typical of right-wing extremist violence (Mudde 1995), is worth reflecting on, even if the latter essentialises this inferiority, whereas the media principally consider it as a process of adjustment. The narrative of immigrant vulnerability is also evident in an article in which *FAZ* Feuilleton editor Karen Krüger compares the NSU victims to the victims of the arson attacks against the houses of Turkish families in Mölln and Solingen in 1992/1993 and the acts of solidarity that followed:

> An imaginary building of perceived security was set up for foreigners here: written above it in bold was that Turks are popular in Germany. With so many well-intended chains of lights and awareness campaigns at schools one did not realise how fragile it was the whole time. Now it has collapsed. (*FAZ*, "Hinterbliebene, von uns allein gelassen", 19 November 2011, p. 33)

According to this story, the discovery that the murder series was committed by right-wing extremists reveals that immigrants are in need of even more protection from anti-democratic, violent forces than expected because their apparent difference from "the Germans" makes them vulnerable to these forces. This new story of "immigrants" – a word that the media continue to use synonymously with "foreigners" (*Ausländer*) and "aliens" (*Fremde*) – as vulnerable victims contrasts with the pre-November 2011 stories connected to the trope of "deviant foreign milieus". Whereas before the exclusion of the victim group from the "Germans" served to uphold the image of Germany as a democratic society and defensive state, it is now their inclusion that fulfils the same

purpose. In this way, stories of violence committed *by* and *against* "non-Germans" both achieve the same aim, revealing a very fluid transition from victims to perpetrators and vice versa.

On the one hand, the media criticise the idea that immigrants are "too different" from German society and not sufficiently integrated. On the other hand, they reinforce this difference as a key element of the anti-racism discourse. This reflects the integration dilemma described by Fatima El-Tayeb (2011, 2015): while the discourse of "failed multiculturalism", not limited to Germany, accuses (in particular Muslim) communities of being unable to integrate into Western societies, leading to their marginalisation, they are simultaneously required to re-affirm their Otherness in order to have a legitimate claim to special protection from violence by the state. Demands for immigrants to develop a sense of belonging and the reinforcement of essentialised differences thus constantly compete with each other. Moreover, it implies that the dominant discourse recognises those assigned to the group of "immigrants" only in virtue of their agency qua group membership and does not consider them as highly diverse individuals.

## On Narrative Continuity: Reinforcing the Difference-Deviance-Nexus

In chapter 4 I argued that the narration of both the 2000-2006 murder series and the 2004 Cologne bombing as "violence within the milieu" can be traced to the existence of a difference-deviance-nexus ascribed to "immigrants" as a highly abstract group. The re-narration of the murder series and the bombing after the discovery of the NSU continues to produce this nexus. In the *FAZ* Feuilleton, for example, editor Karen Krüger

acknowledges the prevalence of stereotypes in the news media coverage before November 2011. At the same time she does not fail to emphasise that "sinister" parallel worlds with their own norms and values are indeed *also* a reality:

> Not just the police agents were apparently guided by clichés of German-Turks, but the public also participated. […] Conflicts within the Turkish milieu do happen from time to time. It is well known after all: Neukölln, the Rütli School; the brother who kills his sister in the name of honour. The non-transparent backyard mosque where religious fanatics hatch something evil. Simply a sinister world where other norms and values are valid and which Germans cannot access. Indeed this is all reality. But just a small part of it. (*FAZ*, "Hinterbliebene, von uns allein gelassen", 19 November 2011, p. 33)

Northern Hesse correspondent Claus Peter Müller makes a very similar argument in the *FAS* Rhein-Main section, writing with reference to the 2006 murder in Kassel:

> If the university with its more than 20,000 students was not in close vicinity, hardly any Germans would still live in the area. The German workers from the old factories have long moved into their detached single family homes in the well-maintained suburbs. […] The people from Kassel with German and those with Turkish roots live peacefully in the same city, albeit not together, but rather next to each other in the parallel worlds that have become typical of West German large cities. […] The idea that it was a crime within this parallel world of the Turks, which existed peacefully next to the world of the Germans and that neither of the two entered, was not too much of a stretch in Kassel either. (*FAS*, "Die Verunsicherung", 20 November 2011, p. R2)

Both excerpts illustrate that the narrative of the "parallel world of the Turkish community" that shaped the story-telling process before the discovery of the NSU also plays a role in the re-narration process. Now it legitimises why stories of "criminal immigrant milieus" were *more* plausible at the time (see also Siri and Schmincke 2013:

10). That the individual victims did in fact nothing to confirm the rift that multiculturalism has allegedly produced within German society is, however, not addressed – not even in hindsight.

The view that intra-milieu violence was the most likely scenario at the time is also legitimised through quotes from friends and neighbours of the victims, i.e. witnesses with a high credibility because they knew the victims personally. In the *SZ*, Susi Wimmer and local news reporter Florian Fuchs, for example, cite Habil Kilic's neighbour:

> Neighbours and acquaintances of the victims never would have thought it possible that the men were shot simply because they were foreigners. […] Back then there had been major concern in the neighbourhood that Habil Kılıç was involved in a gang war. That there might be further shootings. "We all felt uneasy for a while back then", says [janitor Marion] Daser. […] That Neo-Nazis were the perpetrators did not occur to her either. "Actually I thought the case would never be resolved", she says. (*SZ*, "Nichts als Hass", 14 November 2011, p. 29)

A few days later, an article by *SZ* correspondent in NRW Bernd Dörries suggests that the Keupstraße is, after all, still connected to criminal activity, regardless of the right-wing extremist background of the 2004 bombing:

> "Our reputation was destroyed back then", says [pastry shop owner Selda] Özdag. She is the vice chairwoman of the Interest Community Keupstraße that is combating the bad image of the area, but actually managed to elect a convicted former drug dealer to its top position. They are certainly not all choirboys in the Keupstraße. (*SZ*, "Chancenstraße", 17 November 2011, p. 3)

According to this story, it is not (just) the news coverage of the bombing that created the negative image of the community, but the latter had existed long before – the *Interessengemeinschaft Keupstraße* was founded in 1978 – and criminality is in fact *also* a

reality there. That the accusations against the 2000-2006 victims were wrong is therefore not taken as an opportunity to fundamentally question the negative stereotypes of persons with a migration, specifically Turkish, background; there is (still) a reluctance to recognise the group as a whole as victims of racist violence.

The narration of NSU violence after November 2011 reveals that difference remains associated with (potential) deviance, while "immigrants" are connected to stories of both perpetration and victimhood. This questions the usefulness of the concept of "integration through partial disintegration" because it does not acknowledge the element of suspicion attached to "difference". In November 2004 and again in October 2010, Angela Merkel had stated that "multiculturalism is dead" because the policy of promoting differences between "Germans" and "immigrants" had led to the development of parallel worlds with their own, deviating rules.[28] This view stands in contrast to President Wulff's recognition of Islam as an integral part of German society, but the pre-November 2011 stories, as well as those post-November 2011 to some extent, bear witness to it. Merkel's and Wulff's statements responded to the debate that had ensued after the publication of the book "Germany is doing away with itself" (*Deutschland schafft sich ab*) by Thilo Sarrazin, former Minister of Finance for the state of Berlin (SPD) and member of the German Central Bank executive board. In it he developed bio-cultural theories about the backwardness of, and the threat potential posed by, (Muslim) immigrants.[29] The NSU as a media event since November 2011 is a caesura in these discursive dynamics, putting the

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[28] See *FAZ.net*, "Schröder warnt vor Kampf der Kulturen", 20 November 2004, URL: http://www.faz.net/ aktuell/politik/integrationsdebatte-schroeder-warnt-vor-kampf-der-kulturen-1191509.html (last accessed 30 August 2016); *SZ* online, "Merkel: 'Multikulti ist absolut gescheitert'", 16 October 2010, URL: http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/integration-seehofer-sieben-punkte-plan-gegen-zuwanderung-1.1012736 (last accessed 21 July 2016).
[29] See Bellers (2010) and Bade (2012) for a discussion of Sarrazin's book and public responses.

complex relationship between integration and assimilation back on the agenda. This question has been hotly debated since the late 1990s when MdB Jörg Schönbohm (CDU) had publically rejected an allegiance to the Basic Law ("constitutional patriotism") because he saw it as insufficient for granting German citizenship. In this context it is worth recalling Ricœur's remarks on pluralism in his discussion of ideological closure:

> [A] radically pluralist, radically permissive society is not possible. Somewhere there is the intolerable; and from the latter, intolerance springs. The intolerable begins when novelty seriously threatens the possibility for the group to recognise and re-discover itself. (Ricœur 1981: 227)

The discussion so far indicates that German society may indeed not (yet) be ready to become "radically pluralist".

**Conclusion**

This chapter has traced how, following the discovery of the NSU and the provision of an unexpected conclusion for the detective stories in November 2011, the past acts of violent crime are re-narrated, thereby transforming stories of intra-milieu and drug-related crime previously considered to be most plausible into a story of right-wing extremist violence. The events are no longer simply located within the "deviant milieu of immigrants" or the misguided world of thought of a lone perpetrator, but become the expression of an intra-societal conflict between two groups that have influenced processes of negotiating Germanness for decades, albeit in different ways: "immigrants" and "right-wing extremists". It is also worth noting that the geographic origins of the

tenth murder victim and the perpetrators brings in the German East as a third, albeit less pronounced, "Other" because it is (still) the East that is predominantly associated with right-wing extremist violence, signified by the trope of the "brown East". Narrating the violent crimes attributed to the NSU is an inherently German affair. It also demonstrates that, contrary to what *SZ* Feuilleton editor Willi Winkler claims in an article on 16 November 2011, it matters a great deal why someone died and how ("Tötungsarten", p. 11).

The analysis of the re-narration process, however, reveals that there is a hierarchy of "Others". The pre-defined Otherness of right-wing extremists guides the re-telling of the stories, while a general level of distrust towards "immigrants" in Germany and the "German East" is also (still) perceptible. The discussion indicates that conceptualising integration as a process that recognises and promotes differences between "Germans" and "immigrants", while stipulating that certain political norms and values as laid out in the Basic Law are valid for all members of German society, is not sustainable. Even after November 2011 the assumption that difference is, at least potentially, tied to deviance is being upheld, regardless of the identification of the right-wing extremist perpetrators. The findings suggest that there is a certain divergence between official political discourses of Germany as an open, tolerant society one the one hand, and a deep seated uncomfortableness with those who continue to be seen as "different" on the other hand.

Another important dimension of the post-November 2011 re-narration process is the transition of the difference-deviance-nexus from an interpretative code that operates in the background to a "theme before our eyes", as Ricœur put it. The transition from pre- to post-November 2011 news media discourses makes this nexus visible and

provides German society with an opportunity to think *about* it, rather than only *from* it. It demonstrates that the current status of Germany as a reunified country of immigration cannot be grasped through a black-and-white approach: while "difference" as expressed by a pluralistic, multicultural society continues to be positively connoted in public and political discourse, a general suspicion towards those who are perceived as different from "the Germans" in an abstract sense remains. From this perspective, the creation of a cohesive society through (immigrant) integration has neither failed nor has it been entirely successful. Germany rather seems to be characterised by an in-between-status that hinges on the reality of difference on the one hand and the potentiality of deviance on the other hand. This adds a complicating dimension to Schönwälder's and Triadafilopoulos' recent observation (2016: 377) that since the end of the first half of the 2000s "diversity" has come to mark the new middle ground between assimilation and multiculturalism in an individualistic society (what the authors term the "new differentialism").

This uneasy relationship with immigrants commands the insecurity regarding the most appropriate response to actors such as the NSU whose aim it is, so the narrative, to destroy the level of cohesion that has already been achieved in Germany. The media connect the three major "'Others' within" – immigrants, East Germans and right-wing extremists – in order to tell a story that fulfils a specific need in the present, the moment of (re-)narration: to uphold an abstract image of Germany as a democratic and pluralist society and state. However, the realisation that the public rhetoric about German society's successful transition into a re-unified country of immigration does not necessarily match the (narrative) reality could be used as an opportunity to rethink the

interpretive codes that are normally operating in the background. So far media and

political discourses of the NSU in Germany do not show any signs that this is happening.

The next chapter takes the narrative of NSU violence as "an attack on all of us" as

its starting point and investigates how this is related to the news media's re-negotiation

of the relationship between German society, the state and the perpetrators through the

lens of "terrorism".

# CHAPTER 6

## THE NSU AS TERRORISM NEWS: VIOLENT CRIME, GERMANNESS AND THE POLITICAL

**Introduction**

This chapter turns to the question of why and how the label "terrorism" is applied to the NSU crimes in the re-narration process. This is important given that defining the perpetrators as right-wing extremists already fulfils the key purpose of "othering" them and ascribing innocence to the victims by implication as discussed in the previous chapter. I will argue that the complex repertoire of stories associated with discourses of "terrorism" helps the media to make sense of why they narrated the deeds committed by the NSU, in particular the murders and bombing, predominantly as "intra-milieu crime" rather than right-wing extremist violence before November 2011.

I first discuss how the news media narrate the distinction between the robberies and arson as "common crime" and the murders and bombings as "terrorism". I then examine how they create a link between the group's deeds of the past and the present through the notion of "terrorism news". I argue that the media draw on three dominant narratives in order to do so: terrorism as an *immediate* act, as an (outside) *attack on the collective* and as an act of *political violence*. In the third and main part of this chapter I analyse the narrative strategies that the media develop to explain why the violent crimes were not interpreted as "terrorism", or "political violence" more generally, before November 2011. I suggest that these strategies reveal two different understandings of "the political" in connection with violent crime. The first one concerns the perpetrators'

motives and intentions, while the second one refers to the legitimacy of violence as a political tool and the effects that violence perpetrated against a specific social group may have on a society as a whole. Based on this analysis, the last section before I conclude this chapter discusses how and why the media take recourse to narratives of right-wing extremists as irrational, insane, dumb or evil actors.

**NSU Violence between "Ordinary Crime" and "Terrorism"**

As indicated at the end of chapter 4, the label "terrorism" appears at the very beginning of the re-narration process. On 10 November 2011 it is the *SZ* that uses the term for the first time: Based on evidence found in the destroyed house in Zwickau, Saxony reporter Christiane Kohl responds as follows to the suspicion that the "Trio" is responsible for the (attempted) murder in Heilbronn in 2007:

> Was it possibly a group of right-wing terrorists? According to prosecutor Dietsch, no right-wing writings have been found in the house yet – but in view of the severe fire damage all sorts of discoveries are possible during the fine search. (*SZ*, "Die rätselhafte Frau Z.", 10 November 2011, p. 10)

At this point, the deeds ascribed to the group – a series of robberies 1998-2011, an (attempted) murder in 2007 and a case of arson on 4 November 2011 – apparently do not suffice to apply the label "terrorism" beyond doubt. Instead, the quote above suggests that this is dependent on the existence of written evidence of their ideology and, it is implied, an ideological motive for the murder. The *BILD* therefore merely speaks of the "Killer Trio" ("Die blutige Spur des Killer-Trios", 10 November 2011, p. 17), while *FAZ*

correspondents in Thuringia and Baden-Wuerttemberg Claus Peter Müller and Rüdiger Soldt define them as "police murderers" or, with reference to the "Trio's" criminal activities in Thuringia in the mid-1990s, as "bomb makers" ("Die Verdächtige schweigt", 10 November 2011, p. 9).

On Saturday, 12 November 2011, the media report that the weapon that was used to commit the 2000-2006 murder series has been found in the house in Zwickau. It is this discovery that ultimately establishes the terrorism label, based on the perception that the murder series characterises the "Trio" as an organised, strategic group that acted on the basis of a coherent worldview. The (attempted) murder in 2007 is then also re-categorised by default. In the *BILD*, Thuringia editor Oliver Löhr, crime reporter Jörg Völkerling, and senior editors Tania Winterstein and Malte Wicking describe this eventful dynamic as follows:

> *First* it was only about a series of bank robberies. *Then* suddenly a police murder was added. *Now* it comes to light: the killer trio Uwe Mundlos († 38), Uwe Böhnhardt († 34) and Beate Z. (36) are apparently right-wing terrorists! They are said to have killed at least ten people across a period of more than a decade, are also responsible for the "kebab murders"! (*BILD*, "Killer-Trio auch verantwortlich für die neun Döner-Morde?", 12 November 2011, p. 12, my emphasis)

In the *Spiegel*, freelance investigative journalist Maik Baumgärtner et al.[1] use a spatial metaphor to describe the same temporal dynamics of the process of "uncovering what happened", referring to the clearing work at the house in Zwickau:

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[1] This also includes investigative reporter Jürgen Dahlkamp, Stuttgart correspondent Simone Kaiser, Munich editor Conny Neumann, Germany editors Sven Röbel, Holger Stark and Andreas Ulrich, and Munich correspondent Steffen Winter.

> Top layer: only a gang of bank robbers who blew up their hiding place [*on 4 November 2011*]? Deeper. A Neon-Nazi trio who built pipe bombs *at the end of the nineties* in Thuringia and went underground here? Even deeper. Cold-blooded murderers who shot the police-woman Michèle Kiesewetter in Heilbronn *four years ago*? [...] But no, that was still not everything. So what else? A right-wing extremist terror group that randomly shot nine men across Germany *since the year 2000*, eight from Turkey and one from Greece? Since the end of last week the findings reach this deep. (*Spiegel*, "Letzte Ausfahrt Eisenach", 14 November 2011, p. 67, my emphasis)

Both of these quotes illustrate how journalists "discover" past violent crimes and transform them into "news" that tell a coherent story.

As mentioned in chapter 4, the articles published on the weekend of 12 and 13 November 2011 add that the investigators have found "propaganda videos" in the house and caravan. In these the "Trio" identifies itself as the "National Socialist Untergrund", thereby establishing a proper name that defines the cell as a distinct group of actors, specifically as Neo-Nazis, and introduces a political ideology that provides a motive as the "reason-for" (Ricœur 1992: 63). They also serve as evidence that the NSU perpetrated further crimes, including the 2004 Cologne bombing:

> Hints at a possible crime motive have now also appeared in the rubble in Zwickau. Forensics secured several DVDs with a video in which apparently a group with the name "National Socialist Underground" indirectly takes responsibility for the series of murders of Kiosk owners and kebab stand operators. According to information from investigation circles, the DVDs contain perpetrator's knowledge about the murder series as well as right-wing propaganda. [...] Many other crimes of the past ten years are also being analysed now [...]. There are new investigations of a nail bomb attack in a street mostly populated by Turks in Cologne in 2004 with 22 injured people. By all accounts Uwe B. and Uwe M. also attributed this attack to themselves in one of the videos. (*FAS*, "Auf einmal ergeben die Puzzleteile ein Bild", 13 November 2011, p. 2-3)

And chief reporter Alexandra Castell et al.[2] write in *BILD*:

> At the same time the investigators evaluated the NSU's DVD of confession. The DVD allegedly documents that the group is also responsible for an attack on a German-Iranian (then 19) in Cologne. She was seriously injured by an explosive charge in 2001. (*BILD*, "Hier wird der Komplize der Killer-Nazis verhaftet", 15 November 2011, p. 12)

Four key elements of terrorism discourses are thus established by mid-November: a proper name; an extremist ideology; a premediated series of crimes; and claims of responsibility.

Whereas the label "terrorism" was very marginal in the pre-November 2011 narration of the murders and bombing, it becomes dominant after the NSU's discovery: on 14 November 2011 the *SZ* lead story reads "Government shocked by right-wing terror" (p. 1) and *FAZ* editors Majid Sattar and Reinhard Bingener cite then Minister of the Interior Hans-Peter Friedrich who sees the deeds as a "new form of right-wing terrorism" (p. 1). The *Spiegel* cover depicts the "Trio" as the "Brown Army Faction", a term that the *BILD* had used to describe the "Nazi Terror Trio" already on 12 November 2011 ("Killer-Trio auch verantwortlich für die neun Döner-Morde?", p. 12). It implies that the media perceive the NSU's significance for the country to be comparable to that of the RAF in the 1970s-90s. The two groups are, as investigative research editors Nicolas Richter and Hans Leyendecker and East Germany reporter Christiane Kohl point out in the *SZ*, temporally linked because "the year that the RAF officially ended their murdering [1998], the Trio

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[2] This also includes news reporter Maximilian Kiewel, Leipzig editor Martina Kurtz, freelance writer Carolin Lemuth, chief reporters Josef Ley and Julian Reichelt, M. Schwarz and senior editor Tania Winterstein.

from Jena went underground" ("Kleine, kalte Welt", 15 November 2011, p. 3).[3] It is also striking that from the very beginning the media differentiate between Mundlos, Böhnhardt and Zschäpe as the "Trio", a group of criminal right-wing extremists, and as the NSU, a group of right-wing terrorists[4] that committed robberies and an arson attack on their apartment as "ordinary crimes" to provide the financial means for, and later erase traces of, its terrorist campaign and life in the underground.[5]

The media's "terrorism news" relate to acts of violent crime committed four to eleven years earlier. However, since the relationship between "terrorism" and the media has been conceptualised as an instantaneous one to the extent that the events are broadcast or, in times of online journalism and social media, written about *as* terrorism live, the question is how and why the unexpected conclusion of the previous stories results in the NSU's deeds becoming "terrorism news" in November 2011. I shall demonstrate that the answer to this question is connected in particular to the following dimensions of "terrorism": a sense of urgency, the idea of an "attack against all of us", and understandings of violent action as a tool of political communication.

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[3] The RAF's final statement from March 1998 spoke of its "struggle against a state that had not broken with its national socialist past after the liberation from Nazi-Fascism". See "Selbstauflösungserklärung der RAF", URL: http://www.rafinfo.de/archiv/raf/raf-20-4-98.php (last accessed 12 September 2016).

[4] The same approach is taken in the indictment of the Attorney General at the Federal Court of Justice from 5 November 2012 (Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 73).

[5] See e.g. *Spiegel*, "Letzte Ausfahrt Eisenach", 14 November 2011, p. 74; *SZ*, "Grauenhaftes Finale", 21 November 2011, p. 5; *FAS*, "Aggression hinter einer freundlichen Fassade", 27 November 2011, p. 6.

**"Terrorism" between Motives, Intentions and Effects**

The Video as a Claim of Responsibility *after all*

Since it is not clear whether the NSU's violent campaign ended abruptly and unexpectedly by the death of Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Böhnhardt or whether this ending was premeditated, the DVD that appears after the group's discovery fulfils an important narrative function. It employs the humorous comic figure "Pink Panther" as a story-teller and shows photos of the crime scenes and the dead victims. The Pink Panther is an original character from the detective film series "Inspector Clouseau", centred on the inspector's incompetent, but ultimately successful crime investigations. The video also includes material that refers to other acts of violent crime the group may have committed in the past as well as potential acts they may have intended to commit in the future but were averted by the their discovery. It thereby adds further lines to the NSU story. Hans Leyendecker, for instance, writes in the *SZ*:

> Did the terrorists squeeze all of their murders, their attacks, their crimes into this video – or is there something missing? Was a sequel planned? What about the other pertinent cases in the Republic that could not be assigned to a perpetrator? [...] Was it the brown terrorists after all? (*SZ*, "Auf dem rechten Auge blind", 14 November 2011, p. 2)

This question about what crimes the group committed is causally linked to the suicide of Mundlos and Böhnhardt in Eisenach – either narrated as an act of desperation[6] or a symbol of victory over the system[7] – and the fact that around the same time editorial

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[6] E.g. *SZ*, "Grauenhaftes Finale", 21 November 2011, p. 5.
[7] E.g. *Spiegel*, "Tödliche Fehleinschätzung", 28 November 2011, p. 28.

offices and civil society initiatives received the DVD. In the *Spiegel* Maik Baumgärtner et

al.[8] suggest that the group sent out the DVDs as an act of propaganda, implying a shift in

the group's enemy image from individuals or minority groups to society as a whole:

> The agitprop videos were addressed to several media and centres of Islamic culture, evidently they were meant to start the next phase after 13 years of silent terror: a propaganda campaign. The Neo-Nazis apparently felt strong enough to take on the whole society. (*Spiegel*, "Letzte Ausfahrt Eisenach", 14 November 2011, p. 67)

The *BILD* also supports the assumption that the NSU's campaign was not over yet, in

particular because some of the DVD copies, so the paper, were sent out before 4

November 2011, the day of the last bank robbery:

> Clear is: the killer Nazis wanted out of their anonymity and to take responsibility […] for their deeds. They had already sent their DVD of confession to offices of the Left Party. And there are clues that they wanted to produce a "DVD No. 2" with the subtitle "Paulchen's new tricks". Perhaps with images from new bloody deeds! (*BILD*, "Die 5 größten Rätsel der Todes-Serie", 15 November 2011, p. 12)

By contrast, Hans Leyendecker claims in the *SZ* that all DVDs were distributed after 4

November 2011, some of them during Zschäpe's visit to different German cities after

Mundlos and Böhnhardt had committed suicide and before she turned herself in on 8

November 2011 ("Die Frau an der Seite der Killer", 14 January 2012, p. 5).[9] Hence the

circulation of the DVD may have been the "final chord" of the NSU' campaign, as Hansjörg

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[8] This also includes investigative reporter Jürgen Dahlkamp, Stuttgart correspondent Simone Kaiser, Munich editor Conny Neumann, Germany editors Sven Röbel, Holger Stark and Andreas Ulrich, and Munich correspondent Steffen Winter.
[9] The indictment prepared by the Federal Prosecutor General confirms this version of the story (see Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 74).

Geiger, former president of the Federal VerfS and the BND, says (quoted by Heribert Prantl in *SZ*, "Ein Blick in den tiefen Abgrund des Versagens", 15 November 2011, p. 2). These opposing interpretations illustrate how differently events can be emplotted to construct media stories: depending on what paper readers turn to, they may have understood the group's reasons for circulating the DVDs and hence their overall strategy differently.

These differences notwithstanding, the news media see the video as a claim of responsibility *after all*. As Maik Baumgärtner et al.[10] write in the *Spiegel*, "[a]t the end Böhnhardt und Mundlos wanted to leave behind a document of horror after all, footprints of terror" ("Letzte Ausfahrt Eisenach", 14 November 2011, p. 75). Whether planned or not, the death of the killers effectively ended the group's terrorist campaign and the video closes the communicative cycle by functioning as a device that allows German society to connect the acts to existing issues, in particular the threat posed by right-wing extremism (Hoffman 2010: 616), and trace the NSU's violent activities over time – it is their "testament".[11]

Over the course of the subsequent months the newspapers report that further material has been found, including a second and third video, a written film script, lists with names and addresses of politicians and (Islamic) organisations, a self-made (National Socialist) version of the board game "Monopoly", and propaganda letters.[12] This material

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[10] This also includes investigative reporter Jürgen Dahlkamp, Stuttgart correspondent Simone Kaiser, Munich editor Conny Neumann, Germany editors Sven Röbel, Holger Stark and Andreas Ulrich, and Munich correspondent Steffen Winter.

[11] E.g. *SZ*, "Deutscher Herbst", 19 November 2011, p. 19; *Spiegel*, "Das Netz der Bösen", 21 November 2011, p. 28.

[12] E.g. *BILD*, "Planten die Killer Attentate auf 88 Politiker?", 17 November 2011, p. 17; *SZ*, "'Kein Grund zur Beunruhigung'", 3 December 2011, p. 61; *BILD*, "Das perverse Monopoly-Spiel der Killer-Nazis", 5 December

is accepted as proof that the group planned the murder series immediately after they had gone underground and that they had officially operated under the name "NSU" at least since 2001 (i.e. after the first murder in September 2000), the year when the first version of the DVD was produced.[13]

While the news media stories do not differentiate neatly between the NSU's "motives" and "intentions", it is clear from the stories that the video is primarily understood to reveal the latter ("reason to"). The NSU crimes are not only defined as having been motivated by hate of the pluralistic system and its representatives as discussed in chapter 5, but are also interpreted as a response to an immigration policy that is in the perpetrators' view harmful to the German nation. They state in their film: "As long as there are no fundamental changes in politics, the press and freedom of expression, the activities will be continued" (e.g. *FAZ*, "Getrieben vom Hass", 14 November 2011, p. 3). Their deeds, we may say with reference to Schmid and de Graaf (1982: 15), are now seen as having had the intention "to activate a relationship between victims and enemy, whereby the latter is made responsible for the former before a public." In the *FAS* Berlin correspondent Markus Wehner writes:

> The idea of foreigners as a threat, as a danger for the German nation and as a synonym for evil pervades all of the documents that are appearing now. Videos and texts that could be secured from the hard drives that were found in the debris in the Frühlingsstraße [in Zwickau] testify to this victim selection based on crude political motives. (*FAS*, "Ein scheinbar bürgerliches Leben", 22 January 2012, p. 8)

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2011, p. 12; *Spiegel*, "Sieg oder Tod", 16 January 2012, p. 34-35; *SZ*, "Werbebrief vom Killer", 17 January 2012, p. 6.
[13] E.g. *SZ*, "Schockierende Funde auf einer Festplatte", 14 December 2011, p. 5; *FAZ*, "Morde zum 'Erhalt der Nation'", 15 December 2011, p. 4.

Whereas the temporary change in the story of the serial murders in summer 2006 defined "hate of 'Turks'" as the result of the perpetrator's negative personal experiences, hate as a motive is now connected to the intention of countering a perceived general threat through the use of violence and its terrorising effects. *Spiegel* TV editor-in-Chief Thomas Heise and Germany editors Sven Röbel and Holger Stark, for instance, speak of the NSU's "motive", while actually (also) making claims about the group's intentions:

> That their worldview, shaped by racial hatred, was the key motive for the murders is evident in different film sequences that are missing from the final version of the published video of confession, but were saved on the hard drive. The Neo-Nazis numbered their victims from "Ali1" to "Ali9", reflecting their misanthropic views. In one film section, which the creators saved on 7 June 2006, there is a speech bubble that says: "The Ali has to go." On a poster that was not published either, it says: "Fellow combatants sought in the struggle against the flood of wogs." (*Spiegel*, "Sieg oder Tod", 16 January 2012, p. 34)

According to this story, the perpetrators did not only murder persons with a migration background *because* they judged the value of human beings based on their race, but *in order to* reverse the settlement of these people in Germany. In the *SZ* Andreas Zielcke contrasts the NSU with the RAF to make sense of how the enemy image of the former is linked to their intentions:

> Schematically speaking, the RAF perpetrators saw themselves as the enemies of capitalism and the state that served it. Consequently they were perceived and persecuted as "enemies of the state". Neo-Nazis, however, see themselves like their predecessors in the twenties as the true guardian of the nation and its state. In their eyes state and nation are seriously threatened and require unilateral rescue. (*SZ*, "Der Hort der Terroristen", 19 November 2011, p. 4)

Zielcke suggests that whereas the RAF combated the West German economic model and its implications, the NSU considered itself as a spokesperson for the "Germans" as an ethnically homogeneous people. The use of violence, it is implied, is illegitimate in both cases, but the core assumption of the NSU that their enemy is also the enemy of the German nation (state) and that they were therefore acting on behalf of the latter is, in the author's view, deeply flawed. In the *FAZ* G.H. also denies right-wing terrorists any credible claim to making a lasting impact on society, because the very basis for their violence, so the author, is not a vision of victory, but an awareness of their own weakness:

> Left-wing terrorism always posed as a hero because its authors were unregenerately confident in their world-historical victory; Islamist terrorism promises the perpetrators triumph in the afterlife and the instigators the glory of an idea of salvation that is worth "confiding" in. Right-wing terrorism, however, feeds on an inferiority complex, it "takes revenge" on an allegedly heteronomous environment rather than daring to shape it comprehensively, and is intuitively aware of its intellectual, social and economic inferiority. […] Every single one of the perpetrators in this milieu is what common parlance once called good-for-nothings [*Taugenichtse*]. (*FAZ*, "Tonlos feige", 21 November 2011, p. 10)

The notion of weakness that the author employs here appears to go beyond the idea that "terrorism" as a violent strategy is used by the politically powerless (Crenshaw 1981: 387): it is a normative judgment of the perpetrators' use of violence as a tool for revenge rather than political change, speaking to the notion of right-wing terrorism as destructive, irrational violence. As "good-for-nothings" right-wing terrorists are – in contrast to left-wing and Islamist terrorists – unable to even conceive of a coherent alternative socio-political model (regardless of how undesirable it might be). The NSU crimes are thus

characterised by a "deep senselessness" (Hans Leyendecker in *SZ*, "Reliquien des Irrsinns", 16 November 2011, p. 6).

However, this narration overlooks that the dominant discourse in the 1970s equally saw German left-wing terrorists as lacking a rational political programme and acting against the will of the German people in general and the (legal) far-left in particular (Colvin 2009: 117-119). This expressed itself in Heinrich Böll's famous *Spiegel* statement in 1972 that the RAF was engaging in a war of "six against sixty million". In an article for the daily *Frankfurter Rundschau* on 10 September 1977, at the height of the German Autumn, Marxist political scientist Iring Fetscher[14] also wrote:

> In their considerations, self-critical reflections of the origin of their personalised and rationalised hatred did not play any role, and neither did a consideration of the concrete living conditions of the population. Their actions are the expression of idealistically extravagant self-conceit. (Fetscher 1978: 29)

Balz (2007: 84) and Colvin (2009: 136-137) have also shown that in particular during the 1970s the political left and party politicians alike, albeit for different reasons, denied the RAF and their deeds any political quality and defined them as "mere criminals" – an approach that was betrayed by politicians' own clearly identifiable ideological position and their narrative of RAF violence as an "impending civil war" (Colvin 2009: 137).

The narration of the NSU's violence as inherently unproductive is thus built on a memory of RAF terrorism that is adapted to present circumstances. While the crimes are understood as having been politically motivated because the victims were chosen based

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[14] Fetscher was also a member of the "Commission for the Investigation of the Intellectual Roots of Terrorism" appointed by Helmut Schmidt's second socio-liberal coalition in 1977. It produced four edited volumes titled "Analyses of Terrorism" (see also Colvin 2009: 129).

on ideological criteria,[15] they are also seen as an act of defence and despair, directed *against* rather than *towards* something. It is this passiveness that the media use to conceptualise NSU terrorism as an unsuccessful process of communication, the implications of which I discuss in the next sub-section.

"Silent Terrorism" as Unsuccessful Violent Communication

*Inscribing "Terror" in Hindsight and the Absence of Claims of Responsibility*

Maik Baumgärtner et al. speak of "13 years of silent terror" that was followed by the circulation of the videos as a propaganda campaign, targeted at German society as a whole ("Letzte Ausfahrt Eisenach", 14 November 2011, p. 67). This notion of silent terror is key to how the news media narrate the past events as it suggests that their acts of violent crime were incapable of terrorising, but have turned out to be terrorism *after all*.

The news media stories explain the absence of a collective feeling of terror within German society with the intention of the perpetrators to spread fear only *within* their target group, "foreigners". *SZ* home affairs editor Matthias Drobinski writes:

> "For us Turks it was clear, someone hates foreigners", says [daughter] Semiya Şimşek. The message hits home where it is supposed to, even without claims of responsibility: be scared. You are the target. But the police follow a different lead. (*SZ*, "Geliebter Vater", 13 December 2011, p. 3)

This interpretation carries forward the idea, already prominent before November 2011, that a message of fear was indeed communicated through the acts of violent crime.

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[15] See e.g. *Spiegel*, 21 November 2011, "Der braune Terror", p. 18-21.

However, "fear" was not defined as "terror" because, the texts suggested, the victims and perpetrators were located within the same criminal milieu and hence there was no "outside attack". Even the temporary shifts towards hate as a motive in the narration of the murder series and the 2004 Cologne bombing did not refer to a message of terror. This illustrates that in order for terrorism discourses to come into being, it needs to be perceived as such by witnesses who are socially powerful enough to shape the interpretation of an act of violent crime (Schmid and de Graaf 1982: 15). It also corroborates the idea, addressed in chapter 2, that "message crimes" can refer to both backward-looking motives and forward-looking intentions. In hindsight, the news media identify a forward-looking message, but one that is (still) limited to the immediate target group itself. According to this interpretation, the perpetrators planned to achieve their goal of an ethnically (more) homogenous German population by threatening "non-Germans" with violence and thus evicting them, rather than challenging the state to make changes to Germany's immigration and integration policies.[16] The then Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmed Davutoğlu supports this interpretation when he says in an interview with Bernhard Zand, the head of the *Spiegel* foreign politics department, that "[it] was not the intention of the perpetrators to make propaganda, but to spread fear among the Turks. They wanted the Turks to leave this country." ("Gefährliches Vorurteil", 12 December 2011, p. 76) No distinct messages, so the story, were addressed at German society or the state – the violent conflict was intended to be between the perpetrators, supposedly representing the "Germans", and the (Turkish) immigrant community. This story of terrorism as a two-sided conflict stands in contrast to Koehler's (2017: 66) recent

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[16] In their video, however, the perpetrators claim that the ending of their campaign is conditional upon political changes.

argument that "right-wing terrorists" actively seek to create fear, destabilise the rule of law and challenge the government's legitimacy.

The absence of claims of responsibility *during* their violent campaign, defined as a key element of terrorism whose purpose it *should be* to use violence or the threat thereof as a tool for pressing for (political) demands, is then also explained with reference to this two-sided rather than triangular conflict that the perpetrators provoked. Berlin correspondent Markus Wehner writes in the *FAS*:

> The fact that the perpetrators apparently murdered randomly, that they did not disseminate any claims of responsibility, makes this terror into something special because they ignored the actual purpose of terroristic attacks, to spread fear and terror and attach a political message. (*FAS*, "Brauner Terror", 13 November 2011, p. 12)

*FAZ* domestic politics editor Jasper von Altenbockum also establishes this link between the absence of claims of responsibility and the impossibility to identify the perpetrators' political intentions through their deeds alone:

> *No one* could perceive it [the terrorism of the NSU] as such because terrorism commonly consists not only of the deed but also a publicly effective claim of responsibility. But the latter was missing in case of the "Zwickau Cell", if one disregards that years after serial murder and raids a video was produced that was meant to put together pieces of a jigsaw of horror which did not reveal an image of politically motivated misanthropy until now. (*FAZ*, "Schreckensbild", 14 November 2011, p. 1, my emphasis)

This approach reflects an argument made in the academic literature about the high degree of reliability of claims of responsibility, in particular those that are issued immediately after an attack, for interpreting the "background" of acts of violent crime –

referring to perpetrator identity, motives and intentions – "correctly" as terroristic, in particular if there is more than one known "terrorist group" that could be the perpetrator (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008: 424; Hoffman 2010: 616; Davis 2013). Other journalists claim that "as a rule" or "usually" terrorists such as the generations of the RAF in the 1970s-1990s want to attract attention for their demands. In the following *FAS* article, Wibke Becker und NRW correspondent Reiner Burger present the reader with a reason, not offered before November 2011, for why the investigators did not consider the 2004 Cologne bombing as a right-wing terrorist attack:

> This assessment, [chief prosecutor Josef Rainer] Wolf, who has been working for the state security division of the Cologne prosecution for more than thirty years, recalls, was essentially connected to the fact that no one claimed responsibility for the deed. "And that is quite untypical of a terror attack." (*FAS*, "Die Nagelbombe", 20 November 2011, p. 4)

Burger characterises Wolf's statement as credible and further supports this by hinting at his many years of experience. However, in the past audiences have labelled a number of major acts of violent crime "terrorism" in spite of the absence of claims of responsibility, either because a perpetrator with an extremist identity could be identify quickly (e.g. in the case of the Oklahoma bombings in 1995) or due to the symbolic value of the target (e.g. the World Trade Centre bombing in 1993; see Zulaika and Douglass 1996: 13; Tuman 2010: 70; Stampnitzky 2013: 143-146). At the same time, as mentioned in chapter 2, the practice of claiming responsibility has declined over the past few decades and right-wing terrorists generally do so rarely (Davis 2013; Pfahl-Traughber 2012: 194). The media, however, do not consider either of these aspects or the fact that many of the victims and

their families did express their suspicion that an organised right-wing extremist group was behind the murder series, despite the absence of any claims. Instead, they define the NSU's behaviour as untypical of "terrorists" in general.[17] As a consequence they struggle with the group's statement that "our deeds speak for themselves" and their slogan "deeds instead of words" (*Taten statt Worte*) that the video contains. The *BILD* writes:

> The two recently discovered terror videos of the right-wing extremist Zwickau killer Nazi trio "National Socialist Underground" (NSU) are clear videos of confession with a hate message! [...] "The NSU will not draw attention to itself with many words, but with its deeds!" Combined with martial music and images of the first murder victim the sentence is uttered: "Now Enver Şimşek knows how seriously we take the preservation of the German nation." [...] Preliminary findings suggest that the videos were not disseminated then. (*BILD*, "Nazi-Bekennervideos mit Hassbotschaft!", 14 December 2011, p. 1)

The video, it is suggested, reveals that the separation of deeds and claims of responsibility was a deliberate decision of the perpetrators because they believed that the (dead) victim(s) and the "foreign community" would understand the message through the deeds alone. *SZ* literary critic and RAF expert Willi Winkler concludes that the NSU was not interested in spreading propaganda because their deeds – in contrast to the RAF who made the same claim, but nevertheless published extensive documents (Colvin 2009: 13-14) – were intended to entirely replace words:

> If the murderers of the NSU did have a programme, then it was the exemplary character of their deeds. They wanted to show the way ahead for how to, in their eyes, properly deal with immigrants. That is why they

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[17] But see *Spiegel*, "Der braune Terror", 21 November 2011, p. 18-21. The article mentions the general lack of claims of responsibility in cases of right-wing terrorism.

were not keen on their deeds being perceived as propaganda. (*SZ*, "Tötungsarten", 16 November 2011, p. 11)

As a claim of responsibility *after all* the DVD is thus what the group has left German society with; it did not intend to challenge or negotiate with the state.

*Perpetrator-focused Explanations for "Silent Terrorism"*

The NSU's deliberate invisibility is perceived as blurring the boundaries between "ordinary criminals" and "terrorists". While the former focus on *excusing* their self-focused violence and try to remain unidentified by the law enforcement authorities, the latter, despite their clandestine operations, claim to act on behalf of others and deliberately reveal their identity in order to achieve a terrorising effect within the population, provoke a response from those in power and use public statements as a means to make known their *justification* of violence (Imbusch 2002: 44; Barkun 2007; Colvin 2009: 121). They therefore make "a tremendous noise" as Laqueur once said (1978). The NSU thus *behaved* like criminals rather than terrorists, even though their silence was also a recipe for remaining unapprehended, in particular since their names were already on record.

In the *FAS* publicist Utz Anhalt discusses the blurring of boundaries between terrorism, extremism and serial murder as dimensions of violent crime in the NSU case as follows:

What makes the Zwickau killers different from typical serial murderers is the right-wing extremist infrastructure, the integration of the perpetrators

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into the open violence of the milieu. For most criminals discretion is an imperative. By contrast, right-wing extremists brag about their deeds, collective violence binds them together. […] The dummy bombs and a nail bomb attack of the group in Cologne correspond to typical Neo-Nazi terrorism, but not serial murderers. […] Perpetrators who are both organised right-wing extremists and serial murderers pose a new challenge to profiling. (*FAS*, "Die Sucht zu töten", 4 December 2011, p. 6)

This echoes Pfahl-Traughber's assessment (2012: 196) that serial murder as a type of crime offers one explanation for why a right-wing terrorist "background" of the crimes, referring to the perpetrators' intentions, was not considered by the authorities.

Anhalt's comment also suggests that right-wing extremist crime and specifically right-wing terrorism, in contrast to serial murders that are mostly perpetrated by lone offenders, are acts of organised collective violence. Their purpose is to strengthen the cohesiveness of the perpetrators' own in-group and to further attract support for their political programme (Gerrits 1993: 30-31; Waldmann 2005: 15; Mullins 2009: 815; Tuman 2010: 21-22). Indeed, following initial speculations that the right-wing extremist scene did not constitute a resonance chamber,[18] one (albeit at this point still rather marginal) strand of the discourse suggests that the absence of claims of responsibility might be due to the fact that the NSU crimes were in fact a strategy for mobilising followers from within the right-wing extremist scene (what Dowling calls "insiders"), targeting them as a second audience in addition to "immigrants" as a victim group (see also Borstel and Heitmeyer 2012: 364). This narrative is supported by other elements of the video such as the "fight against wogs" mentioned earlier. In contrast to the democratic interpretative code used by general audiences in Germany to make sense of acts of violent crime, the right-wing

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[18] See e.g. *FAS*, "Was wusste der Verfassungsschutz?", 13 November 2011, p. 1; *Spiegel*, "Letzte Ausfahrt Eisenach", 14 November 2011, p. 66-75.

extremist scene uses a different code that enabled, so the story, its adherents to interpret the NSU's deeds as a tool for promoting the ethnic German state. Claims of responsibility were thus not required to reach sympathisers as a specific target audience. Other authors, however, deny the NSU even this ability to mobilise insiders through their violent campaign. Hans Leyendecker und Nicolas Richter of the *SZ*'s investigative research department, for instance, speculate:

> Did they really believe they could create a new Nazi movement with these scattered crimes? After all it did *not even* suffice to create a climate of fear. The public erroneously considered the deeds to be "kebab murders" in the foreigner milieu. Did the deeds serve amusement and self-affirmation rather than a political goal? (*SZ*, "Im Schutt", 27 January 2012, p. 3, my emphasis)

This supports the idea that, as Jasper von Altenbockum had put it in the *FAZ*, *no one* could have understood their intentions without the issuing of claims of responsibility. Regardless of the fact that, as Anhalt's article suggests, the "irrational fetishism" of serial murder is generally unsuitable for using violence as a political tool, the whole silent NSU campaign was, as Leyendecker and Richter indicate, self-focused from the beginning, not PR.

This implies a view of the political dimension of terroristic violence as the intention to not simply violate the law, but to overcome the political system that is defined by this law. If the perpetrators, however, do not reveal themselves, as in the case of the NSU, no political exchange can take place. The *Spiegel* thus defines them as "the silent cell" ("In der Parallelwelt", 18 February 2012, p. 64), a phenomenon that German

scholar and author Navid Kermani analyses as follows in his opening speech at the Lessing

Symposium of the Thalia Theatre in Hamburg which the *SZ* prints in a shortened version:

> This relatively new type of political violence draws its power from the renunciation of political discourse, the refusal of any argumentative controversy. Its enemy images are no longer related to a specific state, a government or a party, but systems of power, races or cultures. This kind of terrorism does not involve the expression of demands nor does it intend to bomb into existence the willingness to negotiate of those in power. This is why there can be none or only a total victory, self-destruction or the destruction, at the very least expulsion, of all enemies, i.e. of the ruling system, the alien [*fremde*] race, the infidels, the inferior culture. (*SZ*, "Vergesst Deutschland. Eine patriotische Rede", 23 January 2012, p. 12)[19]

Kermani suggests that *not speaking*, coupled with a totalitarian (not necessarily right-

wing extremist) ideology, is an inherently unpolitical form of terrorism because it is not

based on negotiation, but on a "total war", akin to the war of extermination conducted by

historical National Socialism, but on a much smaller scale. This argument can also be

found outside the media discourse, e.g. in an article by Busch (2013) who denies the NSU

the label "terrorism" altogether because the group, so his argument, *intentionally*

employed violence as an end in itself, as violence against their "enemy", and not as a

means to communicate messages (and hence act "politically"), otherwise they would

have ensured their victims and/or acts had a perceptible symbolic value (232-233). This,

however, would suggest that premediated, strategic violent crimes committed by agents

from within a definable right-wing extremist milieu against ordinary members of

"vulnerable" victim groups, e.g. ethnic, religious, sexual or other minorities, do not

deserve the label "terrorism" because they are not symbolic (enough), unless the

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[19] The original speech was later published in a slightly edited version as a brochure-type book with the same title (Kermani 2012).

perpetrator(s) provide this symbolism by issuing separate claims of responsibility. Indeed, the papers speak of the history of fatal violence by right-wing extremists against "low profile" victims as "terror from the right" as an everyday phenomenon rather than "terrorism".[20]

This explanation for why the murder series and bombing were not defined as "terrorism" prior to the discovery of the NSU shifts the responsibility for communicating violent crime to the perpetrators, not mainstream society and/or the state as their audiences. The news media suggest that "silent terrorism" cannot be accepted as a new form of politics by violent means, but is a sign of the perpetrators' inability or unwillingness to behave as "proper" terrorists because they do not aim to provoke concrete political change or take control of this process through the issuing of claims of responsibility. The NSU's strategy to expel a specific minority group by threatening them with extinction is inherently non-political in a democratic sense *and* (therefore) unsuitable to communicate any messages to a wider audience. The NSU itself, it is suggested, must have been aware of this and *therefore* did not issue any claims of responsibility to reach the wider society. Feuilleton editor Lorenz Jäger (*FAZ*) writes:

> There were no claims of responsibility because it was impossible. Somehow, in some corner of their consciousness the perpetrators must have realised the objective insanity of their actions. That's why they kept silent. Who would they have reached with a confession, how could they have explained the deeds to others? […] They couldn't. Beate Zschäpe, Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Böhnhardt must have known that. (*FAZ*, "Morde, auf einer DVD betrachtet", 15 November 2011, p. 33)

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[20] See e.g. *SZ*, "'182 Opfer rechtsextremer Gewalt", 17 November 2011, p. 6; *Spiegel*, "Der braune Terror", 21 November 2011, p. 18-21; *SZ*, "Antifeministisch und volkstreu", 21 November 2011, p. 2.

Accordingly, violence as a communicative tool failed because the perpetrators did not have a comprehensible message to communicate in the first place. Here we find the idea reflected that, in contrast to IRA or ETA terrorism that is linked to contested statehood or the denial of national independence as concrete grievances, "right-wing terrorism" is not linked to political injustices that can be responded to by addressing "underlying root problems and causes" (English 2009: 123-125).[21] Instead, it aims at the "destruction of society and the elimination of large sections of the population", making it difficult to make sense of the perpetrators' intentions (Laqueur 2000: 81; Stampnitzky 2013: 152-153).

Only after the discovery of the perpetrators, NSU violence, these stories suggest, can be defined as "terrorism" because, based on their right-wing extremist identity, the videos and other material evidence, it is possible to establish that the group targeted the valid social order. Koehler (2017: 64) supports this approach, arguing that the definition of right-wing terrorism does not depend on the issuing of claims of responsibility or the symbolic value of the victims as perceived by audiences, but on the perpetrators' intentions that need to be uncovered by other means. He does not, however, reflect on the fact that in the case of the NSU the lack of claims of responsibility and the perception of the victims as not "symbolic" (enough) contributed to the preclusion of a "right-wing extremist background".

As regards the news media, they seem to differentiate between various aspects of "political" violence in order to tell a plausible story of NSU violence: the crimes may have been politically (ideologically) motivated and the group may have seen their own deeds as

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[21] It should be noted, however, that there is disagreement over whether underlying grievances leading to terrorist violence can or should be attended to at all, see e.g. Dershowitz (2002).

contributing towards a change in German society, but this did not result in a communicative process with the wider German audience because in a democratic state like Germany the use of violence by non-state actors is illegitimate; "violent politics" is inconceivable.

*Society-focused Explanations for "Silent Terrorism"*

The media also offer a society-focused explanation for why the crimes were not narrated as "terrorism" before November 2011. This explanation, again, relates to the process of "working through the past". There are two versions of this story. The first one links the redefinition of the victims as an integral part of German society to the idea that violence is not accepted as a form of politics in the first place as discussed above. Hans Leyendecker (*SZ*), for instance, describes the NSU as a unique form of terrorism because it "specifically targeted ordinary people among the foreigners" ("Spuren ins Nichts", 18 November 2011, p. 2), while the *FAS* reminds the reader that the police precluded a right-wing extremist background because the murder of "foreigners" could not be capitalised on ("Auf einmal ergeben die Puzzleteile ein Bild", 13 November 2011, p. 2). This is connected to the narratives that I discussed in the previous chapter: in this account German society has learned from its violent past and has accepted persons with a migration background as members of a democratic, pluralist community and state. The victims were not symbolic because Germany's status as a country of immigration cannot be negotiated. This is a narrative of success that helps to explain why it was inconceivable that an organised right-wing extremist group would be behind these crimes. In her *FAZ* guest comment Federal Minister of Justice Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger (FDP)

addresses this key distinction between "us", the democratic, pacific majority, and "them",

a racist and violent minority:

> Sophie Scholl [, a member of the resistance group *Weiße Rose,*] said in her trial before the People's Court: "So many think what we said and wrote. But they don't dare to voice it." Those who disagreed with National Socialism put their lives in danger, and many who did it anyhow died because of that. Today we live in a liberal democratic state of law. We, who stand up for our democratic community, are the majority and those who hold right-wing extremist views and are xenophobic and violent, are the minority. […] Such dull resentments have to be opposed from the midst of society. (*FAZ*, "'Ein zweites Verfahren darf nicht scheitern'", 22 November 2011, p. 10)

Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger references the resistance movement *Weiße Rose* (*White

Rose*) to suggest that historical National Socialism and contemporary right-wing

extremism are comparable to the extent that in both cases the majority of society was/is,

in fact, against the ideas espoused by them.[22] At the same time, she differentiates

between the two based on contemporary Germany's status as a democratic state of law

that guarantees the freedoms of opinion and expression, while ostracising that which is

considered to be "right-wing extremist" and "xenophobic". That this distinction between

the "democratic and tolerant us" and the "anti-pluralist, anti-democratic them" is not as

clear-cut as Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger suggests was reflected in the narrative

dynamics discussed in the previous two chapters, and has also been discussed in

Heitmeyer's *German Conditions* and the *Leipziger Mitte-Studien* mentioned earlier.

The second, less dominant version of the story picks up on these observable

narrative dynamics and suggests that, as discussed in chapter 5, xenophobic and (even)

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[22] The question of Germans' complicity in the crimes committed by Hitler's regime is a key element of the literature on the Third Reich, see Goldhagen (1996) and Gellately (2001).

racist views, rather than having been relegated to a small extremist minority, have in fact

penetrated German society to a considerable degree. MdB for the Left Party Wolfgang

Nešković, at the time also a member of the Parliamentary Control Commission, writes in

the *FAZ* a few days after Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger:

> Apparently the cell assumed for the longest time that their attacks did not
> require any explanation. […] But the cell was wrong. Investigators, media
> and the public concluded that it was rivalry among migrants. It all seemed
> to be obvious, that foreigners are only killed by foreigners. The terrorists
> had completely underestimated society's latent racism. What a horrible
> irony. (*FAZ*, "Der kranke Sinn", 28 November 2011, p. 8)

In an Interview with *BamS* editor Angelika Hellemann, the leader of the SPD

parliamentary group in the *Bundestag* Thomas Oppermann takes a similar approach:

"Perhaps it was a very perfidious strategy to throw suspicion on 'the foreigners' [*die*

*Ausländer]* and continue to murder without interruption." ("'Das Ende der Täter bleibt für

mich rätselhaft'", 20 November 2011, p. 14/16) While there is no evidence that any of the

authors support the assumption that a considerable share of the population considers

right-wing extremist violence to be legitimate, this narrative of unsuccessful terrorism

qua suspicion towards the victim group (whether labelled as "xenophobia" or "racism" or

otherwise) again addresses the idea that a general discomfort with the "'Other' within" is

in fact a common denominator between the "average citizen" and right-wing extremists.

This version of the story, therefore, addresses problems prevalent in society itself, rather

than focusing exclusively on the NSU as a manifestation of these problems (Picard 1993:

112; Frindte et al. 2011: 13). It corresponds to Borstel and Heitmeyer's assessment (2012:

364) that the NSU practiced an *Umlenkungsterrorismus* ("terrorism of diversion") that

produced *Doppelopfer* ("two-level victims") based on actual physical violence and the systemic violence of suspicion by the authorities.

*A History of Right-wing Extremist Terror(ism)*

The perpetrator- and society-focused explanation may appear to be in conflict with each other, but they both emerge from a consideration of the history of right-wing extremist violence in Germany in the 20th-century. According to *SZ* political editor Jan Bielicky, this history stretches back to the Weimar Republic, the murder of socialist journalist Kurt Eisner by Count Arco in 1919 being the "first attack of a right-wing terrorist according to modern understandings of terrorism" that "set the scene for the subsequent years of terror that would unsettle the Weimar Republic". This is a good example of a re-evaluation of past events based on a newly established discursive framework, in this case "terrorism" that only emerged in the 1970s (Stampnitzky 2013: 25). Bielicki also counts the attack on student leader Rudi Dutschke by Josef Bachmann in 1962 as an act of right-wing terrorism – a terrorism that reawakened after the "National Socialist terror regime" had collapsed more than two decades earlier (*SZ*, "Das Maß der Justiz", 19 November 2011, p. SV2). Berlin parliamentary correspondent Peter Carstens (*FAZ*) speaks of NSU violence as "an unparalleled terror series in the post-war history of German right-wing extremism" ("Starres Entsetzen", 23 November 2011, p. 1). And in the *Spiegel* Germany editor Sven Becker et al.[23] ("Der braune Terror", 21 November 2011, p. 18-21) place NSU terrorism within a history of "terror from the right" in post-reunification Germany. This

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[23] This also includes Berlin/Germany reporters and editors Stefan Berg, Markus Deggerich, Jan Fleischhauer and Gunther Latsch.

history, so the story, begins with the killing of Angolan worker Amadeu Antonio in Eberswalde (Brandenburg) in November 1990 by a group of Skinheads and continues throughout the 1990s, including the arson attacks on houses of Turkish immigrants in Mölln in November 1992 and Solingen in May 1993, as well as the murder of three police men by right-wing extremist Michael Berger near Dortmund in June 2000. Other elements of this history that the papers mention elsewhere include the *Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann* that was banned in January 1980, the Oktoberfest bombing in September 1980 by Gundolf Köhler, a member of the *Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann*, and the prevented attack on a synagogue in Munich by a group of extremists organised in the *Kameradschaft Süd* ("Comradeship South") and led by Martin Wiese in 2003 who was subsequently tried for having established a terrorist group, itself labelled a "Brown Army Faction" at the time.[24] It is striking that, contrary to what Koehler (2017) has recently suggested, these events are not defined as a "history of right-wing terrorism" in Germany, but rather as particularly notable cases of (organised) right-wing extremist violence. Indeed, in a discussion of the NSU Armin Pfahl-Traughber states that the 1990s cannot be included in a history of right-wing terrorism in Germany because "no right-wing extremist group could be considered as terroristic during the 1990s" (2012: 184). This suggests that organisational structure is the key criterion for differentiating between "terror" and "terrorism". Again we see that the application of these labels is highly context-dependent as discussed in chapter 2.

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[24] See e.g. *SZ*, "Die Bombe in der Christstollen-Dose", 16 November 2011, p. 6; *SZ*, "Durchsetzt mit Militanten", 17 November 2011, p. 6; *Spiegel*, "Im Teufelskreis", 5 December 2011, p. 32-36; in its report the first Federal Parliamentary Enquiry Committee points out that the then Vice-President of the Federal VerfS Klaus Dieter Fritsche rejected the term "Brown Army Faction" for Wiese's group because it did not conduct its activities from within an illegal existence and with an extended group of supporters, nor did they commit robberies to finance themselves (Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 230-231).

The news media stories thus conceptualise 20th-century German history as a history of "extremist" rather than "terrorist" violence in which the different German states – the German Reich 1933-1945, foreign military occupation in the immediate post-war period 1945-49, the division between the Federal Republic and the GDR 1949-1989 and, eventually, the reunified FRG since 1990 – emerged in parallel to, and were often catalysed by, various violent movements: the "Nazi terror" in the 1930s and 1940s, left-wing extremist violence in the 1970s and 1980s, and right-wing extremist violence in the 1990s and 2000s. This defines the NSU as part of a long-term process, rather than as something unique, while it also situates it within the history of the modern German state.

The two stories, oscillating between success and failure regarding the process of civilising German society after WWII, indicate that at the turn from 2011 to 2012, the news media are unsure of how to narrate Germany's relation to its own past. On the one hand, there is the idea that the process of working through it has been completed and that German society is resilient enough to defend itself against right-wing extremism. On the other hand, there is a sense that the success of this learning process is, first and foremost, to be found in political rhetoric and not necessarily in the attitudes prevalent within German society. The idea of NSU violence as an "attack against all of us" would then imply a particular relation between the democratic German state and a partially (still) xenophobic or (even) racist German society. In this sense, the violent crimes committed by the NSU constitute a form of politics after all, because they require the state to respond to it (cf. chapter 7).

## Summary: "Terrorism" as a Narrative Resource

The discussion so far has shown that the hindsight notion of an "attack on all of us" grasps what the acts of violence *should* have meant for "us" as a society, even if the perpetrators did not behave like "proper terrorists". On the one hand, as discussed in chapter 5, the media stories draw on narratives connected to the success or failure of the process of "working through the past" in order to explain why the hypothesis of right-wing extremist perpetrators was not pursued more vigorously and why the crimes did not provoke a feeling of terror within German society. This self-critical stance is offset against the NSU's "improper" behaviour as terrorists who lacked clear, sensible political demands, a narrative that serves to exonerate the media and other audiences. In line with normative self-expectations, a collective feeling of terror is then inscribed into NSU violence in retrospect. *BILD* chief columnist Franz Josef Wagner writes:

> Brown terror vermin, the more we learn about you, the more it makes our blood run cold. We all agreed that Neo-Nazis are disgusting. […] I thought our society needed to tolerate these lunatics. A dark minority. A week ago I was not frightened by the boots, now I am. (*BILD*, "Braunes Terror-Pack", 14 November 2011, p. 2)

In this context it is also worth recalling that the German legal definition of what a terrorist group is focuses exclusively on the perpetrators' motives and intentions, an approach that is reflected in how the media narrate NSU violence post-November 2011: while its physical manifestation was not seen as posing a threat to the basic structures of the German state at any point and failed to translate into a terrorising effect within the German population, the perpetrators' *intention* to do so, at least within the immigrant

community, is established after their discovery, thereby fulfilling the key criteria of scholarly and German legal definitions of terrorism.

The distinction between political motives and intentions as seen from the perpetrator's perspective and the legitimacy and effects of this violence in democratic societies that is revealed by the analysis above illustrates the complexity and ambiguity of discourses of "terrorism". The final section in this chapter looks at how the news media support the idea of "incompetent perpetrators" by drawing on another key dimension of terrorism discourses: the offenders' psyche and social behaviour.

**Countering the NSU's Status as Political Agents**

Before November 2011, the suspects in the three detective stories were predominantly described as strategic, calculating and coldblooded. After the discovery of the NSU, such narratives of evilness are complemented by narratives of terrorists as irrational, insane and – with regard to their right-wing extremist identity – anti-intellectual actors that counter the group's alleged status as political agents. As Horgan (2003) argues, much of psychological research on "terrorists" has indicated the heterogeneity among this group and the complexities behind their behaviour, and has shown that diagnoses like psychopathy and narcissisms tend to be the exception rather than the rule, or simply have not been established through empirical studies. Nevertheless, these simplistic explanations continue to be dominant in academia and media discourses alike, not only in the print news (Guterman 2013; Ottosen and Bull 2016), and the following illustrates this for the "NSU terrorists".

Irrationality and Insanity

As regards irrationality, *SZ* reporters Richter, Leyendecker and Kohl identify a parallel between the NSU and Breivik, suggesting that both lived in a different reality:

> It seems as if the perpetrators had not really associated their murderous raid with real life anymore. To that extent the Neo-Nazi cell also reminds one of the like-minded Norwegian Anders Breivik who afflicted his country with a mass murder this summer. Breivik, too, lived in a world in which reality and fiction blended into each other, in which he appeared in costumes, became a crusader, who had to fight the supposed invasion of Muslims into Europe and therefore bombed the government district and shot young social democrats. (*SZ*, "Kleine, kalte Welt", 15 November 2011, p. 3)

This story explains the inability of the NSU to design its violent campaign in a way that would make it interpretable as terrorism by characterising it as having been conceived of within a fictional world, inhabited only by the perpetrators and other right-wing terrorists. The *Spiegel* also describes this "parallel world" in which the perpetrators (rather than the victims) lived, pointing out that the their life in the underground between 1998 and 2011 – but one that was by no means hidden from public view – was secured by telling "lies and half-truths" to neighbours and acquaintances ("In der Parallelwelt", 18 February 2012, pp. 60-66).[25] A communicative process, so the narrative, could not take place between "*their* fictional world" and "*our* reality".

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[25] On 21 February 2010 the *Spiegel* had published an article on the murder series titled "Düstere Parallelwelt" ("dark parallel world", p. 64-66), referencing the suspicion that Turkish nationalists were the perpetrators; see also *SZ*, "Die netten Camper von Fehmarn", 24 December 2011, p. 8.

According to *FAZ* Feuilleton editor Lorenz Jäger, the use of the humorous comic figure "Pink Panther" as a story-teller in the video also expresses the perpetrators' struggle to make sense of their own actions:

> The only way in which the Trio could explain their deeds to themselves was the aspect of fun, which was presumably meant to be casual and provocative – the comical diminution in contrast to the unprecedented brutality of the liquidations. The dead are considered as the "Pink Panther's new tricks". […] The laughter clears one's conscience. To the extent that the supposed justifiability of attacks fades, because the victims were murdered randomly and not as "representatives" of some "system", to the extent that there is no option of rationalising the deeds anymore, they can only be seen as "tricks" by the murderers. (*FAZ*, "Morde, auf einer DVD betrachtet", 15 November 2011, p. 33)

Jäger further suggests that "traditional" claims of responsibility, lengthy written statements, can only be issued if, as in the case of the RAF with its "heavy, highly politically charged commando declarations", the perpetration of violent crimes follows a rational logic that connects the victims to a specific system. Indeed, the absence of claims of responsibility has been interpreted as a sign of the acts' meaninglessness and the perpetrators'' irrationality in other cases as well, in particular the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing. This is a discourse that has since gained momentum due to the emerging tactic of suicide bombing (Stampnitzky 2013: 144-145). Jäger is referring to the RAF, of whom most readers (and the 1951 born author) will have personal memories, to differentiate the NSU as "new", irrational terrorists from "old" terrorists and their sophisticated practice of credit-taking. He bases this assessment on the absence of claims of responsibility during their campaign and the frivolous approach to the use of violence evident in their video and mirrored in their choice of victims that aimed at combating a

system, pluralism itself, which cannot be negotiated. However, this claim does not match the stories told by the media at the time which saw the perpetrators as rational actors. Moreover, as indicated earlier, public discourses in the 1970s did not perceive RAF terrorism predominantly as "serious violent politics" either, but as criminal, irrational and misguided – an illustration of how narrating events in the present can shape memories of past events (Schudson 2014: 85-87).

The link between victim choice and irrationality is also established with regards to Michèle Kiesewetter whose murder is seen as the one anomaly in an otherwise supposedly homogeneous group of murder victims: Not only was she killed with a different weapon than the other victims, but the perpetrators also took a much higher risk by shooting her in a parking lot and there is no evidence that the attack was planned in advance. In light of these investigation results, parliamentary correspondent Peter Blechschmidt and investigative research head Hans Leyendecker write in the *SZ*:

> For the killers' choice of victim it was apparently only important to be able to leave the crime scene as quickly as possible and without attracting attention after the deed. All of this does not apply to the murder of the police-woman Michèle Kiesewetter in Heilbronn. It remains unclear why the 22-year-old police-woman became a victim. […] The murderers were cruel, they were fanatical, but were they schizo as well? (*SZ*, "Zehn Morde, 2500 Asservate, viele Fragen", 2 December 2011, p. 5)

The quote indicates that the transition from narratives of irrationality to narratives of insanity is very fluid. By suggesting that the NSU might have been schizophrenic, the authors consider a psychotic mental disorder as an explanation for the perpetrators'

behaviour, one that makes it impossible for those affected to recognise what is real.[26]

Richter's, Leyendecker's and Kohl's (*SZ*) analysis of the video and comparison to Breivik

also contains this idea of the NSU as "being out of their mind":

> In another scene the film […] shows a poster marked: "Long live Pink Panther and the NSU." Are the murderers ridiculing themselves here? They constantly blend hate and comedy, for example when the Panther strikes out at night to fire a "small bomb". Similar to Breivik the question arises if the three were out of their minds. (*SZ*, "Kleine, kalte Welt", 15 November 2011, p. 3)

As Roth and Dager (2014) point out, the media coverage of Breivik's crimes and

subsequent trial often referred to him as "crazy" in order to create a distance between

him and the sane collective Self in light of the fact that he is "one of us", an ethnic

Norwegian (see also Ottosen and Bull 2016; Seierstad 2015). One psychiatric assessment

found him to suffer from paranoid schizophrenia as revealed by his delusions and

disordered thinking, making him legally insane. A second assessment, however, found

these delusions to be expressions of his extremist ideology and diagnosed a personality

(i.e. non-psychotic) disorder that made him narcissistic and antisocial, but not legally

insane. The authors state that judging the bizarreness of delusions is measured with

regards to their improbability in comparison to the beliefs about reality that adults hold

on average, i.e. it is a measure of relative deviance. Roth and Dager cite one of the

experts who testified that "in comparison with Nazi ideologues of the past and with

contemporary anti-Islamic bloggers, Breivik's beliefs are neither very deviant nor very

original" (2014: 184) and speculate that the assessments may have been contradictory

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[26] None of the defendants in the NSU trial, including Zschäpe herself, have been diagnosed with such a condition though and are therefore criminally liable.

because "the classifications [for schizophrenia] were developed to distinguish psychosis from normalcy in populations that did not include mass murderers or political extremists." (183) The articles cited above reflect a similar dynamic: since the NSU is, after all, "one of us" in an ethnic and historical sense, there is a tendency to medicalise its deviant behaviour, attributing it to individual dispositions rather than to socio-political circumstances (Schneider 2015; see also Wardle 2003). According to this story, the NSU ridiculed itself and its own deeds in the video in order to bring its world and the "real" world, in which these acts do not make sense, together. This singles the group out from the milieu of right-wing extremists, which is the opposite of the effect of the "Brown East" narrative. However, rather than implying that right-wing terrorists can be cured and made into "conforming members of society" (Schneider 2015: 137), this medicalisation of the NSU's deviance serves to delegitimise them as political actors capable of rational judgment and decision-making. It also helps to reinforce a positive image of the (other) "Germans" as a democratic society and state.

Anti-Intellectualism

The third narrative of anti-intellectual perpetrators expresses itself in particular with reference to the absence of "proper" claims of responsibility. While the NSU's silence, as discussed above, may have been a strategy for success, the news media also evoke the opposition between the stereotypes of "intellectual left-wing terrorists" and "dumb violent Neo-Nazis" (Zwerenz 1993) as part of the "othering" process. The story suggests

that Mundlos, Böhnhardt and Zschäpe were simply illiterate and hence incapable of writing long declarations. Sven Becker et al.,[27] for example, write in the *Spiegel*:

> Right-wing terror rarely leaves behind claims of responsibility and no page-filling tractates that promote the struggle against the system. Most perpetrators are not even able to justify their violent deeds in coherent sentences. (*Spiegel*, "Der braune Terror", 21 November 2011, p. 19-20)

In a similar vein, Hans Leyendecker (*SZ*) reflects on the content of a pamphlet found in the house in Zwickau:

> "[…] The tasks of the NSU are the forceful combating of the enemies of the German people and the best possible support of comrades and national organisations." They wrote all of this in capital letters with many mistakes. The RAF prepared its pamphlets and claims of responsibility mostly in small letters and their messages were also misanthropic, but not that appallingly simple. (*SZ*, "Werbebrief vom Killer", 17 January 2012, p. 6)

The difference between the RAF's and NSU's use of language, according to Leyendecker, is not necessarily to be found in orthography or grammar, but content and style. A very similar assessment has been made by Borstel and Heitmeyer who argue with reference to the NSU's life in the underground that in contrast to the intellectualism of left-wing terrorism (the RAF being its most prominent example), right-wing terrorism is part of an "anti-intellectual milieu" that is "increasingly embedded in the petty bourgeoisie of caravans, holidays, cats, normal time structures etc." (2012: 363).

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[27] This also includes Berlin reporter and editors Stefan Berg, Markus Deggerich and Jan Fleischhauer, and Germany editor Gunther Latsch.

Evil

Overall, however, the news media continue to draw most heavily on stories of terrorists' (non-medicalised) lack of emotion and, more specifically, evilness rather than their irrationality, insanity or anti-intellectualism to explain the NSU's behaviour. Maik Baumgärtner et al.,[28] for example, write in the *Spiegel* that the video illustrates that the NSU was "cold as ice" ("Letzte Ausfahrt Eisenach", 14 November 2011, p. 67), while others consider the group's chosen method of killing to be an expression of its cruelty and brutality, fed by hate. This is illustrated, for example, in an *SZ* article by Hans Leyendecker on the attack of the police officers in 2007:

> Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Böhnhardt had almost dragged the police-woman and the police man out of the car. The terrorists were aggressive, merciless and brutal – killer machines who killed ten people in total between 2000 and 2007. (*SZ*, "Ein Leben voller Gewalt und Hass", 5 March 2012, p. 6)

And in a *BILD* report Maximilian Kiewel et al.[29] see the perpetrators' contempt for the victims reflected in the fact that all of the ten murder victims were shot in the head:

> At least ten times the three Nazi terrorists shoot, execute people, seemingly randomly. Eight Turks, one Greek, one police-woman die before April 2007. The way of killing expresses hate, contempt. Head shots, mostly fired at close range from a Ceska [*sic*] Type 83, directly into the face. They film and photograph their dead victims for their propaganda film […]. (*BILD*, "Sie schossen ihren Opfern direkt ins Gesicht", 14 November 2011, p. 12)

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[28] This also includes investigative reporter Jürgen Dahlkamp, Stuttgart correspondent Simone Kaiser, Munich editor Conny Neumann, Germany editors Sven Röbel, Holger Stark and Andreas Ulrich, and Munich correspondent Steffen Winter.

[29] This also includes Leipzig editor Martina Kurtz, freelance writer Caroline Lemuth, Thuringia editor Oliver Löhr, chief reporter Julian Reichelt, Berlin office head Ralf Schuler and Hanover chief reporter Stefan Sievering.

This focus on the "terrorist" as a cruel and evil being is, as mentioned in chapter 2, also key to the notion of "new terrorisms" which emphasises perpetrators' "terrorist identity" rather than the terrorist character of concrete acts of violent crime. The dominant portrayal of the NSU as "evil" may also be reflective of the moral and political imperative to take the NSU seriously. This is supported by Interior Minister Hans-Peter Friedrichs' response to an interview question posed by *Spiegel* editor-in-chief Georg Mascolo and Germany editors Holger Stark and Alfred Weinzierl concerning the psychopathic and political dimension of the NSU crimes:

> I believe that the boundaries between psychopathy and extremism are fluid in this case. But the effects that these deeds have on the sense of security of our population and the public image of Germany in the world are of course highly political. We need to clarify what has happened in our society. (*Spiegel*, "'V-Leute sind unverzichtbar'", 21 November 2011, p. 29)

In the *FAZ* Feuilleton, editor Jürgen Kaube also picks up on this blurred boundary between mental illness and evilness, suggesting that extreme violent crimes commissioned or committed by actors such as the political leaders of the Nazi dictatorship, the RAF, Breivik and the NSU are not necessarily attributable to a lack of intelligence or a medical condition, but rather pure evil:

> All cases for the clinic? Or rather self-encapsulation in the sense of conscience without an external light? Coldness, hypertrophic thinking in causalities, extreme heartlessness, derailed mind – in short: evil. Elaborated evil, overly clever evil, bigmouthed evil – attributable evil. After all, where is it written that extreme malice is due to a deficient mind? (*FAZ*, "Zurechnung", 1 December 2011, p. 33)

For Kaube, "evil" is not one-dimensional, but a syndrome of emotional *and* cognitive derailment that can be attributed to individual, responsible actors. As Schneider (2015: 140) points out, the designation of deviants as "evil", connected to religious concepts of sinning, historically precedes their medicalisation and is therefore more primordial. However, if one understands it as a kind of intentional wrong-doing, as Kaube does, it also implies that it can be combatted – not cured, but prevented. A key difference between medicalising the NSU's crimes and defining them as an expression of evil is that the latter does not see them as victims of some outside conditions that they suffered, but as culprits. Ricœur has made this distinction between evil as suffering and evil as wrong-doing as well, suggesting that narrative understanding and working-through of an evil that is simultaneously perpetrated and suffered is a precondition for resisting and acting against it (Kearney 2006: 212-214). This takes us back to the problem discussed earlier in this chapter: the NSU may not have behaved like "proper" terrorists and their acts were therefore not identified as terrorism before their discovery in November 2011, but the German state nevertheless needs to respond to the group and their actions because they have led to suffering among its subjects (see also Koehler 2017: 56). This dimension of the re-narration process will be addressed in chapter 7.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that, beginning in November 2011, the news media narrate the violent crimes of the NSU through the lens of "terrorism" as a complex narrative resource. They take recourse to 20th-century German history as a history of extremist

violence, but also to European and international events. The selective use of stories associated with "terrorism" is a coping mechanism that provides the basis for telling a plausible, mainly perpetrator-focused story that fits the conclusion.

This new story in particular addresses the question of why the violent crimes committed by the NSU were not identified as "terrorism", or "political violence" more generally, before the group was discovered. The media suggest that remaining "silent" and "invisible" by not revealing themselves through the issuing of claims of responsibility was key to the NSU's ability to commit violent deeds over an extended period of time. However, this also meant that society could not "see" the political motives and intentions *behind* their violent crimes. Three explanations are given for this inability: first, the literal character of the NSU's violence whose ascertained aim – to "purify" the German nation by killing and, in effect, evicting "immigrants "– is incomprehensible and unacceptable in a democratic state. The social model it pursues, so the narrative, has long been overcome because Germany has successfully worked through its past, so today it constitutes its historical "Other". The second explanation suggests the opposite: a largely xenophobic and/or racist German society did not feel connected to the victims because they perceived them as strangers, and hence a collective feeling of terror could not develop. The third and most dominant explanation does not focus on the reasons for society's inability to decipher messages that may have been attached to the NSU's violence, but characterises the perpetrators as abnormally behaving terrorists. It confers the responsibility for communicating violence "properly" onto the NSU. It would have been their task, so the narrative, to use violence as a political tool in a way that makes it interpretable as terrorism in the first place. While their motives and intentions may have

been political to the extent that they themselves considered their violence to enforce a change in German social structures, both their anti-immigrant ideology and use of violence could not be translated into a communicative process within the democratic mainstream society.

"Terrorism" is thus constructed as a previously invisible *background* to the NSU crimes: before their discovery, the perpetrators' motives and intentions could not be identified through the acts themselves or other forms of communication. The narrative dynamics themselves, however, illustrate that motives and intentions do not exist independently of stories of violent crime and are *ascribed to* perpetrators based on the repertoire of cultural stories that can be accessed and that limits the field of interpretation. The news media texts thus bear witness to Ricœur's observation that, analogous to texts, "action is detached from its agent and develops consequences of its own" – a process of autonomisation that "constitutes the *social* dimension of action" (1981: 206, original emphasis). Before November 2011, it was not the intentions of the NSU that were recovered, but the "matter of the action" itself as seen through the institutionalised narrator's own belonging. After November 2011, the violent crimes are narrated through the lens of the perpetrators' right-wing extremist identity that is itself connected to a complex inventory of pre-existing stories.

It becomes clear here that we do *not "*know" terrorism when we see it, as many scholars have argued (Schmid and Jongman 1988: 1). In an increasingly entangled European and international media public, institutionalised narrators have the totality of cultural stories that the term "terrorism" carries with it at their disposal in order to make sense of the relationship between victims, perpetrators and society when interpreting

violent crimes. This process of sense-making is highly selective based on consciously reflected norms and values as well as unconsciously internalised beliefs and pre-judgments. In the case of the NSU, taking recourse to the multitude of stories connected to the term "terrorism" fulfils the need to comply with normative ideas of Germanness based on the abstract political values of democracy and pluralism. However, the "othering" process is by no means straightforward because the perpetrators are ethnic Germans. The media's response to them therefore oscillates between the seriousness of their crimes and their portrayal as irrational, incapable and pitiful actors.

In light of the NSU's political relevance that results from these normative self-expectations, the final empirical chapter 7 considers how the news media narrate the state's response to the discovery of the NSU, focusing on the dynamic relationship between democratic politics, extremist ideologies and the use of violence within the context of the federalist system and the left-right scheme of German politics.

# CHAPTER 7

## THE STATE AND THE NSU: DEMOCRACY, EXTREMISM AND VIOLENCE

**Introduction**

The previous two chapters have shown that after its discovery in mid-November 2011 the NSU is narratively excluded from democratic German society, based on its right-wing extremist ideology and use of violence. This is supported by a narrative of "deviant East Germanness", while the victims are narratively (re-) integrated as "*our* immigrants". The NSU "terrorists" is seen as having been politically motivated, but their actions are nevertheless defined as unpolitical to the extent that the use of violence to expel immigrants by threatening them with extinction does not constitute a rational political programme. Nevertheless, the German political elite is expected to respond to the collective violence of the NSU and the larger threat it is understood to be an expression of, namely organised, violent right-wing extremism.

The political response to the NSU has three dimensions that are closely linked: the completion of the criminal investigations in order to fill the gaps in the story of the Trio-turned-NSU (what members of the NSU committed what crimes after 1998, and who supported the group?); the process of "working through" that includes the ascription of guilt for past mistakes and responsibility for the development of adequate policy measures to political actors; and the prosecution of the NSU's violent crimes in court. This chapter concentrates predominantly on the second dimension, as the news media mostly focus on this one during the period November 2011 to March 2012. Moreover, as mentioned in chapter 1, the reconstruction of the NSU's criminal activities continues to

be subject to the work of federal and state enquiry committees and the trial against Beate Zschäpe and four of the NSU's supporters is expected to continue until September 2017.

This final empirical chapter therefore asks how the news media conceptualise the relationship between the state and the perpetrators by narrating the delayed response of the former to the violent crimes *as* right-wing extremist crimes and to what extent this implies a (re-) negotiation of democratic boundaries. I first locate the state and the security authorities as characters within the re-narration process, arguing that the media single out the police and the VerfS, in particular in Saxony and Thuringia, as the culprits for failing to connect the underground "Trio" to the violent events. This reinforces the narrative of "deviant East Germanness", but serves to uphold the image of Germany as a liberal-democratic state. Secondly, I analyse the two stories that the news media tell to develop the notion that the authorities were "blind in the right eye". The first one centres on the manhunt for the "Trio" after 1998 and emphasises the authorities' incompetence and the flawed federal security architecture. The second one suggests that the violent crimes committed by the group after 2000 could have been interpreted as the doing of right-wing extremists if the latter had been considered more of a threat. The focus here is on the authorities' alleged complicity with the right-wing extremist scene and the underestimation of right-wing extremism vis-à-vis left-wing and Islamist terrorism. Thirdly, I examine how the metaphor of "blindness" is linked to the left-right-scheme of German politics and one of the key policy measures taken in response to the NSU: a

second, ultimately unsuccessful attempt to ban the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) after the first one had failed in 2003.[1]

## The State and the Security Authorities

The state's role in the NSU story is closely linked to what I discussed in chapter 6: the assumptions about the perpetrators' motives and intentions and the effect their violence *should* have had on the wider society, namely to produce a collective feeling of being terrorised, regardless of the fact that, as the media suggest, the NSU's choice of victims made this violence inherently unpolitical. The blurring of boundaries between "extremist violence", "everyday terror" and "terrorism" thus also serves to make an argument about why the state needs to respond to "NSU terrorism". Sven Becker et al.,[2] for example, write in *Spiegel*:

> […] [T]here is more than one way of challenging the state. One can attack its representatives, which is the path that the RAF took. Or one can mark off areas where the state loses its monopoly on violence, thereby suspending the laws of civil society. (*Spiegel*, "Der braune Terror", 21 November 2011, p. 19)

For *SZ* editor-in-chief Heribert Prantl, the state's particular responsibility to take action against this form of organised violence lies in the fact that regardless of how they were perceived, "a terrorist crime is a terrorist crime, even if there is no impertinent half-baked

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[1] The first ban was initiated in 2001 and failed in March 2003 because the information provided by Confidential Informants from within the party itself, so the ruling by the BVerfG, contaminated the evidence against the party (Bundesverfassungsgericht 2003; Flemming 2005).

[2] This also includes Berlin reporter and editors Stefan Berg, Markus Deggerich and Jan Fleischhauer, and Germany editor Gunther Latsch.

claim of responsibility the next day" ("Braune Mörder", 14 November 2011, p. 4).[3] In a

similar vein, former constitutional judge Winfried Hassemer says in an interview with

Prantl in March 2012: "The murders committed by the Neo-Nazis, that were in fact

executions, have created a situation which the state needs to respond to in a

comprehensive manner" (*SZ*, "'Der Staat muss reagieren'", 22 March 2012, p. 5). These

examples illustrate how the state's response to the NSU is not so much tied to what the

perpetrators have *done* than to who they have turned out to *be*, because it puts the topic

of violent radicalisation within the right-wing extremist scene (back) on the political

agenda. Berlin parliamentary correspondent Peter Carstens (*FAZ*) writes:

> The fight against right-wing extremism has been fought in Germany for
> sixty years with varying intensity. The fight against organised right-wing
> terrorism, however, began on 11 November 2011 around noon. At this
> time the Federal Prosecutor's Office officially stated that it had taken over
> the proceedings for the nine murders of immigrants from Turkey and
> Greece, of the police officer Michèle K. as well as for the Cologne bomb
> attack (22 severely injured persons). There is reportedly the suspicion that
> all of the deeds have a right-wing extremist background. (*FAZ*, "Nicht
> länger Zuschauer", 24 November 2011, p. 10)

Indeed, the VerfS focuses primarily on monitoring the radicalisation potential of and

threat posed by movements that are categorised as "extremist", i.e. as having the aim to

overcome (rather than to reform) the liberal democratic basic order, both through

parliamentary means (participation in elections) and (organised) violence.[4] The VerfS

functions as an early warning system that provides governments with the information

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[3] This recalls Home Secretary Hans-Dietrich Genscher's statement that "[a] crime remains a crime, even
when the thin mantle of political conviction is subsequently cast over it", with which he separated the
notion of "political" from that of "violence" in his definition of the RAF (see Colvin 2009: 136-137).
[4] See "Glossary: Extremism/Radicalism", URL: https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/service/glossar/_lE
(last accessed 13 August 2016).

they need to design appropriate security measures (Bundesministerium des Innern 2016: 15-16). It is, however, striking that Carstens makes a distinction between "right-wing extremist violence" and "right-wing terrorism" based on the organisational structures *behind* the violence rather than the effects it has on the victims and target groups. While it may be justified to say that "[e]very violent blow against an ethnic minority […] is automatically a blow against the governmental authority responsible for their protection […] in the first place" (Koehler 2017: 56), this does not seem to be the dominant approach even after the discovery of the NSU.

The news media thus consider the NSU to be both a continuation of and break with Germany's right-wing extremist past. After their disappearance following the failed police operation in Jena in January 1998, the police had continued to search for the "Trio" with an arrest warrant as they were charged with the making of dummy letter and suitcase bombs and the possession of explosives. The proceedings were closed in June 2003 due to a statute of limitations. By then the "Trio" had already committed six robberies, four murders and one bomb attack and had started operating as the "NSU" as evidenced by the video. The question that the media ask, therefore, is why the manhunt for the "Trio" after 1998 and the stories of violent crime since 2000 could not be brought together. Figure 7.1 below depicts the parallel events that the news media try to connect in hindsight as an element of the re-narration process.

The media thus also consider a dysfunctional communicative link between the perpetrators and the security authorities, specifically the (criminal) police and the VerfS, because the latter were unable to define the violent crimes after 2000 as "right-wing terrorism" and link them to the right-wing extremist "Trio" that was not being searched

for as a "terrorist group"[5] at the time. Their crimes were therefore subject to statute of limitations after five years (Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 480-481).
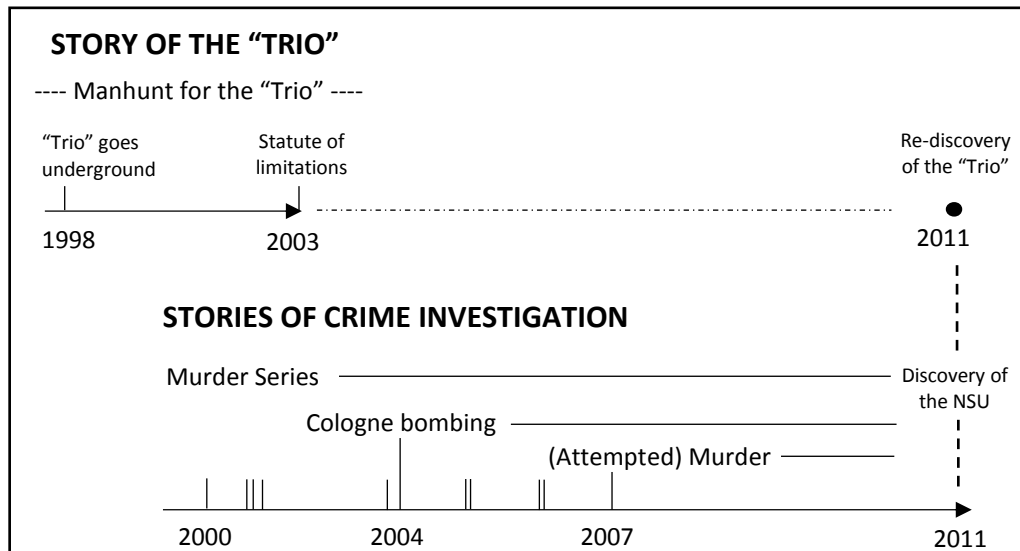


*Figure 7.1: Narrative Dynamics of Crime Investigation and the Search for the "Trio"*

Domestic security in Germany is predominantly a domain of the states. This system is, as the media acknowledge, a lesson drawn from the centralised security system under National Socialism.[6] Hence, various actors on both the federal and state level are part of the process of re-narrating the relationship between the Trio-turned-NSU, its violent crimes and the political and legal system. The news media, however, focus in particular on two groups of actors within this narrative network: the VerfS, in particular in Saxony and Thuringia, and the managerial elite of the parties on state and federal level whose responsibility it is to direct and monitor the work of the VerfS through the Ministries of the Interior and the Parliamentary Control Commissions. They thereby establish a link

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[5] See e.g. *Spiegel*, "Das Netz der Bösen", 21 November 2011, p. 24; *SZ*, "Schwarzer Peter in Thüringen", 28 November 2011, p.6; *SZ*, "Pech und Schuld", 6 December 2011, p. 6; *SZ*, "Konfrontiert mit namenlosem Schrecken", 31 December 2011, V2/6; *SZ*, "Chronik der verpassten Chancen", 4 February 2012, p. 6.
[6] See e.g. *SZ*, "Parallelarbeiten, Reibungen, unklare Verantwortlichkeiten", 18 November 2011, p. 5; *FAS*, "'Wir dürfen nicht nachlassen'", 20 November 2011, p. 3; *SZ*, "'Jeder Stein muss umgedreht werden'", 14 February 2012, p. 5; *SZ*, "Unter Beobachtung", 6 March 2012, p. 6.

between the responsibility for defending the FRG and political guilt for allowing the NSU to emerge. This is evident, for instance, in the following article in which editor-in-chief Heribert Prantl (*SZ*) links "terrorism news" to "state failure":

> The current news are not only about a new dimension of terror, but also about a new dimension of the failure of the security authorities. […] Certainly: the Federal Prosecutor's Office in Karlsruhe is not investigating "a state crisis", but the "formation of terrorist organisations" – but indirectly also state failure because the authorities in charge apparently did not pick up on this terrorist organisation in the slightest. (*SZ*, "Staatsversagen", 17 November 2011, p. 4)

This quotation hints at the idea that, because its members were known to the authorities, the discovery of the NSU is not as much "news" after all. Prantl also appears to equate the failure of the authorities to recognise the emergence of the NSU as a terrorist group with the failure of the German state as a whole. Most articles, however, do not follow this approach, but differentiate clearly between the failure of individual elements of the security apparatus and the possibly flawed security system on the one hand, and the notion of Germany as a liberal, defensive state on the other hand. Political editor Reinhard Müller (*FAZ*) comments:

> But mistakes with unfathomable consequences are far from being conspiracies. And what seems to be unbelievable in hindsight was not always recognisable in advance – the attackers from 11 September 2001 were also in the sight of the VerfS. Knee-jerk demands do not get us anywhere in any case. There may have been systematic failure. But the system as a whole works. […] This goes to show again that the liberal, defensive state depends first and foremost on the responsibility and the ethos of those who carry it – and this cannot be sued for. (*FAZ*, "Böser Staat?", 17 November 2011, p. 1)

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Müller is referring to the three members of the Al-Qaeda group who came to Germany in the 1990s from Lebanon, Egypt and the UAE and studied in Hamburg, where leading members of their Islamist milieu had been under observation by the VerfS, before moving to Afghanistan in 1999.[7] The author suggests that in both cases the effectiveness of existing intelligence structures depended on the performance of individuals. In a similar vein, Germany editors Sven Röbel and Holger Stark and Munich correspondent Steffen Winter (*Spiegel*) question the notion of a "brown state affair":

> The state derives its monopoly on violence from the promise to protect its citizens. In case of the nine immigrants and the police-woman Michèle Kiesewetter who were murdered by the Neo-Nazis the state did not honour this promise. Out of incompetence, not on purpose. There is no evidence for a brown state affair with secret services that were involved in the murders. (*Spiegel*, "Das Desaster von Chemnitz", 2 January 2012, p. 17-18)

In chapters 5 and 6 I argued that after the discovery of the NSU normative ideas of the German state as a defensive, democratic-liberal and pluralistic entity are upheld because the perpetrators, despite their ethnic and "historical" Germanness, are indisputably "othered", while parts of German society are defined by some authors as not having incorporated key democratic values to a sufficient degree yet either. The same effect is achieved here by differentiating between the security system as a whole and the misconduct of specific political agents. The next section discusses this process of the ascription of political guilt in greater detail.

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[7] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (2004), *The 9/11 Commission Report*, URL: http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report.pdf (last accessed 14 August 2016).

**The Violence of the Past and the Ascription of Political Guilt: "Blind in the Right Eye"?**

The notion of "blindness" relates to the idea that the security authorities should either

have been able to arrest the "Trio" before it could transform into the NSU, or identify the

violent crimes as "terrorism" in spite of the perpetrators' flawed behaviour. Heribert

Prantl (*SZ*) illustrates the graveness of the situation in context of the appointment of the

first federal enquiry committee:

> More than half of the enquiry committees that have been appointed in the
> Federal Republic have had to deal with secret service scandals. This time it
> is a scandal that calls into question the VerfS' general right to exist. Either it
> knew nothing about the Neo-Nazi murders – then it is dispensable. Or it
> knew and did not do anything about them – then it is dangerous. (*SZ*,
> "Hilfe, der Verfassungsschutz!", 28 January 2012, p. 4)[8]

The news media tell two stories that try to respond to the question of what the

authorities knew and what they could have known. The first story suggests that

interpreting the crimes committed by the group after 2000 "correctly" would not have

been necessary if the manhunt for the "Trio" after 1998 had been successful.[9] The second

story takes the crimes themselves as its starting point and asserts that these could have

been interpreted as "right-wing terrorism" if the threat posed by right-wing extremists

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[8] Between 1949 and November 2011 a total of thirty-eight enquiry committees were set up on the federal level. Examples include the committee on the efficacy of the German state security and intelligence authorities (1968-1969), the committee dealing with the spying case of Günter Guillaume, a GDR agent who worked for Willy Brandt's office (1974-75), and a committee on the role of the Federal Intelligence Service for the release of German citizen Murat Kurnaz from the US detention camp Guantanamo Bay (2006-2009). The number of committees established on the state level exceeds 250.

[9] In the *SZ* this is emphasised to exonerate the Bavarian VerfS from having made mistakes while the murder series was happening, see e.g. *SZ*, "Eine widerwärtige Partei", 16 November 2011, p. 30; *SZ*, "Wir müssen den Rechtsextremismus ernster nehmen", 18 February 2012, p. 39.

had been taken more seriously.[10] Both stories are connected to the question of whether the VerfS actually protects the state from threats, or in fact allows these threats to develop through negligence of sorts.

Story 1: From the "Trio" to the NSU

As mentioned before, the "Trio" used the opportunity to disappear and eventually go underground while a garage rented by Zschäpe was being searched by the police. Thuringia correspondent Claus Peter Müller (*FAZ*) narrates this event as follows:

> A bolt cutter could have prevented it all. This bolt cutter caused an unforeseen turn in the fate of the Federal Republic. More precisely: a missing bolt cutter. A garage door that could not be opened. A janitor who did not know about the padlock. Police officers who had to call the fire brigade. One hour of waiting that changed everything. (*FAZ*, "Zu spät", 4 February 2012, p. 3)

This is a good illustration of how events come to be defined as necessary rather than contingent once a story has been told: The key event in the NSU story, according to Müller, was the police's inability to open the garage *because* it enabled the "Trio" to go underground and eventually develop into the NSU, which changed the FRG's history. Whereas the news media describe the radicalisation of the perpetrators as almost inevitable due to the dynamic interaction between their personal circumstances and the post-Wende context (cf. chapter 5), the emergence of the NSU as an organised group operating in the underground, so Müller, could have been prevented by the authorities.

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[10] See also Koehler (2017: 166-167) for a hint at this two-dimensional failure which he considers to be "ironic".

Two key narratives are developed to explain their failure to do so: a narrative of incompetence and a narrative of federal complexity, both of which focus in particular on the security authorities in Thuringia and Saxony.

*Narrative of Incompetence*

At the core of the first narrative of incompetence, also supported by McGowan (2014: 205), are a series of mishaps and acts of negligence that happened in parallel to the series of violent crimes. In hindsight these events are collapsed into and equated with the non-discovery of the NSU as an event in its own right. This is, for instance, illustrated by Thuringia reporter Christiane Kohl, secret service specialist Hans Leyendecker and northern Germany correspondent Jens Schneider (*SZ*) who describe the situation at the garage in January 1998 as follows:

> The series of mishaps and embarrassing failures begins in Jena, when the investigators found four pipe bombs in the bomb manufactory of Uwe Böhnhardt, Uwe Mundlos and Beate Zschäpe in January 1998. Instead of arresting Böhnhardt who was present during one of the searches, they let him loose and the other two members of the Trio also disappeared. During the later hunt for the Trio the Thuringian VerfS also failed, as its former President Helmut Roewer admits today. (*SZ*, "Lange Spur der Versäumnisse", 17 November 2011, p. 6)

Telling the story of the "Trio" in light of its ending, their discovery as the NSU in 2011, the news media also identify other missed opportunities to change the course of events. These include, for example, several attempts by the Thuringian VerfS to transfer money

to the "Trio" through Confidential Informants[11] to gather information about their whereabouts (see also Koehler 2017: 161). In Saxony, Beate Zschäpe was questioned by the police in 2007 following water damage above their apartment in Zwickau, but no suspicions were raised, despite her contradictory statements.[12] The competition between Thuringia and Saxony about whose authorities carry more guilt is a key element in the story-telling process, visible already by how interchangeably the terms "Thuringian Terror Trio" and "Zwickau Cell" are used.[13] The media's narrative of incompetence mainly refers to the East German states as the product of post-Wende circumstances. The story they tell is that the transition from "GDR dictatorship" to "FRG democracy" destabilised the regional political and security structures, making it possible for right-wing extremism to thrive in the 1990s. More importantly, the media emphasise that these deficits remain even today. Parliamentary correspondent Constanze von Bullion's *SZ* article is particularly illustrative:

> It is not a coincidence that the brown murder gang was from Jena and not from Detmold [NRW]. The outrageous failures of the authorities which made it possible that right-wing bomb builders simply disappeared are also symptomatic of the East in the post-wall years. Nowhere did one allow right-wing extremist milieus to thrive as much as in the new states, nowhere were so many police officers who turned a blind eye, sometimes because of sympathy for Neo-Nazis, sometimes because of fear for their families. In the East democracy allowed itself to be laughed at for many years, also in appallingly useless courts. (*SZ*, "Das Gift der Diktatur", 23 November 2011, p. 4)

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[11] E.g. *BamS*, "Zahlte Verfassungsschutz 2000 Mark an Nazibande?", 18 December 2011, p. 8; *FAZ*, "Thüringer Verfassungsschutz wollte Terror-Trio Geld zukommen lassen", 19 December 2011, p. 2; *SZ*, "Der Staat spielte mit", 19 December 2011, p. 5; *Spiegel*, "Das Desaster von Chemnitz", 2 January 2012, p. 19.

[12] E.g. *Spiegel*, "Vernehmung ohne Folgen", 30 January 2012, p. 13; *FAZ*, "Zschäpe schon 2007 vernommen", 30 January 2012, p. 4; see also *Spiegel*, "Tödliche Fehleinschätzung", 28 November 2011, p. 28-31; *Spiegel*, "Geplante Gewaltanwendung", 5 December 2011, p. 34-35.

[13] E.g. *SZ*, "Sachsen schert aus", 20 February 2012, p. 6; *FAZ*, "Terrorheimstatt Thüringen", 16 November 2011, p. 3.

In a report about a conference held by the Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship (*Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur*), GDR-born senior Feuilleton editor Jens Bisky (*SZ*) is equally outspoken about this idea of the GDR's lasting effects, but also of reunification, on people's democratic competence and the authorities' abilities:

> The decisive difference between East and West today is that the readiness to use violence is considerably higher in the new states. Discussions, tough educational work, encouraging civil society, the civil centre, who needs to say what it does not want, may help against it. But more importantly we would need to demand from the state that it enforces its monopoly on violence. The fear remains precisely because during the 90s there was often the impression that it wasn't all that serious. The failure of the police, VerfS and judiciary has promoted right-wing violence as much as "the brown legacy of dictatorship". (*SZ*, "'Meine Nazis', 'Deine Nazis' – ein müßiges Spiel", 1 February 2012, p. 11)

This refers back to the narrative of East Germany as a "perpetual laggard" introduced in chapter 5. Here it expresses itself in the higher propensity for violence among East German right-wing extremists as confirmed by official figures (Bundesministerium des Innern 2016: 30) as well as the region's inability, so Bisky, to respond adequately to this situation. In line with this is the claim, made by *SZ* investigative research editor Nicolas Richter et al.,[14] that "[s]pecifically in Thuringia something always goes wrong", citing recent incidents of inadvertent support of the local right-wing extremist scene by the Thuringian government and its security authorities (*SZ*, "Deutscher Herbst", 19 November 2011, p. 3). Moreover, *FAZ* correspondent Claus Peter Müller portrays Jörg Geibert,

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[14] This also includes parliamentary correspondents Nico Fried and Susanne Höll as well as investigative reporter Hans Leyendecker.

Minister of the Interior in Thuringia since 2010, as competent and progressive *because* he was born and raised in West Germany before coming to Thuringia as an "aid worker" in the early 1990s:

> But Geibert is not catching his breath in the face of the threatening disaster, but takes up – with the easiness of a man who has experienced key phases of his socialisation in the Rhineland – all questions targeted at him with a disarming frankness, only to ask them publically as his own in turn. […] As chairman of the JU [the youth organisation of the CDU/CSU] in Westerwald he admitted the first Turkish-born teenager to the organisation. (*FAZ*, "Souverän", 18 November 2011, p. 10)

Müller's text reproduces a dominant discourse that sees West Germany as the provider of "development aid" to East Germany as a perpetually weak entity (Wedl 2009: 121, 130). Overall, a distinctively *East* German incompetence is therefore blamed for the "Trio's" disappearance and re-emergence as the NSU. This is closely linked to the second narrative of federal complexity.

*Narrative of Federal Complexity*

The media suggest that many opportunities to find the "Trio" were missed because the German security system involves too many different actors: ministries and secret services in sixteen different states and on the federal level. Their critique addresses two levels: The first one is the federal security system as a whole. The NSU, so the story, is proof that this system is outdated and in need of reform in order to facilitate the process of elucidating past events and preventing similar failures in the future. Former director of the *Deutschlandradio* Ernst Elitz writes in the *BILD*:

The working in parallel and against each other of the security agents jeopardises our security. It is murderous. The terrorists executed ten people. The political elite has been sloppy with controls. Now it has to decide quickly! No more of the sixteen provinces of intelligence agents [*Schlapphut-Provinzen*]. The fight against terror needs central governance, clear leadership, data exchange without state borders! The political elite needs to act. Only this safeguards us from crime. (*BILD*, "Schluss mit der Schlapphut-Provinz!", 16 November 2011, p. 2)

According to Elitz, the federal security system itself is an accomplice in the NSU murders because it enabled the group's unimpeded operation. It should be noted, however, that while policing and public safety in general remain the prerogative of the states, the Federal Criminal Police Office (*Bundeskriminalamt*, BKA) has had the sole competence for combating threats that transcend state boundaries, including international terrorism, since 2006 when the first federalism reform entered into force and Art. 73 GG was amended (Deutscher Bundestag 2006). The responsibility for the "Trio" was therefore not pooled at the BKA headquarters in Wiesbaden (Hesse) because the reform was limited to international terrorism and the cross-border crimes (in particular the murder series) were not defined as "terrorism" in the first place.

The second part of the critique refers to the failure of the authorities in Thuringia and Saxony to arrest the "Trio" before they could develop into the NSU due to unclear responsibilities. Berlin correspondent Markus Wehner expresses this in the *FAS*:

Coordination between the authorities, a steering of the information and a clear division of labour did not exist in the years after 1998 [after the "Trio" had gone underground]. It was not clear who was in charge, people say in Erfurt. In Saxony the head of the VerfS points out succinctly that they did not know the whereabouts of the Trio at any point. In the Federal Ministry of the Interior a high-ranking official, however, says that the Thuringian VerfS was responsible for the Neo-Nazi Trio throughout. But when people

disappeared and were searched for with arrest warrants, it was primarily a police concern: "If they are not found, it is the police's fault." (*FAS*, "Monopoly für Neonazis", 4 December 2011, p. 5)

The competition between the federal and the state levels thus also has an effect on the "working through" process after November 2011. This is evident, for example, in an article by *SZ* parliamentary correspondent Susanne Höll in which she offers an explanation for why the appointment of a group of experts rather than a parliamentary enquiry committee in the *Bundestag* is being considered:

> Regional authorities are not liable to testify in front of an enquiry committee of the Bundestag. But since clarification is not possible without information from the individual states, an expert group of federal and state representatives who will receive information everywhere is necessary according to MPs of the Union and the SPD. CDU/CSU and SPD are also concerned that in an Enquiry Committee they could be given the bulk of the political responsibility for the security debacle. After all the Ministers of the Interior on the federal and state level as well as the heads of the VerfS Offices and police departments of the past decade were put in place by these parties. (*SZ*, "Zwei Gremien und viele Fragen", 13 January 2012, p. 6)

Höll indicates that, while the states and the federal government compete for influence vertically, they are nevertheless connected horizontally through the parties in power. The first Federal Enquiry Committee is eventually appointed in January 2012, followed by a number of enquiry committees on the state level as well as a number of special investigators and expert commissions (cf. chapter 1).[15] At the same time, a number of policy measures are suggested or taken with the aim of improving the flow of information

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[15] E.g. *SZ*, "Unmut über Bundesanwälte", 12 January 2012, p. 6; *SZ*, "Doppelte Aufklärung", 14 January 2012, p. 5; *BILD*, "Ausschuss zu Neonazi-Morden", 14 January 2012, p. 1; *FAZ*, "Untersuchungsauschuss zu Zwickauer Terrorzelle", 14 January 2012, p. 1; *FAZ*, "Ausschüsse zu NSU eingesetzt", 27 January 2012, p. 4; *FAZ*, "Kommission untersucht Behörden in NSU-Affäre", 9 February 2012, p. 1; *BILD*, "NSU-Untersuchungsausschuss in Sachsen beschlossen", 8 March 2012, p. 12.

between different authorities in the states and on the federal level, e.g. increased data retention, a merger of sub-federal VerfS offices, the establishment of a "Defence Centre against Right-wing Extremism" and an "Anti-Right-wing Extremist Database".[16] But how exactly the exchange of more and qualitatively better information might help to interpret violent crime "correctly" does not become clear. Höll provides a good example of this when she claims on 5 January 2012 that "[i]f the security authorities had informed one another better of their respective results about the Zwickau Cell, perhaps ten people would still be alive" (*SZ*, "Sammeln mit Augenmaß", p. 4). But less than two weeks later she writes in another article:

> Will the new [Neo-Nazi] database prevent crimes like the right-wing extremist series of murders? No. But it is meant to make sure that all German security authorities are informed about a putatively violent group like the Zwickau Cell so it does not, as it happened in the case of the Trio, disappear from the authorities' sight. (*SZ*, "Datenbank gegen das Konkurrenzdenken", 18 January 2012, p. 5)

This suggests that collecting, exchanging and pooling more information alone is not sufficient for the prevention of cross-state violent activities. This provides the point of transition to the second story that centres on the symbolic dimension of the acts, the authorities' assessment of the security situation in Germany and the threat posed by violent right-wing extremists.

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[16] E.g. *SZ*, "'Aufklärung allein wird nicht ausreichen'", 18 November 2011, p. 5; *BILD*, "Minister plant Abwehrzentrum gegen rechts", 19 November 2011, p. 12; *SZ*, "Friedrich plant umfassende Neonazi-Datei", 29 November 2011, p.1; *FAZ*, "Bessere Koordination", 17 December 2011, p. 4; *FAZ*, "Koalitionsstreit über Vorratsdatenspeicherung", p. 1; *SZ*, "Einigkeit über Neonazi-Datei", 4 January 2012, p. 6; *FAZ*, "Debatte über Neonazi-Datei", 2 March 2012, p. 2.

Story 2: The Violent Crimes and the Notion of "Right-wing Terrorism"

According to the second story, the manhunt for the "Trio" as criminal extremists rather than as terrorists meant that the crimes committed after 2000 were not attributed to a right-wing terrorist group, despite the fact that a right-wing extremist background was considered. The authorities' assumption, so the media, was that if such a group had existed, they would have known about it (see also Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 516-518). The notion of "right-wing terrorism" as a threat was not prominent on the security agenda.

This story implies that investigating violent crime is not solely based on the features of the act itself, but also shaped considerably by available knowledge about certain types of perpetrators and existing organisational structures. It competes with the narrative of "silent terrorism" which, as discussed in chapter 6, refers to the idea that the acts themselves were not symbolic enough to be properly decoded by the audiences, including the security forces, regardless of whether they were aware of any organised right-wing extremist groups or not. This narrative competition is illustrated, for example, in an article by *FAS* Feuilleton editor Nils Minkmar who makes reference to Breivik's attacks in July 2011 in Norway:

> Federal Prosecutor Rainer Griesbaum appeared surprised on the ARD because his agency's investigations had not revealed any right-wing terrorist structures. This echoes what Federal Minister of the Interior Friedrich said after the attacks in Norway in the summer: there are no Nazi terrorist structures in this country. As if there was a compulsory registration for terror groups, as if the murder wasn't the terror, but the accompanying written statement. (*FAS*, "Hauptsache, es macht peng!", 20 November 2011, p. 49)

Minkmar's article contributes to the dominant discourse of the authorities' "blindness" by suggesting that it is, first and foremost, them (rather than German society in general) who should have been able to identify the crimes as acts of terrorism. Several political figures defend the authorities by emphasising the difficulties implied in interpreting acts of violent crime. In an interview with political correspondent Mike Szymanski (*SZ*), Bavarian Minister of the Interior Joachim Herrmann, for instance, says the following in response to the question of whether the regional security authorities need to fundamentally query their own work: "There was no definitive evidence for a right-wing extremist background. That is why the structures that we already have established in the struggle against right-wing extremism did not take effect" (*SZ*, "'Wir müssen den Rechtsextremismus ernster nehmen'", 18 February 2012, p. 39). In a guest contribution for the *FAZ* the former Federal Attorney General Kay Nehm also supports this view:

> Now the impression is being created on all sides that the right-wing terrorist background had almost imposed itself. But there were many blind people. Where were the politicians, in particular the supervisory Ministers of Justice and the Interior from the Federation and the states […]? Where were the investigative journalists who now outdo each other with accusations? The bitter realisation remains that, in order to be successful, the VerfS and the police that were informed by it would have needed to pick up the thread of the investigations separately from the deeds, and therefore close to the perpetrators, and not to base their search on unproven hypotheses. (*FAZ*, "Im Kern bewährt", 1 December 2011, p. 8, my emphasis)

According to Nehm, the perpetrators could have been identified if the focus had *not* been on the acts themselves, but on the information that the security authorities had about potentially dangerous persons, in particular those who had disappeared. But this

approach, he suggests, disregards how criminal investigations work since it would, to use Ricœur again, make it impossible to move from the notion of "anyone could have done it" to the apprehension of the perpetrators. A similar idea is reflected in the *SZ* where only a few days after the discovery of the NSU a spokesperson of Hermann's Ministry is quoted as saying that "[a]fter all, only once we have the perpetrator do we know if a case has a right-wing extremist background" ("'Die CSU ist auf dem rechten Auge blind'", 15 November 2011, p. 30). That the authorities did not search for the perpetrators as terrorists is thus again attributed to their deeds not being interpretable as right-wing extremist violence in the first place. There are two key narratives that emerge in this context, one of complicity, and one of underestimation.

*Narrative of Complicity*

The narrative of complicity challenges the separation between the perpetrators as "evil terrorists" and the "righteous security authorities". Minkmar puts it succinctly in the *FAS*: "If they had wanted to know, they could have known" ("Hauptsache, es macht peng!", 20 November 2011, p. 49). Complicity is suggested in particular by two elements of the story: Andreas Temme, the VerfS agent who was at the crime scene when Halit Yozgat was shot on 6 April 2006, and Confidential Informants who connect the right-wing extremist scene to the German state.

In the case of Temme, the news media pick up on and partially re-tell the earlier story of his presence at the crime scene that was ultimately defined as coincidental (cf. chapter 4). They suggest that the security agent might in fact have known about Yozgat's

murder. Investigative research head Hans Leyendecker, for example, writes tentatively in

the *SZ*:

> But could it, theoretically, really be possible that officials from the VerfS
> supported a brown commando of killers (whether due to negligence or on
> purpose)? Could it be that civil servants are disguised enemies of the state
> at heart and in cahoots with the right-wing vermin? The story of a former
> Hesse VerfS agent who almost witnessed the murder in an internet café in
> Kassel in 2006, inspires such fantasies. The man is even said to have the
> nickname "little Adolf". If that is not evidence, serious people in Berlin say.
> (*SZ*, "Spitzel und Doppelwesen", 16 November 2011, p. 6)

However, the preliminary conclusion that the news media give to the story soon after

these initial speculations is very similar to the one they gave in July 2006: Temme is, after

all, not a right-wing extremist, but the right-wing tendencies in his youth and his presence

at the crime scene were erroneously linked to create a false story. Local correspondent

Claus Peter Müller writes the following in the *FAS*, referencing the conspiracy theories

about the involvement of the VerfS in the murder in Kassel:

> The people complement the information that they lack with dubious
> sources until reality fits their own worldview. That is also what happened
> with the man called "little Adolf". Not everyone wants to hear that
> according to the investigations of the authorities he probably did not exist
> in the way that he was portrayed in the media and in conversations on the
> street. Based on preliminary findings former VerfS agent Andreas T.
> apparently cannot be reproached; the monstrous suspicion that the state
> intelligence service could have been complicit in one of the ten Neo-Nazi
> murders through a former employee appears to be refuted. (*FAS*, "Die
> Verunsicherung", 20 November 2011, p. R2)

What appears to have been easily imaginable with regards to the victims and even explicitly searched for – their complicity in the crimes committed against them – is thus (still) considered unlikely in the case of security agent Temme.

The second, closely related element of the complicity narrative is the role of Confidential Informants within the right-wing extremist scene. It becomes part of the re-narration process as early as 9 November 2011, i.e. one day after Zschäpe had turned herself in to the police,[17] and takes recourse to the history of the VerfS. NRW chief reporter Frank Schneider, chief political reporter Hans-Jörg Vehlewald and senior editor Malte Wicking evaluate the situation with Temme on 15 November 2011 in the *BILD* as follows:

> Until now such a deep involvement of the VerfS seemed to be inconceivable. Its approach towards Neo-Nazis has been controversial before. Today the former head of the Thuringian service, Helmut Roewer (61), writes books for the right-wing "Ares Press". Under Roewer the Office recruited leaders of the Nazi scene as informants: The former NPD state leader Thomas Dienel (49) became a Confidential Informant in 1995, took around 40,000 Deutschmark tax payers' money until 1997. […] He was uncovered in 1999, security agent Roewer resigned in 2000. NPD deputy leader Tino Brandt (36) became a Confidential Informant in 1994, took 200,000 Deutschmark until 2001. With the money from the state he built up the organisation that he was supposed to watch: the "Thuringian Homeland Security". Members were his friends Beate Zschäpe (36), Uwe Mundlos († 38), Uwe Böhnhardt († 36). (*BILD*, "Verfassungsschützer saß beim Mord im Café des Opfers", 15 November 2011, p. 12)

In spite of the state's close observation of the right-wing extremist scene, the authorities, so the story, were not only unable to prevent the emergence of the NSU, but actively supported it. According to the story, this is because those who are paid to provide the

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[17] See *FAZ*, "Ist die Tat von Heilbronn nun wirklich aufgeklärt?", 9 November 2011, p. 9; *SZ*, "Die rätselhafte Frau Z.", 10 November 2011, p. 10; *FAS*, "Zweifel an den Behörden", 13 November 2011, p. 2.

authorities with information about their own group remain loyal members of that group and hence "the system of Confidential Informants alienates the state of law", as Heribert Prantl puts it (*SZ*, "Das Unwesen des V-Mann-Wesens", 21 November 2011, p. 4). In this narrative, the NSU case reveals that the system only works on paper because some of the informants are in fact in a position to influence the group and use the money they receive from the state to further their own cause.[18] They are "Janus-faced creatures" as Hans-Leyendecker writes (*SZ*, "Spitzel und Doppelwesen", 16 November 2011, p. 6); they blur the boundaries between the democratic state and the non-democratic right-wing extremist scene. This challenge has been discussed in detail in the academic literature (Jesse 2003; Jesse 2012) and in the accounts of the NSU mentioned in chapter 1 (e.g. Eckert 2013; Aust and Laabs 2014; Funke 2015; Wetzel 2015; Koehler 2017).

The narrative of complicity is dominant in particular during November 2011 in the immediate reaction to the discovery of the NSU, but ultimately does not prevail. In February 2012 Hans Leyendecker and NSU reporter Tanjev Schultz write in the *SZ*: "It is difficult to explain why the investigators knew so much – and yet did not succeed. Bad luck? Yes. Dilettantism? Probably. But apparently no chumminess" (*SZ*, "Chronik der verpassten Gelegenheiten", 4 February 2012, p. 6). However, a new event in mid-February 2012 – the discovery that relevant VerfS files were deleted shortly after the unmasking of the NSU[19] – initiates the telling of new stories beyond my sample period that further support this narrative of complicity (see Deutscher Bundestag 2013: 45, 744-802; Grumke 2016).

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[18] E.g. *SZ*, "Chaos im Amt", 15 November 2011, p. 2; *FAZ*, "Ein Nehmen, nicht immer ein Geben", 17 November 2011, p. 2; *BILD*, "Der V-Mann-Report: So leben Neo-Nazis von unseren Steuergeldern", 24 November 2011, p. 14.

[19] E.g. *SZ*, "Irritierende Datenlöschung", 13 February 2012, p. 6.

*Narrative of Underestimation*

Meanwhile, the other key narrative that the media develop, the narrative of underestimation, becomes more central. It is closely associated with the metaphor "blind in the right eye" and explains the authorities' inability to interpret the 2000-2007 violent crimes as the doings of right-wing extremists or, more specifically, terrorists with their inability to imagine that right-wing extremists are capable of developing organised structures, which relates back to the narratives of irrationality, insanity and anti-intellectualism discussed in chapter 6. This underestimation is also connected to a relative overestimation of the violent potential of the left-wing extremist and Islamist milieus. An article by Karlsruhe correspondent Wolfgang Janisch (*SZ*) illustrates this:

> The murders of the brown terrorists have shocked the population. And really shocking is the fact that the true backgrounds remained hidden from the investigators and security agents for so long, at a time when almost every Islamist or left-wing extremist movement lights up way beforehand on the radar screens of the security authorities. (*SZ*, "Fahndung mit schlechtem Gewissen", 2 December 2011, p. 4)

*SZ* domestic politics editor Joachim Käppner also supports this approach:

> With reference to the three famous apes one could say: saw nothing, heard nothing, knew nothing. But it was even worse than that. One saw, heard and knew a lot. But all of this was lost because of mind-blowing incompetence. They starred at a small group of left-wing extremists. But the VerfS' awareness of the nascent right-wing terrorism was so limited that Minister of Justice Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger (FDP) would now rather that the state authorities were dissolved. (*SZ*, "Trio infernal", 3 December 2011, 57-58)

In the following excerpt from the *Spiegel*, Thomas Heise et al.,[20] moreover, suggest that if the work of the police and the judiciary had not been shaped by the legacy of left-wing terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s, they would have been able to recognise the clear terrorist potential of the "Trio" in the late 1990s:

> […] [S]ince in the German state of law only those who produce a well-sounding organisation name [like the RAF] can be terrorists, the prosecution in Gera [Thuringia] did not want to recognise a terrorist organisation. The Federal Prosecution agreed and refused to take over – although the police had found 1.4 kilograms of industrial explosives and swastika emblems in Jena at the end of January 1998. The necessary information was simply missing, they say in Karlsruhe today. If the police and judiciary had hunted the right-wing terrorists of tomorrow as intensively as the left-wing terrorists of yesterday, a lot of harm might have been prevented. (*Spiegel*, "'Tödliche Fehleinschätzung'", 28 November 2011, p. 29)

In another *Spiegel* article, Jürgen Dahlkamp et al.[21] point to the contradiction between the assessment of the threat potential of the right-wing extremist scene at the time and the interpretation of the series of crimes by the VerfS:

> Nobody asked the obvious question of why three hard-core Neo-Nazis who had had to disappear did not re-appear again. There were actually only three possibilities: Dead. Abroad. Or: They had committed new crimes and therefore could not return from the underground. Apparently that was inconceivable for German secret agents. […] In a situation overview that dealt with the "threat of an armed struggle of German right-wing extremists" since 1997, the agents summed up: "At the moment only an 'after-work terrorism' [*Feierabendterrorismus*] led by very small groups or individuals is feasible, if at all." And: "One needs to reckon with attacks on objects rather than persons." At that point, in 2004, the Neo-Nazis had

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[20] This also includes Dresden correspondent Maximilian Popp, Germany editors Sven Röbel and Holger Stark, and Munich correspondent Steffen Winter.
[21] This also includes Germany editors Udo Ludwig, Sven Röbel, Holger Stark and Andreas Ulrich, Dresden correspondent Maximilian Popp and Munich correspondent Steffen Winter.

apparently already shot five immigrants. (*Spiegel*, "Das Netz der Bösen", 21 November 2011, p. 25)

Even before the re-categorisation of the murder series and police murder as "right-wing extremist violence" in November 2011, the official number of fatal victims of the "terror from the right" since reunification in 1990 provided by the police had been 47, the unofficial one, calculated based on a research by *Der Tagesspiegel* and *DIE ZEIT* journalists, 137 (Deutscher Bundestag 2011). In the same *Spiegel* issue, Sven Becker et al.[22] address this blurring of boundaries between right-wing extremist "everyday terror" and organised "terrorism":

> But the terror from the right […] has become an everyday phenomenon. […] It is a terrible trail of blood that leads through the Republic. And the uncanniest thing about it is probably that only very few had so far recognised it. […] One would have to get the impression that the political elite and the public were occupied with more important things than with this form of murderous everyday violence. […] Now the Republic has woken up with a shock. (*Spiegel*, "Der braune Terror", 21 November 2011, p. 18)

As mentioned in chapter 6, Busch (2013) has argued that the security authorities did not focus on the hypothesis of right-wing terrorism because they assumed that right-wing extremists who resort to organised, premediated violent crime, choose symbolic targets – such as the synagogue in Munich that Martin Wiese's group intended to bomb – rather than individual victims (235-236). Both Becker et al. and Busch suggest that it was the very dominance of "everyday terror" by right-wing extremists that "blinded" the authorities to the existence of right-wing terrorism.

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[22] This also includes Berlin reporter and editors Stefan Berg, Markus Deggerich and Jan Fleischhauer, and Germany editor Gunther Latsch.

The media explain the authorities' one-sided focus with reference to two narrative resources. The first one is the history of the VerfS in Germany since the end of the Second World War. Heribert Prantl, for example, writes in the *SZ*:

> The VerfS was a child of its time, certainly a particularly aggressive child. In order to get the population to re-arm again only five years after the unconditional capitulation, the Federal Republic needed an enemy image: the communists. […] And when the Communist Party of Germany [KPD] was banned by the Federal Constitutional Court in 1956, the big wild time of the VerfS began: KPD members who had been in concentration camps were hunted down by secret agents who had been Nazis. From this one can learn what the VerfS was (and sometimes still appears to be): a political authority of the respective government with a name that camouflages this function. (*SZ*, "Wer schützt die Verfassung vor dem Verfassungsschutz?", 7 January 2012, p. V2/1)

Seen from this perspective, the VerfS is subject to control by the government and thus bound to the dominant political ideology. This has an impact on how it differentiates between friend and foe and hence between legitimate and illegitimate claims within a democratic system. Protecting the Constitution is thus connected to the negotiation of agonisms in democratic politics. The NSU affair, according to Prantl, fits into the VerfS' history to the extent that the underestimation of right-wing extremism is characteristic of the general political climate in Germany, based on the dominance of the CDU/CSU as the (leading) government parties between 1949-1969 and 1982-1998, and again since 2005. After the RAF declared its official dissolution in 1998, the script of left-wing terrorism continued to be dominant in the late 1990s and early 2000s. With the exception of the murder of police officer Kiesewetter in 2007, the NSU's victim choice did not fit this script. In an earlier *SZ* article Prantl had commented on this choice as follows:

The publicist Ralph Giordano, a Hamburg Jew once persecuted by the Nazis, recently noted at the annual conference of the Federal Criminal Police Office that the Federal Republic "was shaken out of its naivety". And he asked what would have happened if those who were killed by Neo-Nazis had not been ordinary people with a migration background, but instead high-ranking representatives from politics, economy, church or academia like during the murderous time of the RAF? The question answers itself. Of course then the security authorities would not have been starry-eyed for ten years. (*SZ*, "Das braune Netz", 12 December 2011, p. 4)

This again moves the focus towards the failure of the security authorities rather than other audiences of violent crime, supported by the high credibility associated with Giordano as a public intellectual and survivor of the Nazi regime. It also supports the idea that the crimes were not labelled "terrorism" because, in comparison to the RAF victims such as the President of the German Employer Association Hanns Martin Schleyer, the victims were not "prestigious" enough for the crimes to be seen as an attack on German society as a whole.

The second narrative resource is the post-9/11 era that has been shaped by the US agenda of the "War on Terror" rather than by countries', including Germany's, specific experiences with political violence and terrorism (Longhurst 2004: 83-96; Croft and Moore 2010: 822). *FAZ* parliamentary correspondent Peter Carstens reflects on this: "After the Islamist terror attacks in America on 11 September 2001, threat perceptions changed and public attention turned away from right-wing extremism as well" ("Tiefbraune Realitäten", 18 November 2011, p. 6). Two days earlier Carstens had written that

[i]t appears to be clear already: The price for the concentration of forces on the combating of Islamist terror was high. [...] This concentration had to

have effects on all other areas of work of the security authorities. […] In the area of right-wing extremism the defence against terrorism had not kept up with developments, however. The VerfS report of the Federal Office claimed in summer 2011: "No right-wing terrorist structures could be identified in Germany in 2010." But apparently the following was true: They existed (and continue to exist?), but were not recognised. (*FAZ*, "Im Zweifel gegen den Zweifel", 16 November 2011, p. 3)

The narrative frame of 9/11 continues to be important after November 2011. This is evident, for example, in the fact that both then Attorney General Harald Range and Minister of the Interior Hans-Peter Friedrich speak in interviews of the NSU discovery as "Germany's 9/11" because of parallels in society's inability to imagine this kind of terrorism and its political consequences.[23] This comparison implies an expectation that the German authorities will focus on the threat from the right in the future as they did with Islamist terrorism after 9/11. However, the media discourse does not narrate the response to the NSU as "counter-terrorism", but as a "joint struggle against right-wing extremism",[24] which again points to the inefficacy of the concept of "right-wing terrorism". It also supports my argument from chapter 6 that the media draw on the repertoire of stories associated with "terrorism" in a very selective manner and combine them with other resources, such as the trope of the "brown East" or the story of "vulnerable immigrants", to achieve specific purposes.

The dominant script of left-wing terrorism and the post-9/11 context are also used to describe the VerfS as being characteristically inefficient and unreliable. Secret services specialist Leyendecker (*SZ*) formulates it as follows:

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[23] See *Spiegel*, "'V-Leute sind unverzichtbar'", 21 November 2011, p. 29-30; *FAS*, "'Die NSU-Morde sind unser 11. September'", 25 March 2012, p. 5
[24] E.g. *SZ*, "Bundestag beschämt über Neonazi-Morde", 23 November 2011, p. 1.

> If big things happen, something often goes wrong. This applies both to the chaos of the authorities in the case of the abducted President of the Employers Association Hanns Martin Schleyer in autumn 1977 and the history of the Hamburg Cell who later carried out the mass murder on 11 September. Important leads to the attackers had remained unnoticed. After everything was over, the secret service had to admit that they had known quite a lot about the conspirators beforehand. (*SZ*, "Pannen, Fehler, helle Köpfe", 22 November 2011, p. 5)

The failure to end the NSU's violent campaign, Leyendecker suggests, is comparable to the unsuccessful rescue of Schleyer in 1977 and the authorities' inability to detect the assassins of 9/11 before they could commit their attacks. The VerfS is incapable of foreseeing "the big things", regardless of where the threat is coming from. Only very few articles emphasise the past successes of the security authorities in preventing terrorist attacks,[25] in particular with reference to the Islamist Sauerland Group.[26]

The conclusion that was reached in November 2011, these authors suggest, could have been reached through the process of following the story, rather than an accidental discovery of the NSU, *if* the authorities – and German society in general – had considered right-wing extremist violence to be a threat. G. H.'s comment in the *FAZ* illustrates this:

> Public debates about the threat of right-wing crimes not only would have moved the focus in the right direction, but also increased the pressure on the scene, perhaps it would have brought the tension into it that allows for new insights. But the pride of being able to signal in the VerfS reports that nothing remains unobserved was arrogant. (*FAZ*, "Tonlos feige", 21 November 2011, p. 10)

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[25] E.g. *FAZ*, "Und es gibt doch auch Erfolge", 16 November 2011, p. 35; *SZ*, "'Aufklärung alleine wird nicht ausreichen", 18 November 2011, p. 5; *FAS*, "Grob fahrlässige Wünsche", 18 December 2011, p. 14.

[26] The *Sauerland Group* was a small cell of the *Islamic Jihadi Union* operating in Germany. Its members, two of whom were German converts, were arrested in September 2007 before they could carry out the major bomb attacks they had planned (see Malthaner 2014; Eijkman 2014).

This approach, however, ignores the fact that the comparatively low status of the issue of (organised) right-wing extremist violence at the time was not at all arbitrary or coincidental, but embedded in a specific context that in turn shaped the process of narrating the violent crimes. Moreover, the news media's critique of the authorities' focus on left-wing violence and Islamist terrorism is peculiar considering that before November 2011 they had narrated the 2004 bombing through the lens of "Islamist terrorism" and now also compare the NSU predominantly to the RAF in order to make sense of their idiosyncratic behaviour.

A narrative of "institutional racism" to describe the prejudiced attitude of the security authorities towards persons with a migration background (Green 2013: 346) is, however, almost entirely absent from the discourse until March 2012, despite the considerable attention that the verdict in the Stephen Lawrence case in the UK in January 2012 received in the German media.[27] One of the very few hints at this narrative is made by Peter Carstens in the *FAS*:

> Why did hardly anyone think of xenophobia? Was that so far-fetched in a country where dozens of foreigners and immigrants have been killed since 1990 because of their origin? For isolated cases one could have explained this with local bigotry. But the same investigation patterns can be found among the prosecutions and the police departments […] right across Germany. In addition, mistakes were made by the VerfS in Thuringia, Saxony and elsewhere. Was that still coincidence, institutional blindness or, in the worst case: institutional racism? (*FAS*, "Zerbrechliches Vertrauen", 26 February 2012, p. 12)[28]

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[27] See e.g. *SZ*, "Nationale Narbe", 5 January 2012, p. 10. The NSU is not referenced in this article, but a report about Breivik's contested schizophrenia is found directly below.
[28] *SZ*, "Entschlossen gegen Rassismus", 31 January 2012, p. 5 also hints at this narrative.

Indeed, the analysis in chapter 4 showed that the pre-November 2011 narrative patterns of the murder series and the 2004 Cologne bombing are very similar to the extent that all victims were "othered" as strangers and (potential) deviants and "hate of foreigners" was interpreted as non-political. The issue of institutional racism has received considerable attention in the German media since 2012 (see e.g. Bojadžijev 2013). Moreover, in April 2015 a collective of co-plaintiffs in the NSU trial, civil society activists, scholars and individual supporters published a report titled "Institutional Racism Exemplified by the Case of the Terror Group 'National Socialist Underground' (NSU)". The authors claim that the emergence and crimes of the NSU were not (primarily) due to a lack of information or cooperation between security authorities. Instead, institutional racism would be "a significant cause for the investigations into the individual actions of the NSU systematically being pursued in a false direction and for investigations being carried out against the victims and their families" (Daimagüler and Schellenberg 2015: 3; see also Koehler 2017: 158). They criticise that this structural disadvantaging of the victims as evidenced by the investigation reports and the findings of the first Federal Enquiry Committee on the NSU has not been (sufficiently) reflected on by the police and the VerfS, suggesting that other criminal cases might continue to be investigated in a one-sided manner (2015: 7-8). However, the authors do not address the complex relationship between the notions of "prejudice", "xenophobia" and "racism" as well as the fact that the distinction between "Germans" and "immigrants" and the distrust towards the latter continue to be evident in the media discourse beyond November 2011 (cf. chapter 5).

The final section before I conclude this chapter looks at how the metaphor of blindness is applied to the dynamic relations between the far-left, the far-right, extreme

left and extreme right inside and outside the German parliamentary system, and how this is connected to narrating one of the key consequences of the NSU affair: a new, but ultimately unsuccessful attempt to ban the NPD.

**Blurring the Boundaries: Narrating Democracy, Extremism and Violence**

Since governments and parliaments are in charge of steering and controlling the security authorities through the Ministries of the Interior and the Parliamentary Control Commissions, guilt and responsibility are also ascribed to political leaders and the government parties on the state and federal levels. A key dimension of this process is the (re-)negotiation of boundaries between democracy, extremism and violence. I first discuss the impact that the NSU story has on the position of the Left Party on the continuum between democracy and extremism and then move on to a closer analysis of the links that the media construct between the NPD, the (violent) right-wing extremist milieu and the NSU with a view to legitimising a new initiative to ban the NPD.

The Left Party between Democracy and Extremism

The narration of the relationship between the democratic parties and extremist movements on the left and right exhibits two conflicting narratives: The first one considers the far-left, represented by the Left Party, to be part of the coalition against the nationalist far-right (mainly referring to the NPD) and the extreme right-wing milieu that, so the assumption, bred the NSU. The Left is therefore a democratic element of the FRG's political system. The second narrative excludes the Left Party from the group of "good

democrats", but nevertheless considers the extreme right to hold a bigger threat potential. This discourse is embedded in a long-standing academic and political debate about Germany's (and Europe's) "double past" of fascism and communism and the question of whether contemporary right-wing extremism and left-wing extremism can and should be seen as equally threatening to democracy based on their radical ideas of inequality and equality respectively (Robertson-von Trotha 2011: 12; Jesse 2009; Müller 2015). Figure 7.2 below illustrates the position of the main German parties on the left-right/democracy-extremism continuum as espoused by the news media.
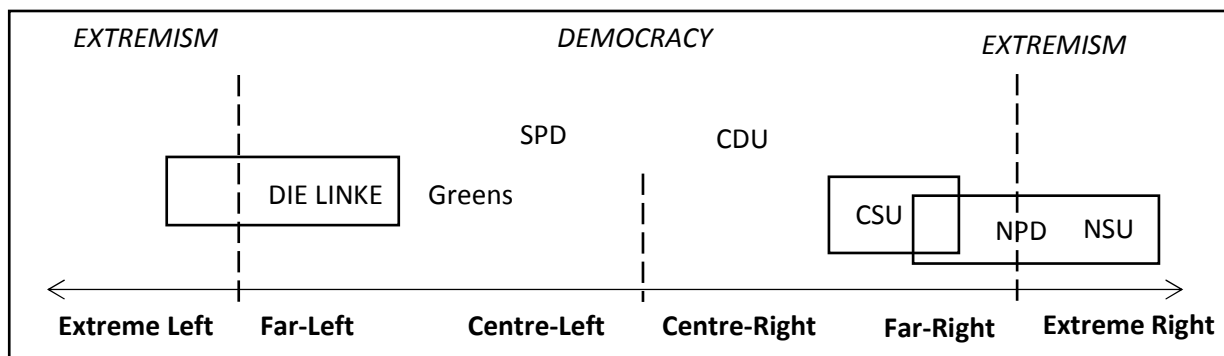


*Figure 7.2: Party Spectrum between Democracy and Extremism*

As regards the first, more inclusive narrative, the media emphasise that the initial response to the NSU is shaped by unity among the democratic parties of the *Bundestag*, including the Left Party. In the context of the parliamentary debate about the combating of right-wing extremism as a collective threat, *SZ* Berlin correspondent Susanne Höll writes that

> all parties and parliamentary groups had decided to abstain from mutual allocations of blame in the context of the combating of right-wing extremism and to send a signal of major democratic unity in the Bundestag on Tuesday. And as proof of that they could produce a rarity, namely a

> joint motion for a resolution of all five parliamentary groups regarding the fight against right-wing extremism. It may not contain any surprising demands; but that the CDU and CSU make common cause with the Left Party at all in terms of [political] content, is exceptional. (*SZ*, "Ein kurzer Moment der Einigkeit", 23 November 2011, p. 6)

Similar to how the opposition between victims and the NSU as perpetrators begins to be reinforced in mid-November 2011 with the consequence of (re-) homogenising the former as a group (cf. chapter 5), the opposition between the German democratic elite on the one hand and the extreme right on the other hand is emphasised. Prantl's (*SZ*) critique of the security authorities for its exaggerated focus on the Left Party contributes to this narrative:

> The VerfS will have to face a flood of critical questions: Among other things, it recently distinguished itself in Thuringia by keeping the Left Party and its MPs in the parliaments under surveillance. It has been observing people like the Thuringian Left politician and current opposition leader Bodo Ramelow excessively for years. It thus launched itself at the wrong subjects with a real lust for pursuit. (*SZ*, "Ein Blick in den tiefen Abgrund des Versagens", 15 November 2011, p. 2)

Prantl sees the focus on the extremist tendencies of the Left Party as unjustified because, as the NSU shows, the threat from the extreme right was much more immanent. In this concrete situation, the Left Party is accepted as democratic to the extent that it actively fights right-wing extremism, a policy that gains credibility because the NSU and the whole right-wing extremist milieu need be opposed *en bloc*. The NSU thus makes the commonality of the internally pluralist "democratic block" vis-à-vis the supposedly internally homogeneous "right-wing extremist block" visible (Borstel 2007: 278-280).

Since this is only a relative effect, there is nevertheless continued scepticism towards the Left Party. With reference to the increasing number of acts of violence committed against representatives of the Left Party, Berlin editor Markus Deggerich writes in the *Spiegel*:

> Meanwhile, disappointment about the behaviour of the other parties is spreading among the leaders of the Left. They are annoyed that the Union and the SPD are considering a Commission of federal and state representatives in order to clarify failures made in the hunt for the right-wing terrorists, but the Left is being excluded. "Even in the fight against the far-right we continue to be treated as the parliamentary pariah", Left MP and Vice President of the Bundestag, Petra Pau, complains. (*Spiegel*, "Schrauben locker", 2 January 2016, p. 23)[29]

However, this focus on the threat posed by right-wing extremists to members of the Left Party does not imply the media's support for the latter, but (also) constitutes a case of opportunistic story-telling. In fact, the narration of the political competition between the parties displays a tendency to support the centre-right forces, although the left-liberal *SZ* expresses some subdued criticism of defining the Left Party as undemocratic. Both the *SZ* and *FAZ/FAS* report that representatives of the Greens and the SPD accuse the conservative CDU/CSU of having focused too much on the threat posed by left-wing extremism and (therefore) of being "blind in the right eye". However, while the *FAZ* indicates that this is incorrect and downright absurd,[30] the *SZ* does not comment on it at

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[29] The Commission that took up its work in February 2012 and presented its report in April 2013 had four members, including two formerly high-ranking lawyers and a representative each from the SPD and CDU; Petra Pau was the Left Party representative in the first federal enquiry committee.

[30] E.g. *FAZ*, "Grüne bezichtigen die CSU", p. 6.; *FAZ*, "'Fokus zu sehr auf Linksradikale'", 15 November 2011, p. 4.

all.[31] In Hesse the SPD accuses the former Minister of the Interior (1999-2010) and, since 2010, Minister President Volker Bouffier (CDU) of having downplayed the right-wing extremist tendencies of Andreas Temme, suggesting that he was in the café *because* of his own right-wing extremist tendencies and hence is complicit in the murder after all (*FAZ*, "Tat in Kassel in neuem Licht?", 14 November 2011, p. 40). The following quote from an article by *FAZ* editor-in-chief Berthold Kohler illustrates how the *FAZ* and *FAS* in particular reject a conflation of the Christian Social Union (CSU) with the extreme right in Germany:

> What used to be called radical right-wing or right-wing extremist is often simply right-wing these days: "violence from the right", "right-wing terror", "the right-wing scene". […] It is easy enough to understand that the Left is celebrating the equation of right-wing with right-wing extremist as another triumph of its efforts towards narrowing the corridor of barely permissible opinions. But where are the admonishers who usually whip any relativisation? […] Doesn't anyone recognise the threat? Without a fully democratic buffer zone on the right, extremism would start just right of Angela Merkel. Should the CDU leader say: "Right of me is only the NPD? It's not just the Bavarian who dies laughing at this idea. (*FAZ*, "Rechts", 26 November 2011, p. 2)

Kohler is referring to a statement that Bavarian Minister President Franz Josef Strauß made in 1986 in response to the electorate success of the right-wing party Republicans (3%) that "there may be no democratically legitimised party right of the CSU", explicitly excluding the party from the camp of conservative-civil parties (Leggewie 1987).

The papers also observe that since the Left Party predominantly defines itself through its activism against the extreme right and the general response to the NSU is

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[31] E.g. *SZ*, "'Die CSU ist auf dem rechten Auge blind'", 15 November 2011, p. 30; see also the dispute between the CSU, the Bavarian VerfS and the AIDA Centre, e.g. *SZ* "Gericht rüffelt Verfassungsschützer", 16 November 2011, p. 51; *SZ*, "Landtag streitet über Mordserie", 2 February 2012, p. 50.

dependent on precisely this image of the non-democratic opponent, it sees itself as the

political winner of the debate. Thomas Darnstädt et al.[32] reflect on this in the *Spiegel*:

> So far only the supposedly so dangerous state enemies of the Left have
> benefited: The notoriously quarrelling comrades are thoroughly enjoying
> the status of being somehow unjustly persecuted. The fury with which the
> secret agents are pursuing their enquiry misses the point. Indeed there are
> radical splinter groups in the party who demand the overthrow of the
> ruling conditions. And their top politicians have to allow the question of
> whether they support such fantasies. But in contrast to the situation with
> the NPD, the VerfS does not have to dig into anything that is hidden from
> view – even the ideologically most dressed up debates take place publically
> and are very well documented in the forums, for example the Communist
> Platform. (*Spiegel*, "In schlechter Verfassung", 30 January 2012, p. 30)

The authors acknowledge that democratically elected parties, in particular the Left Party,

are not homogenous entities. The Communist Platform that is referenced here, a group

established in December 1989, has also been described by scholars as an extremist group

within the Left Party based on the criteria mentioned in chapter 2: an absolute claim to

truth, a clear friend-foe-distinction, dogmatism and an unwillingness to compromise

(Pfafferott 2012: 162-178), while others have attributed a "soft" form of extremism to the

party as a whole, despite its internal heterogeneity (Jesse 2009). At the same time, while

they support the observation of the Left Party, the papers do not consider it as a threat,

but belittle its claims to reformation and, in parts, overthrow of the current balance of

power in the FRG.[33] Domestic politics editor Jasper von Altenbockum (*FAZ*) emphasises

that both the Left Party and the NPD are, at least in parts, unconstitutional and hence

undemocratic:

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[32] This also includes Berlin editors Markus Deggerich, Hubert Gude and freelance author Catalina Schröder.
[33] See e.g. *FAZ*, "Linke bleiben unter Kontrolle", 3 February 2012, p. 58; *FAZ*, "Das Missverständnis", 2 March 2012, p. 10.

If the Left Party had its way, the VerfS would have to steer clear of the MPs of the NPD in the fight against right-wing extremism. MP is MP, after all, and when the Left Party claims for itself that the observation of its elected representatives is illegitimate, then the same should apply to everyone else. But not only for this reason did the Federal Administrative Court reject a case by MP Bodo Ramelow in July 2010. The Left Party is in parts […] an unconstitutional party. People who ignore this are useful idiots. […] The fact that the party's entire rage is now directed against Federal Minister of the Interior Friedrich, who had made the link to the NPD, only shows that the KPD-SED-PDS-Left Party sees itself only as a victim of history. But it is a perpetrator. (*FAZ*, "Täter", 25 January 2012, p. 8)

Von Altenbockum characterises the Left Party as the successor of both the KPD, which had been persecuted by the Nazi regime and was banned in the FRG in 1956, and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) that ruled in the GDR and was transformed into the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) in 1989/90. The latter merged with the party Labour and Social Justice – the Electoral Alternative (WASG) in 2007 to create the Left Party. This temporal dynamic and, von Altenbockum suggests, ideological continuity implies that the Left Party carries historical guilt for the crimes committed in the name of a left-wing extremist ideology, in particular under the SED regime, and that this guilt links it to extremist movements on the other side of the ideological spectrum.[34] Some authors in the left-liberal *SZ*, on the other hand, are critical of this approach. Editor-in-chief Kurt Kister, for instance, rejects the comparison between the Left Party and the NPD as a strategy to deal with the political present based on enemy images of the past:

The constantly recurring attempt, especially from within the ranks of the CSU, to move the Left Party and its alleged extremism potential close to

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[34] See also Minister of the Interior Friedrich's conflation of nationalists and left-wing extremists as "people who cannot deal with pluralism and tolerance", referencing co-founder of the RAF and attorney for the NPD in the 2001-2003 trial Horst Mahler, in *FAZ*, "'Nicht ablenken vom Problem des Rechtsextremismus", 23 January 2012, p. 4 (see also Pfahl-Traughber 2013).

the NPD, is an easy to see through political manoeuvre. The use of a secret service for the competition of opinions, however, clearly goes against the spirit of the constitution. […] For a long time the VerfS predominantly occupied itself with the fight against espionage, especially from the GDR, and with West German left-wing extremism. It is stuck in these times. (*SZ*, "Liebe Agenten: Die SED gibt es nicht mehr", 25 January 2012, p. 4)

In a sense, the complete "othering" of the NSU in combination with the partial re-inclusion of the victims as discussed in chapter 4, is mirrored here: The democratic consensus that exists with regards to "othering" the NPD and (violent) right-wing extremism does not imply the unreserved inclusion of the Left Party that stands at the opposite ideological end. This logic is also found in a *Spiegel* article by Markus Deggerich:

There are also many names of left-wing officials on the address lists that were recently found at the house of the Neo-Nazi murderers in Zwickau. Right-wing extremists also attack representatives of other parties, they injure foreigners, homosexuals, homeless people and police officers. But the Left is particularly often and particularly severely targeted by the hate of the right; not only because both sides partially compete for the same clientele, those who are disappointed and the losers of society. (*Spiegel*, "Schrauben locker", 2 January 2012, p. 22/23)

The conflation of the NPD and violent right-wing extremists on the one hand with the Left Party on the other hand in terms of the audience they address – "weak" members of German society – is worth noting because it again blurs the boundaries between democratic politics and violent extremism (see Jesse 2009). Overall, these narrative dynamics evoke the inclusion/exclusion mechanisms that were at work in the 1970s when an opposition was built between the democratic state and the RAF as terrorists, but also between the left-liberal and conservative public spheres (Balz 2007: 326-327).

The final sub-section shifts the focus to the right side of the political spectrum and looks at how the media narrate the relationship between the NPD as a (legitimate) party, the right-wing extremist scene and the NSU.

## The NPD as a "Dagger in Parliamentary Disguise"?

As shown above, the news media, in particular *FAZ* and *FAS*, ascribe extremist tendencies to the Left Party, but refrain from suggesting that far-left politics and left-wing extremist violence are directly connected. By contrast, the media see a close ideological and organisational link between the NSU as a right-wing terrorist group, the (violent) right-wing extremist scene, and the democratically elected NPD.

Founded in 1964 following the limited electorate success of the Socialist Reichs Party (1949-1952) and the German Reichs Party (1950-1965), the NPD has never been represented in the *Bundestag* (though it came close in 1969 with 4.3%), but has hundreds of seats in communal parliaments and entered seven state parliaments between 1966 and 1968, and more recently the parliaments in Saxony (2004 and 2009) and Mecklenburg Western Pomerania (2006 and 2011, no seats gained in the 2016 election).[35] The NPD's comparatively strong embeddedness in the German party landscape in

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[35] The figures are taken from the *Federal Office of Statistics*, URL: https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/de/ bundestagswahlen/downloads/bundestagswahlergebnisse/btw_ab49_gesamt.pdf (last accessed 14 August 2016) and the *State Offices of Statistics in Saxony*, URL: https://www.statistik.sachsen.de/wahlen/lw/ lw2004/presse/lwahl_22.htm; https://www.statistik.sachsen.de/wahlen/lw/lw2009/presse/LWL04709.htm (both last accessed on 14 August 2016) and Mecklenburg Western-Pomerania, URL: http://service.mvnet. de/wahlen/2006_land/htm/pdf/L_Mandate.pdf; http://www.mv-laiv.de/static/LAIV/Wahlen/Dateien/ Dokumente/Landtagswahlen/Ergebnisseite/LW%202011%20Analyse.pdf (both last accessed 14 August 2016).

combination with the constitutional status of parties in Germany (Art. 21 GG) make its alleged connections to the NSU a particularly contentious issue.

The media establish a connection between the NSU, the right-wing extremist scene and the NPD through two key elements of the conceptual network of violent action. The first one refers to the ideology and intentions that all of these actors, so the assumption, share. This is illustrated, for example, with reference to the NSU's claim of responsibility, the video, which is accompanied with music from right-wing extremist bands. One of these bands released the song "Kebab Killer" (*Döner-Killer*) in 2010, i.e. before the (re-)discovery of the NSU. In the *FAZ* political correspondent in NRW Reiner Burger comments on this as follows:

> "Kebab Killer" is the title of a song on the CD "Adolf Hitler is alive" in which the Band [Gigi and the Brown Town Musicians] clearly celebrates the serial murders of eight Turkish and one Greek business men as connected, xenophobic deeds of a "kebab killer" and delights in the fact that the authorities are hunting a phantom, the investigators "are going nuts because they cannot find him. He comes, he kills and disappears." […] In the past "Gigi and the Brown Town Musicians" appeared at different NPD events. And there are business connections too. One can purchase the CD "Brown is Beautiful" via the NPD-owned mail order company "German Voice" […]. (*FAZ*, "Auch böse Menschen kennen Lieder", 18 November 2011, p. 6)

Burger suggests that a right-wing extremist band that is closely linked to the NPD promoted the NSU's murder series, implying that all three of them address the same audience. Indeed, as discussed in chapter 6, some authors argue that the NSU's "propaganda of the deed" could only have been effective based on shared interpretative codes that lie outside the democratic realm. Free journalist Toralf Staud, author of several

books on right-wing extremism, considers this dynamic relation between words and deeds in the *SZ* Feuilleton:

> That the NSU terror cell saw itself as the extended arm of right-wing extremist preachers of hate is proven by their DVD of confession: "Deeds instead of words", they claim there. Among the supporters of the NPD, distancing and declarations of incompatibility are usually understood as ambiguous, tongue-in-cheek statements anyway. (*SZ*, "Tarnmanöver", 3 February 2012, p. 13)

According to Staud, the NPD and its followers agree that violent means to achieve political ends, in contrast to the party's official rhetoric, are acceptable. The NSU is the logical consequence of right-wing extremist movements that try to oppose a development in which Germany is moving increasingly further away from their ideal of an ethnic state.[36]

The media ascribe a specific role to the NPD in this context. Jürgen Dahlkamp et al.,[37] for example, write in the *Spiegel*:

> Might be that the Ultras of the Free Comradeships, who are not members of any party, hate without restraint and hit more brutally than the NPD. But without the NPD they would only be splinter and weirdo groups. Only the NPD pools the right-wing extremists, secures them nationwide prominence – and in the East also relevance as a regional party. Conversely the NPD is keen on being close to the guys on the street, their raw power that continues to show through as raw violence. It cannot surprise anyone, least of all the leaders of the NPD, that some of the putative supporters of the Zwickau Cell were or are in the party. (*Spiegel*, "Eine unerträgliche Partei", 13 February 2012, p. 34-35)

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[36] The *SZ* points out that this situation is different from the RAF context because the latter, so the story, was not organisationally or ideologically linked to a specific far-left party (e.g. *SZ*, "Der Hort der Terroristen", 19 November 2011, p. 4; *SZ*, "'Der Staat muss reagieren", 22 March 2012, p. 5).
[37] This also includes Germany editors Sven Röbel, Gunther Latsch and Holger Stark, Berlin office editor Andreas Wassermann, Dresden correspondent Maximilian Popp and Munich correspondent Steffen Winter.

The authors suggest that the NPD and the violent right-wing extremist scene depend on each other. This link has also been the object of several recent studies. Borstel and Heitmeyer's discussion (2012) of the interaction between "misanthropic mentalities, radicalised milieus and right-wing terrorism", for example, also claims that "[i]t is particularly important not to reduce the right-wing terrorism of the NSU to three individuals, but to analyse their embeddedness in the radicalised right-wing extremist milieus" (340-343; see also Malthaner and Waldmann 2014 and Koehler 2017). In their study of political parties and terrorist groups, Weinberg and Pedahzur (2013) include the NPD in an appendix of "[w]orldwide terrorist groups with affiliation to political parties", writing that "[f]requent acts of terrorism have been carried out in the NPD's name in Germany over the past few years" (2013: 133). By this they are probably referring in particular to Martin Wiese's group that planned the attack on the synagogue in Munich in 2003. The authors also mention that the People's Socialist Movement of Germany/ Worker's Party (VSBD/Pda) is an "offshoot" of the NPD (134). McGowan (2014) writes that "NPD membership marked the start of the socialisation in far-right politics for all three [members of the NSU] and rather quickly they chose to become pro-active members of the scene and engaged in criminal activity" (202), although to this day there is no evidence that any of them were actually party members.

The media ascribe the fact that the NPD is particularly strong in the East German states to a regionally specific weakness that makes people in the East "easy prey" for the party. Dahlkamp et al. continue their article as follows:

> And there are sweeps of the country where the NPD is indeed an authority.
> They are not in the West where the NPD has less than 500 members in a

state with eleven million residents like Baden-Wuerttemberg. But in the East it [the NPD] has seats in two state parliaments, Saxony and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt it only failed marginally. Here it particularly attracts the young men, their average age is below that of all parties in the Bundestag. And in an election survey in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in 2011 every fifth respondent said the NPD was a "party like all others". Seen from this angle even 3,000 [NPD activists] can be intolerable for a country of 82 million. (*Spiegel*, 13 February 2012, "Eine unerträgliche Partei", p. 35)

According to the authors, the NPD, the *Kameradschaften*, terrorist cells and the networks that connect them are not only elements of a "dangerous, right-wing extremist subculture", as the Minister President of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Erwin Sellering (SPD) puts it in the *BamS* ("Brauchen wir ein NPD-Verbot?", 20 November 2011, p. 5). They also attract people from outside this milieu who hold latent right-wing extremist views (Borstel 2007; Jesse 1999; Groh 2000). As indicated above, the party's electoral success has been limited, however. Freelance writer and expert on right-wing extremism Olaf Sundermeyer suggests in the *FAZ* Feuilleton that the NSU is a product of the party's failure to overcome the democratic system by parliamentary means:

The radical NPD sceptics from within the movement feel vindicated with every electoral defeat of the NPD. The aim of the party to abolish parliamentarianism through the parliaments is now merely a distant utopia. Germany is also developing into an exemplary democratic country of immigration, i.e. in a direction that is opposed to the one that the right-wing extremist scene follows. It imagines the *völkisch* state. The question remains what its members are ready to do for it. Beate Zschäpe, Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Böhnhardt took the step into terrorism [...]. (*FAZ*, "Die Neonazis wollen Taten statt Worte", 16 November 2011, p. 32)

In this specific context, NSU terrorism is thus indeed considered as a form of "violent politics", [38] but there is again no doubt as to its oxymoronic character: as discussed in chapter 6, politics in Germany can only be conceived of as *democratic* politics and therefore the imagination of an enemy rather than a political opponent and the use of violence to eliminate this enemy do not count as politics.

The second element that connects the NSU, the right-wing extremist milieu and the NSU according to the media are the supporters that enabled the NSU's life in the underground (see Koehler 2017: 145-147). This support network has implications for threat perceptions after the group's discovery in November 2011 and therefore also for the sense of closure associated with it. If the right-wing extremist scene, referring in particular to the *Kameradschaften*, accepted the NSU as acting on its behalf, the NSU may be an indication of more general dynamics of radicalisation rather than an exceptional phenomenon. The story of right-wing terrorism in Germany initiated by the surfacing of the NSU would not be concluded by the arrest of Beate Zschäpe and the suicides of Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Böhnhardt.

Already on 14 November 2011 Minister of the Interior Hans-Peter Friedrich is quoted in *BILD* as saying that

> "[i]t is without question a new dimension of right-wing extremist violence, which is why the Federal Prosecution is investigating based on the charge of the formation of a terrorist organisation. The investigations of the Attorney General and the Federal Criminal Police Office will certainly clarify quickly if there is a larger network behind the three known perpetrators.

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[38] Former constitutional judge Winfried Hassemer hints at this when he says that "[it] is possible that the right-wing extremist politics and the right-wing extremist crimes are two sides of the same brown coin" (*SZ*, "Der Staat muss reagieren", 22 March 2012, p. 5; see also *FAS*, "'Sogar ein Befehl zum Antrag'", 12 February 2012, p. R3).

(*BILD*, "Warum hat niemand die braunen Mörder gestoppt, Herr Innenminister?", 14 November 2011, p. 13)

The media subsequently report that a list of "enemies of the NPD" has been found in the house in Zwickau and that the NSU repeatedly met with NPD officials, taking part in right-wing commemoration marches together.[39] Moreover, two prominent members of the right-wing extremist scene are identified as supporters of the NSU soon after the group's discovery: the first one is the leader of the *Thüringer Heimatschutz* Tino Brandt who, as indicated above, worked as a Confidential Informant for the Thuringian VerfS and is suspected of having supported the NSU financially. The second one is former vice-chairman and press secretary of the NPD in Thuringia and member of the *Kameradschaft Jena* Frank Wohlleben who is accused of having organised the Česká weapon with which the NSU committed the murder series between 2000 and 2006.[40] Since Wohlleben is a former NPD official, the media take his relationship to the NSU as evidence for the transition from party politics to violent politics, even if his actions cannot be proven to be representative of the party as a whole. Reflecting on the media's right, and obligation, to publish a suspect's name in cases of serious violent crime (Presserat 2015: 7), Karlsruhe correspondent Wolfgang Janisch writes in the *SZ*:

> Wohlleben is – based on everything that is currently known – the first connecting link between the brown terror and the right-wing extremist

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[39] See e.g. *FAZ*, "NPD-Vorsitzender demonstrierte mit Terroristen", 14 December 2011, p. 1; *SZ*, "Schmutzige Papiere", 29 December 2011, p. 5; *BILD*, "Killer-Nazis hatte Kontakt zu NPD-Boss", 13 March 2012, p. 8; *FAZ*, "NSU schon 2002 in der Szene bekannt", 30 March 2012, p. 4.

[40] See e.g. *BILD*, "Welche Rolle spielt der Verfassungsschutz?", 12 November 2011, p. 12; *Spiegel*, "Das Netz der Bösen", 21 November 2011, p. 25-26; *SZ*, "Braune Hilfe", 21 November 2011, p. 5; *Spiegel*, "'Das System wegblasen'", 28 November 2011, p. 30-31; *SZ*, "Hakenkreuze am Tannenbäumchen", 29 November 2011, p. 5; *SZ*, "Gefährliche Nähe", 30 November 2011, p. 2; *FAZ*, "Ein Neonazi, landesweit bekannt", 30 November 2011, p. 3.

party. This means that his role points way beyond the criminal case to a legal and socio-political debate that has concerned Germany time and again for years. (*SZ*, "In eigener Sache", 3 December 2011, p. 46)

Janisch is referring to the first, ultimately failed attempt to ban the NPD, during which the prosecution also struggled to establish a direct connection between the actions of individual party members and the intentions of the party as a whole (Jesse 2003: 297). Wohlleben's role, the article suggests, supports the idea that the NPD is a "dagger in parliamentary disguise" as Andreas Zielcke puts it in the *SZ* ("Der Hort der Terroristen", 19 November 2011, p. 4).[41] Art. 21 (2) GG would therefore apply to the NPD:

> Parties that, by reason of their aims or the behaviour of their adherents, seek to undermine or abolish the free democratic basic order or to endanger the existence of the Federal Republic of Germany shall be unconstitutional. The Federal Constitutional Court shall rule on the question of unconstitutionality (Deutscher Bundestag 2012, original translation).

A second attempt to ban the NPD becomes increasingly central in the re-narration process over time. The connection between the NSU and former NPD official Wohlleben in particular provides the media with the opportunity to pick up on the story of the NPD ban that they had begun to tell almost a decade ago. The practice of banning parties (*Parteiverbot*) is specific to the German context and a key element of the country's self-understanding as a defensive democracy, based on a process of "learning from the past": Banning the NPD is legitimised as a pre-emptive step (*Wehret den Anfängen,* "nip it in the

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[41] There are also several articles that are critical of this approach, see e.g. *Spiegel*, "Im Teufelskreis", 5 December 2011, p. 33; *SZ*, "Zweifel an NPD-Verbotsverfahren", 5 December 2011, p. 6; *SZ*, "Innenminister ringen um NPD-Verbot", 8 December 2011, p. 1; *FAZ*, "Vierter mutmaßlicher Terrorhelfer gefasst", 12 December 2011, p. 4; *SZ*, "BKA dämpft Hoffnungen", 2 March 2012, p. 8; *FAZ*, "Innenminister wollen V-Leute aus NPD abziehen", 15 March 2012, p. 1-2.

bud"), building on the argument that if right-wing extremist thinking is not de-institutionalised on the party level, the NPD as an inherently violent organisation might become stronger and ultimately eradicate the democratic constitution of the FRG, comparable to the rise of the NSDAP in the 1920s that led to the demise of the Weimar Republic.[42] The provision for a party ban in Art. 21 (2) GG is therefore a key element of the post-WWII Basic Law, also because it enables Germany to manage its pluralistic party landscape that is itself a response to the totalitarianism of the Nazi regime.

In the aftermath of the first failed NPD ban in 2003, the initiative was criticised for considerably overestimating the threat potential emanating from the NPD and having damaged the party ban as an institution by pursuing it for an insignificant party (Jesse 2003: 298-299). *SZ* political editor Jan Bielicki nevertheless emphasises the threat potential of the NPD in context of the NSU case by causally linking the pardon of Count Arco for his murder of Kurt Eisner in 1919 – which he considers an expression of "a judiciary that is blind in the right eye" – with the "terrorist's" later career in the NSDAP ("Das Maß der Justiz", 19 November 2011, SV2). The NPD today, so Bielicky's story, abuses the principle of democratic pluralism that was created after the Nazi period, because it disguises anti-constitutionalism as social criticism and is therefore a threat to democracy itself. Dahlkamp et al.[43] write further in *Spiegel*:

> Bans are supposed to be the last protective shield of democracy, nothing less, but also not more than this. […] But paradoxically it is now in particular the Neo-Nazis of the NPD who profit from this Anti-Nazi-clause in

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[42] But see Uwe Volkmanns' text in the *FAZ* ("Freund und Feind", 1 December 2011, p. 7) for an argument against this comparability of the situation in 2011 with that of the 1920s.

[43] This also includes Germany editors Gunther Latsch, Sven Röbel and Holger Stark, Berlin office editor Andreas Wassermann, Dresden correspondent Maximilian Popp and Munich correspondent Steffen Winter.

the Constitution (*Spiegel*, "Eine unerträgliche Partei", 13 February 2012, p. 34).

Not attempting to ban the NPD would therefore be tantamount to simply accepting the acts of violence committed by the NSU as "common crime", which in turn would prolong the narrative of the state's complicity. The then President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany Dieter Graumann expresses this problem in an *SZ* guest contribution:

> It sounds like a monstrous absurdity and still remains a sad truth: The NPD enjoys the party privilege with all its advantages and in this way is calmly spreading its brown poison, tolerated and even subsidised by the state. […] And should the assumptions soon be proven to be true that the NPD, in whatever way, was connected to the right-wing terrorist Zwickau Cell, the National Socialist Underground, anything [but a ban] would be a betrayal of our basic values and of our democracy. The NPD, the political flag ship of the right-wing terrorists, needs to be sunk politically and legally and never be allowed to surface again. (*SZ*, "Wann – wenn nicht jetzt?", 18 January 2012, p. 2)

As a Jew who was persecuted by the Nazis, Graumann occupies a particularly strong discursive position in this context, and it is perhaps this fact that makes his rhetoric of destruction ("playing Battleship") more acceptable than if it had been used by someone else.

The necessity of an NPD ban is also inferred from the state's responsibility to protect immigrants as vulnerable minorities. Political correspondent Mike Szymanski (*SZ*), for example, quotes Bavaria's Minister of the Interior Joachim Herrmann (CSU) as follows:

> If a serious threat for people in our country was emanating from the circles of a party, "it would be a sufficient danger", Hermann said on Tuesday in Munich. "We do not want to wait for another January 1933", so Hermann

further with reference to the seizure of power by the National Socialists. Hermann is urging for a decision regarding the planned proceedings to ban the NPD before the summer. (*SZ*, "Herrmann will rasche Entscheidung über NPD-Verfahren", 4 January 2012, p. 34)

This, again, compares the NSU victims and, by implication, all persons with a migration background in Germany to the situation of the Jews and other minorities in the Weimar Republic in the early 1930s, providing the move towards a new NPD ban with a clear sense of urgency. Heribert Prantl (*SZ*) regards an NPD ban as necessary because the party is an indirect physical threat to immigrants:

A new effort towards a ban is not necessarily wrong – because the NPD functions as a flow heater for violence. Democracy can resist violent Neo-Nazis, an immigrant cannot. A ban of the NPD can therefore be pre-emptive victim protection. (*SZ*, "Staatsversagen", 17 November 2011, p. 4)

Since there is a political consensus that right-wing extremists represent Germany's historical and contemporary "Other", focusing on the NPD ban reinforces this Self/Other divide, but avoids having to address the relationship between the German state and the victim group directly. That is, the news media reinforce the Otherness of the immigrants as a group that, true to the country's normative political values of democracy and pluralism, needs to be protected from undemocratic, violent forces. "Immigrants", whose perceived difference from "us" formed the basis for the narration process before November 2011 and continues to be present after the discovery of the NSU, are seen from a discursive distance, through the definition of an opponent that the German state is responsible for combating. They are (still) not perceived as integral members of that state. Figure 7.3 illustrates this mediated relationship:
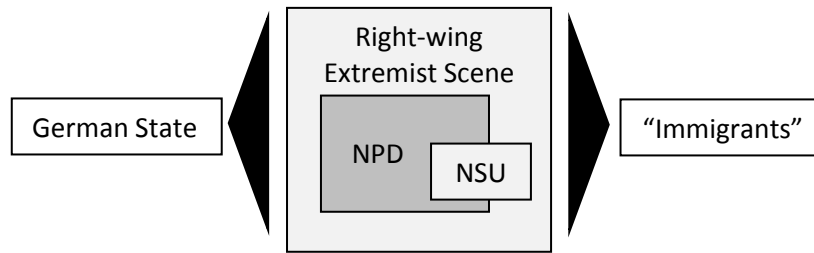
*Figure 7.3: The Mediated Relationship between the German State and Immigrants as espoused by the Media*

This again supports El-Tayeb's finding (2011, 2015) that persons with a migration background continue to be recognised through their perceived difference which is, on the one hand, seen as a sign of failed integration, and on the other hand as a precondition for making a legitimate claim to special protection against right-wing extremist violence by the state.

However, there are also doubts about the efficacy of an NPD ban, expressed in particular by the conservative papers *FAZ* and *FAS*. The argument is that a ban would not eliminate right-wing extremism or the widespread xenophobic and racist views in German society that partially express themselves in voter support for this party. It would, however, abolish the only form of institutionalised far-right politics that can be observed efficiently, thereby leading to more "blindness", and even more extreme successor parties might emerge.[44] Moreover, the papers suggest that the failure of a second attempt would imply a symbolic victory of the party, a risk that is not worth taking, especially to the extent that the German state is considered to be strong enough to face the NPD.[45] This winner/loser narrative in connection with the first attempt to ban the

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[44] E.g. *SZ*, "Bespitzeln statt verbieten", 15 November 2011, p. 4; *FAZ*, "Die Mörder und die NPD", 15 November 2011, p. 10; "Kuhfladen", 25 November 2011, p. 1; *FAS*, "Zwickau oder die Frage, wer wem half", 27 November 2011, p. 29; *FAZ*, "Zurückhaltend", 9 December 2011, p. 10; *Spiegel*, "Zählappell für V-Leute in der NPD", p. 19; *SZ*, "Schaden wenden, Verbot prüfen", 22 March 2012, p. 4.
[45] See e.g. *FAZ*, "Kein Zurück", 9 December 2011, p.10; *SZ*, "Recherchen bei Rechtsextremisten", 29 December 2011, p. 5; *FAZ*, "Die nächste Station", 15 March 2012, p. 10.

NPD has been criticised on the grounds that the failure was not due to an official declaration of the NPD's constitutionality, but procedural obstacles (Jesse 2003: 299). These previous debates, however, receive hardly any coverage.

On 21 March 2012 the news media report that a new collection of material to support a ban of the NPD has been agreed on by the State Ministers of the Interior, in conjunction with an agreement to withdraw Confidential Informants from the leading ranks of the party, but without prejudicing a decision about initiating legal proceedings for an NPD ban – a decision envisaged for 6 December 2012.[46] *FAZ* political editor in Berlin Majid Sattar cites two of the ministers as follows:

> The North Rhine-Westphalian Minister of the Interior [Ralf] Jäger (SPD) emphasised that a ban of the NPD should continue to be the goal of the efforts. If on the basis of the collected material proceedings could be initiated, they should be initiated. It would also be clear, however, that there could not be another failure. [The Interior Minister of Lower Saxony Uwe] Schünemann said, a repeated failure would be a "disaster beyond all expectations" [*Super-Gau*] and in its effects much worse than the possible decision of the Federation and the state not to initiate proceedings after all. (*FAZ*, "Ende für V-Leute in NPD-Führung", 23 March 2012, p. 4)

The anticipation of a failure of a second NPD ban for procedural (rather than substantial) reasons thus implies that political actors are keen to re-tell the story of the first failed ban by giving it a different ending after all. Ultimately, as Law Professor Uwe Volkmann, a regular *FAZ* commentator, also points out, the discourse about the NPD ban and the underlying dynamic of democracy and extremism, ideology and violence serves the

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[46] See e.g. *SZ*, "Mehr Wollen als Können", 21 March 2012, p. 6; *BILD*, "Innenminister gehen gegen NPD vor", 23 March 2012, p. 1; *FAZ*, "Ende für V-Leute in der NPD-Führung", 23 March 2012, p. 4; *SZ*, "Beweise für NPD-Verbotsantrag werden gesammelt", 23 March 2012, p. 6; *FAZ*, "NSU schon 2002 in Szene bekannt?", 30 March 2012, p. 4; *SZ*, "Zeitplan für NPD-Verbot", 30 March 2012, p. 6.

purpose of collective self-assurance ("we" are not the NSU, not the NPD, not the extremists) and of mediating between the German state and the victims (*FAZ*, "Freund und Feind", 1 December 2011, p. 7).

Following the unanimous decision by the Interior Ministries on 5 December 2012 and its confirmation by the Minister Presidents on 6 December 2012, a new ban was officially initiated by the *Bundesrat* (upper house) on 14 December 2012.[47] The motion was submitted to the BVerfG on 3 December 2013 and the proceedings opened on 2 December 2015. On 17 January 2017 the BVerfG ruled that the NPD is an unconstitutional party that seeks to abolish the liberal-democratic basic order and can be held accountable for the actions of its followers, even if they are not party members. According to the Court, however, the NPD is currently unable to achieve its political goals through parliamentary or non-parliamentary means, despite the fact that it achieves a terrorising effect in certain areas – to prevent this would be the task of the police and the judiciary (Bundesverfassungsgericht 2017). Both the NPD and the parties of the *Bundestag* see the verdict as a success – the former because it allows the party to continue its work without having to fear a new ban in the foreseeable future, the latter because it may provide the ground for making changes to the rules of party financing.[48]

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[47] In 2001 the ban had been initiated jointly by *Bundestag*, *Bundesrat* and the Federal Government.
[48] See *FAZ.net*, "Sind die Nazis wirklich so bedeutungslos?", 19. January 2017, URL: http://www.faz.net/ aktuell/politik/inland/kein-npd-verbot-ist-die-partei-wirklich-so-harmlos-14690347.html, and *ZEIT ONLINE*, "Ein Urteil, das Spielraum lässt", 17 January 2017, URL: http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2017-01/npd-verbot-bundesverfassungsgericht-richter-verfassungsfeindlichkeit (both last accessed 20 January 2017).

**Conclusion**

The findings of this chapter can be summarised as follows. First, the media's narration of the state's response to the violent crimes after the discovery of the NSU is based on an understanding of the NSU as a terrorist group due to its strategic behaviour, which separates it from right-wing "everyday terror". Nevertheless, this response is not defined in terms of counter-terrorism but as an (intensified) struggle against right-wing extremism in continuation of earlier political rhetoric and programmes. The image of Germany as a defensive, liberal-democratic and pluralist state is upheld by singling out the law enforcement authorities as the culprit.

Secondly, the media tell two different stories to explain why the security authorities were unable to bring together the search for the "Trio" as criminal extremists after their disappearance in 1998 and the investigation of the violent crimes since 2000. The first story suggests that if the authorities had assessed the radicalisation potential of the "Trio" correctly and categorised them as "terrorists", its transformation into the NSU and the post-2000 crimes could have been prevented. The blame is ascribed predominantly to the police and the VerfS in Thuringia and Saxony, drawing on a narrative of incompetence associated with East Germany that is rooted, so the papers, in the legacy of GDR dictatorship and reunification, leading to higher levels of extremist violence in the East *and* a local inability to adequately respond to it. Thuringia and Saxony are also accused of not having cooperated sufficiently through the federal security architecture. It remains unclear though to what extent policy measures that collect,

exchange and pool information about extremist milieus and offenders could prevent the emergence of groups like the NSU that operate across states in the future.

The second story suggests that if the authorities had assessed the violent potential of extremist milieus and dangerous persons correctly, the crimes could have been interpreted as "right-wing terrorism". In this context, the media question the integrity of the authorities with reference to the role played by VerfS agent Andreas Temme and the problematic system of Confidential Informants. This has since led to major reforms of the federal and regional VerfS, including a reorganisation of the system of Confidential Informants (Deutscher Bundestag 2015a). The most dominant narrative, however, is one of underestimation of right-wing extremists' capability to turn to "terrorism" (rather than "everyday terror") vis-à-vis left-wing extremists and Islamists. The latter two, it is suggested, shaped the German security agenda in the 1990s and 2000s due to the dominance of the conservative parties in government, the activity of the third generation of the RAF until 1998 and the political climate after 9/11. A narrative of "institutional racism", by contrast, is almost entirely absent from the papers until March 2012.

The discussion also showed that the narrative inclusion of the Left Party exhibits the same pattern as the re-inclusion of the victims as "*our* immigrants": it is opportunistic and temporary because the Left is an essential partner in credibly opposing the NSU, and right-wing extremists more generally, as a democratic bloc. While extremist tendencies are ascribed to the party, it is nevertheless not seen as a threat, in contrast to the nominally democratic far-right and the right-wing extremist milieu. However, it is striking that the liberal-conservative papers *FAZ* and *FAS* emphasise the Left Party's historical guilt and partial unconstitutionality, while the left-liberal *SZ* distances itself from such an

approach, and the *Spiegel* takes a middle ground position by suggesting that the party's political potential is generally exaggerated. This supports earlier findings that "the self-dramatization of those who fight and form coalitions against terrorism is quite often a means to divert attention from their own internal contradictions in their civil societies." (Frindte et al. 2011: 13)

By contrast, the papers agree that there is a dynamic interaction between right-wing extremist milieus, the NPD and the NSU as evidenced by right-wing extremist bands, the party's connections to the violent milieu, in particular in the East, and Ralf Wohlleben's previous NPD membership. A second attempt to ban the NPD, however, is contested: the left-liberal papers support the idea, pointing to a historical responsibility to protect Germany's democracy and minorities, which again reinforces their difference from "us". Journalists writing for the *FAZ* and *FAS* are sceptical. Overall, the political orientation of the papers thus comes much more to the fore when considering the dynamic relationships between democracy and extremism, ideology and violence than it did throughout the period September 2000 to October 2011 and also after November 2011 with regards to the narrative re-inclusion of the victims and the definition of the NSU crimes as "terrorism" or "political violence".

# CHAPTER 8

## CONCLUSION: THE NSU, THE PRINT NEWS MEDIA AND GERMANNESS

This thesis set out to make a contribution to understanding the implications of the NSU affair for contemporary Germany. It conceptualised the NSU as a narrative puzzle and asked what notions of Germanness are negotiated through the process of narrating the violent crimes attributed to the NSU throughout the period September 2000 to March 2012 in the national print news media, and what narrative resources this process draws on and why. So far, the NSU has been studied mostly from a journalistic or popular scientific point of view, while the few existing scholarly publications are mostly characterised by a lack of empirical data, a reliance on concepts and theories developed within the (German-dominated) field of right-wing extremism studies, and a focus on the question of which actors are responsible for the late discovery of the group. Authors have also tended to single out aspects that fall within their respective research area (e.g. the GDR past, immigrant integration, etc.), and there has been an overemphasis on November 2011 as a major turning point in neglect of the dynamics of interpreting violent crime over time.

By contrast, I argued that the media actively construct the "background" of the violent crimes through a process of narration and re-narration. In doing so, they draw on available narrative resources in order to locate perpetrators, victims and the relationship between them within German society. While the media's interpretation of the crimes changed from organised or petty "milieu crime" before November 2011 to an evaluation as a "German affair" after the discovery of the NSU, the narrative patterns and

mechanisms are strikingly similar, both synchronically and diachronically. Moreover, contrary to what public discourses have suggested, the re-narration process did not lead to a fundamental re-negotiation, but reinforcement of existing notions of Germanness. This thesis has therefore made a contribution to the empirical study of the NSU and the theoretical literature on narrative discourses of violent crime, in particular from the perspective of narrative criminology. This concluding chapter first discusses the empirical and theoretical findings in response to the two research questions in more detail before considering the limitations of this research and exploring avenues for further work.

**Empirical Findings and Contribution**

Chapters 4 to 7 presented the analysis of the empirical material which included 1,061 news articles on the NSU and its violent crimes that were published in six German newspapers and news magazines. Chapter 4 looked at the process of narrating the 2000-2006 murder series, the 2004 Cologne bombing and the 2007 (attempted) murder during the period September 2000 to October 2011. I argued that the narration of the murder series and the bombing reveal the same patterns, drawing on hegemonic stories associated with the tropes "deviant foreign milieus" and "Muslims as perpetrators": the Otherness of the stranger is combined with the Otherness of the deviant to locate the crimes firmly within the immigrant milieu and outside mainstream German society. Moreover, the crimes are defined as the expression of immigrants' unwillingness or inability to integrate into German society. Only when the victims are considered as hard-working, friendly individuals does a narrative of personal innocence become visible and

their victimisation is attributed to their (inadvertent) membership in the milieu. In both cases the dominance of this difference-deviance-nexus is further corroborated by the media's reluctance to define the assumed criminal behaviour of ethnic Germans as the expression of a larger socio-political problem (e.g. agents being in cahoots with their informants or racist attitudes), but as exceptions to otherwise "normal" individuals. In addition, stories of "immigrants", and more specifically "Muslims" in case of the bombing, as perpetrators rather than victims leads to the non-application of the labels "political violence" and "terrorism", although a terrorising effect of the crimes on the (local) Turkish community is identified. These labels are also absent in the narration of the 2007 murder, although the victim is identified as as a representative of the state and hence as "one of us", while her innocence is reinforced with reference to her identity as a young woman. The general suspicion towards "immigrants" as criminal deviants becomes visible here as well.

My analysis of the narrative process before November 2011 confirms some of the key findings of Virchow, Thomas and Grittmann's study (2015: 33, 56, 72), including the media's willingness to follow the investigators' interpretations, their speculative reporting and general one-sidedness in their narration of the 2000-2006 crimes. However, my findings go considerably beyond that of the authors because they build on a comparison between the murder series, the 2004 Cologne bombing *and* the 2007 (attempted) murder as only this can reveal how a repertoire of cultural stories and crime scripts shape the stories that the news media tell. Moreover, the analysis of the pre-November 2011 media stories prompts the following question that the literature has not yet addressed: how do the media re-narrate their own stories in light of the discovery of the NSU? I argued that

this discovery results in the integration of the three unresolved detective stories into a new NSU story with the aim of providing the former with a conclusion that is acceptable after all.

Chapter 5 showed how the newly emerging NSU story is narrated as a "German affair" that involves the negotiation of the Otherness of "immigrants" (as opposed to "Germans"), "Easterners" (as opposed to Westerners) and "right-wing extremists" (as opposed to "democrats") vis-à-vis each other. While the narrative focus shifts away from the violent crimes as individual events and towards the Trio-turned-NSU as actors, the group's (re-) discovery does not radically alter the media's attitude towards the 2000-2006 victims. Their narrative re-inclusion in the German collective as "*our* immigrants" who are in need of protection is merely a function of the process of "othering" the right-wing extremist perpetrators in a nominally tolerant and characteristically pluralistic society. This process draws on a story of immigrants as vulnerable victims that exists in parallel to stories of immigrants as perpetrators.

An emphasis on the reality of parallel worlds and crime committed by "immigrants", however, remains and serves to justify a narration of the crimes as milieu crime in hindsight. This ambivalent approach to the victims is also reflected in the competition of two narratives to explain the belated discovery of the NSU. The first one is a narrative of success. It suggests that there was a collective inability to imagine organised violence against minorities by ethnic Germans because membership in the German collective is based on key political values such as democracy and pluralism, not ethnicity. The second one is a narrative of failure. It identifies a collective unwillingness to acknowledge and respect Germany's ethnic and cultural diversity which fosters anti-

immigrant sentiments and promotes violence. Finally, the chapter also showed that the radicalisation of the "Trio" and the murder of Kiesewetter in 2007 are attributed to the continued potential for deviance in East Germany and of East Germans, thereby bringing a third "Other" into the narrative process that was absent before November 2011.

In chapter 6 I argued that the label "terrorism" that was very marginal in the news stories before November 2011 becomes a key narrative resource after the discovery of the NSU. It fulfils several functions by transporting a feeling of urgency and terror in the present, thereby promoting an interpretation of the NSU crimes as an "attack against all of us". It also makes the NSU comparable to other offenders whose violence has been labelled "political" and/or "terroristic", in particular the West German left-wing terrorist group RAF and the lone right-wing terrorist Anders B. Breivik in Norway. In this context, the re-interpretation of the crimes as a form of "political violence" moves the focus from the perpetrators' motives to their intentions in order to renegotiate their victims' position within German society and assess the NSU's identity as violent actors. Is the absence of claims of responsibility during their campaign due to the group's inability or unwillingness to communicate their demands to a wider audience? Or was it their intention to only communicate messages to the immigrant community and/or the right-wing extremist scene? The dominant story is that the NSU did not have a sensible political programme, but simply wanted immigrants to leave the country, and this does not require extended propaganda. While they may have considered themselves to be politically motivated and to aim at political change in German society, Germany's status as a country of immigration, so the media, is non-negotiable in principle and sub-state violence as a tool to bring about change is by definition undemocratic. Therefore no communicative

process between perpetrators and the wider German society could develop. Comparatively few authors contribute to a narrative that suggests that German society did not interpret the crimes as political or terroristic violence before November 2011 because there was a lack of identification of "the Germans" with "immigrants".

The media thus conceptualise NSU violence as "flawed" terrorism. On the one hand, they acknowledge that the perpetrators' perceived themselves as politically motivated and acting with political intentions. On the other hand, they define their crimes as non-political in a democratic context, but nevertheless consider them to be politically consequential because they physically attacked a minority group and violated the normative boundaries of the German state and its society. It is also striking that the media use the NSU as a tool for coming to terms with the RAF as a "never ending story" (Berendse and Cornils 2008: 9; Colvin 2009: 11). This illustrates the manifold ways in which journalism does memory work by (re-)remembering the past through the present and making sense of the present through the past.

Chapter 7 turned to the relationship between the NSU and the German state. It found that the media create four narratives to explain why the security authorities were unable to recognise the "Trio" as (potential) terrorists already in the 1990s, to apprehend them after they had gone underground in 1998 *and* to ascribe the violent crimes committed since 2000 to the group. These include a narrative of incompetence that reinforces the difference-deviance-nexus with regards to East Germanness; a narrative of federal complexity; a narrative of complicity between security agents and Confidential Informants in the right-wing extremist scene; and a narrative of underestimation of the threat potential posed by right-wing extremists vis-à-vis left-wing extremists and Islamist

terrorism. All of these are reflected in the metaphor of "blind in the right eye" that has dominated public discourses of the NSU since November 2011. I also argued that the Left Party is only included in the circle of "good democrats" to the extent that this facilitates the "othering" of the NSU and right-wing extremism in general. In particular authors writing in the *FAZ* and *FAS* nevertheless ascribe an extremist potential to the party, but do not see it as a threat to Germany's democratic order. The NSU, the NPD and right-wing extremist organisations such as the *Kameradschaften*, by contrast, are defined as belonging to the same dangerous extremist milieu, differing only in their strategies for pushing through their ideology. In this context, a renewed (but ultimately unsuccessful) attempt to ban the NPD becomes dominant in the media discourse. The social-liberal *SZ* and *Spiegel* clearly welcome such a development, suggesting that not recognising the party's promotion of violent right-wing extremism would mean to underestimate the damage done by the NSU and the continued threat posed to vulnerable minorities. The conservative *FAZ* and *FAS* criticise this plan by arguing that a ban would abolish the only institutionalised and hence controllable platform for right-wing extremist politics, potentially resulting in more "blindness" without combatting right-wing extremist thinking. The papers thus reflect different approaches to how democratic boundaries in German politics should be defined and how vulnerable the state, German society and minority groups within it are to extremist movements.

Contrary to what one might expect, the narrative crisis situation after November 2011 therefore does not lead to a fundamental re-negotiation of notions of Germanness. Instead, existing ones are reinforced through the construction of a hierarchy of "'Others' within" and a confirmation of the hegemonic stories associated with them: "immigrants",

"East Germans" and "right-wing extremists". The news media try to make sense of the collective failure to interpret the murders and bombing(s) committed by the NSU "correctly" without having to radically question its strong self-image as an open, tolerant, pluralistic and democratic society and state. The narrative re-inclusion of the victims and simultaneous upholding of the difference-deviance-nexus, the selective use of the stories connected to the label "terrorism" as a form of political violence, the Left Party's partial inclusion in and simultaneous exclusion from the circles of "good democrats", and the narration of the NSU as an "all-German affair" in combination with a pronounced narrative of the "weak East" are products of this process.

The media discourses show that ethno-cultural criteria and the suspicion towards those who embody "difference" continue to be important for defining membership in the collective of "Germans". At the same time, there is outspoken criticism of xenophobia and racism. This contradiction signals the continuing process of normalisation that Germany is undergoing. The country appears to be struggling to find a balance between the perpetually incomplete process of working through its past, negotiating its German identity and making sense of its status as a reunified country of immigration. This multidimensional struggle expresses itself in very mundane ways: the dynamics of everyday story-telling, in particular as they relate to violent crime.

These findings add considerable depth to current academic debates about the NSU and help to correct false or overly generalised statements that have been made in this context such as the following: "As long as the law enforcement agencies speak of migrant milieus and so-called kebab murders, journalists write about migrant milieus and kebab murders, including the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* [*Zeitung*],

the *Spiegel*" (Haller 2013b: 9, original emphasis). My analysis shows, among other things, that the reasons for narrating the 2000-2006 crimes before November 2011 in this particular way are much more complex than this author suggests and that the media's willingness to follow the authorities' interpretations is only one factor. It also reveals that the FRG's main three "'Others' within" that have accompanied its post-WWII and, in particular, post-reunification history cannot be studied in isolation from each other as their Otherness is relative, not absolute, and the cultural stories to which they are connected interact with each other in multiple ways. The negotiation of notions of Germanness continues to crystallise around these three discursive figures.

**Theoretical Findings and Contribution**

I began this thesis with a review of how the academic literature has conceptualised the overlaps and interactions between different categories of violent crime and to what extent the notion of "narrative" has been employed in this context. The review showed that although scholars, in particular narrative criminologists, have begun to reflect on the narrative construction of violent crime and its implications for the negotiation of both personal and collective identities in recent years, this area of research is still in need of further theoretical work in order to fully account for dynamic processes of (re-)narrating and (re-)categorising acts of violent crime, especially over extended periods of time. Since this thesis focused on print news media discourses of the NSU for the reasons outlined in chapter 1, I turned to Paul Ricœur's textual hermeneutics and narrative theory to develop an integrative framework for the analysis of textual stories of (small-scale) violent crime. I

did so by combining his work on the relationship between narrative texts, time and identity with insights from (narrative) criminology, journalism and media studies. I showed how print news media texts construct the "Germans" as an imagined (news) community and draw on various narrative resources, in particular tropes and the repertoire of cultural stories connected to them, to narrate violent crime in an institutionalised environment.

Ricœur's exploration of the link between texts, narrative and identity is, arguably, not unique and draws heavily on the work of other hermeneutic philosophers and narrative scholars. However, he develops a particularly integrative approach to these and other concepts, including the semantic autonomy of action and text, the conceptual network of action, actors' motives and intentions, the importance of audiences for the social dimension of action as well as the directedness and followability of stories. This allowed me to conceptualise the highly complex and barely researched case of the NSU as a narrative puzzle because it functioned as a golden thread. Moreover, by anchoring Ricœur's work further in narrative criminology, I was able to broaden the spectrum of narrators of violent crime based on extensive empirical material – a stated aim of narrative criminologists that had hitherto not been pursued actively. I did so by combining Ricœur's work with other insights from the discipline, e.g. the complexity and ambiguity of offenders' stories and the dominant use of tropes, and applying it to journalists as story-tellers and journalistic texts instead of interview data.

The empirical analysis reflected these theoretical assumptions, demonstrating that a limited, actor- and context-specific inventory of cultural stories, often indicated by the use of tropes that are key to the negotiation of Germanness such as "deviant foreign

milieus" and the "brown East", compete with each other in the process of narrating the violent crimes attributed to the NSU. Ricœur's work helped me to show that the news media as an institutionalised audience appropriate violent crimes through the lens of their own belonging and how they construct the "background" – the relationship between the "who", "what" and "why" – of violent crimes themselves by making assumptions about offenders' motives, intentions and relationship to the victim as well as the victim's identity and how the offender-victim-relationship is situated within German society. These findings corroborate the idea that phenomena of violence and crime – themselves two highly contested concepts – are socially constructed, and that this construction simultaneously reflects and produces collective identities.

Further integrating the complexities of narrative theory into the study of violent crime, both within and outside the emerging discipline of narrative criminology, can help scholars to understand how and why discourses of violent crime and the categories connected to them are so dynamic. It may also enable researchers to explore further how different audiences – including victims, witnesses, the media, law enforcement authorities and academics – interact with each other and offenders themselves when it comes to the interpretation of acts of violent crime, and what impact these interactive processes have, for example, on the construction of databases and statistics.

**Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

Time and space restrictions meant that this thesis could only look at one discursive space among others, the national print news media, and specifically at a selection of six

newspapers and news magazines. It builds on previous, but much less comprehensive studies of the portrayal of the NSU crimes in German and Turkish national and regional print news media. To grasp the full implications of the NSU as a narrative puzzle it would be useful to study other sources that narrated the violent crimes now attributed to the NSU throughout the period 2000 to 2012 and beyond, in particular papers with a (more) explicit left- or right-wing orientation as well as broadcast media, and to place these within the context of Germany's transition into a reunified country of immigration. As a narrative puzzle the NSU offers scholars the opportunity to study how (narrative) discourses are created, distinguished, merged and transformed over time.

An analysis of narrative discourses of the NSU for the period since November 2011 in the news media and elsewhere – from political speeches and online chat fora to protocols of the police' investigations (if and when declassified) as well as films and theatre plays about the NSU – could elaborate on the narrative patterns that I have introduced in this study. The destruction of security files in 2011 and 2012, the (ongoing) work of the various parliamentary enquiry committees since January 2012 and the trial against Zschäpe and supporters since May 2013 have added many more events to the complex NSU story. This has resulted in what may be termed a "serial moral panic" that continues to prevent the NSU from being given narrative closure. The NSU will therefore continue to be of considerable interest for scholars, both within and outside narrative studies.

Finally, this thesis deliberately provided the names of journalists and guest authors that shaped the narrative process in order to make clear the man-made nature of the stories told, even if authors and readers are detached from each other as Ricœur

suggests. It is striking that only a handful of journalists narrated the events that were integrated into the NSU story after November 2011. The 2004 Cologne bombing, for example, was mainly narrated by Hans-Jörg Heims for *SZ* and by Peter Schilder for *FAZ*, and the 2007 police murder was covered by Bernd Dörries for *SZ* and by Rüdiger Soldt for *FAZ*. It is, moreover, "the [West] German-born academic middle class", as Virchow, Thomas and Grittmann put it in their study (2015: 66), that dominates the narrative process: of the 108 journalists cited in this thesis, only 3 can easily be identified as having a migration background (*FAZ* editor Majid Sattar and *BamS* authors Aysun Bektas and Kazim Dogan), while only 5 of the 117 authors were born in East Germany (*SZ* and *Spiegel*) and 23 of the 114 authors identifiable by their full name are female; 22 hold a PhD. Considering that journalists' identities are one key element of the construction of a collective narrative identity in (print) news media discourses, this information, which is often lost when we speak of media discourses in general terms, deserves to be considered in greater detail. The background information provided in appendix 4 could form a basis for further investigation into the role that journalists, as individual story-tellers operating in an institutionalised environment, play for (long-term) processes of narration and re-narration, in particular with regards to acts of violent crime.

Since the beginning of the influx of refugees into Germany in the summer of 2015, discourses of Germanness have become even more heavily politicised. There has been an upsurge in right-wing extremist protests and violence against asylum seekers and their homes, in particular in the East German states. A general distrust towards refugees – not least because of the terrorist threat associated with them after the attacks in Würzburg, Reutlingen and Ansbach in July 2016 and the thwarting of an attack planned by a Syrian

refugee in Chemnitz in October 2016 – exists in parallel to perceptions of refugees' alleged vulnerability. As this thesis has shown, the notions of distrust and vulnerability are closely connected to the long-term process of integrating "immigrants" into German society, of transforming the "them" into an "us".

Considering that the NSU victims with a migration background are considered as "strangers" throughout the period 2000 to 2012, despite the fact that most of them were resident in Germany for decades and, in two cases, held German citizenship, the prospects for the integration of refugees appear to be dire, in particular if they continue to be seen as an abstract, supposedly homogeneous group vis-à-vis the "Germans". The "refugee crisis" has also further fuelled the power struggle over what it means to be democratic and how German democracy can be protected most efficiently, centring on the emergence of the right-wing populist AfD. Connected to this is the increasing divide between the Turkish community and the German mainstream society in light of President Erdoğan's growing power. The roots of this lie in the perception of long-term social (and media) exclusion of the Turkish community in Germany which Erdoğan is responding to with his identity politics. After the failed military coup d'état in Turkey, however, the Turkish community is also divided internally. It is hoped that this thesis has provided insights that can help to respond adequately to the current situation. Clearly, the NSU, narrative discourses of violent crime and Germanness deserve to be studied further.

# APPENDIX 1

## LIST OF KEY EVENTS

| | |
|---|---|
| 26 January 1998 | "Trio" goes underground |
| 18 December 1998 | Robbery of a Supermarket in Chemnitz (Saxony) |
| 6 October 1999 | Robbery of a Post Office in Chemnitz (Saxony) |
| 26 October 1999 | Robbery of a Post Office in Chemnitz (Saxony) |
| 9 September 2000 | Murder of Enver Şimşek in Nuremberg (Bavaria) |
| 30 November 2000 | Robbery of a Post Office in Chemnitz (Saxony) |
| 19 January 2001 | Bomb Explosion in a Grocery Shop in Cologne (NRW) |
| 13 June 2001 | Murder of Abdurrahim Özüdoğru in Nuremberg (Bavaria) |
| 27 June 2001 | Murder of Süleyman Taşköprü in Hamburg |
| 5 July 2001 | Robbery of a Post Office in Zwickau (Saxony) |
| 29 August 2001 | Murder of Habil Kılıç in Munich (Bavaria) |
| 25 September 2002 | Robbery of a Savings Bank in Zwickau (Saxony) |
| 23 September 2003 | Robbery of a Savings Bank in Chemnitz (Saxony) |
| 25 February 2004 | Murder of Mehmet Turgut in Rostock (MWP) |
| 14 May 2004 | Robbery of a Savings Bank in Chemnitz (Saxony) |
| 18 May 2004 | Robbery of a Savings Bank in Chemnitz (Saxony) |
| 9 June 2004 | Bomb Explosion in a Shopping Street in Cologne (NRW) |
| 9 June 2005 | Murder of İsmail Yaşar in Nuremberg (Bavaria) |
| 15 June 2005 | Murder of Theodoros Boulgarides in Munich (Bavaria) |
| 22 November 2005 | Robbery of a Savings Bank in Chemnitz (Saxony) |
| 4 April 2006 | Murder of Mehmet Kubaşık in Dortmund (NRW) |
| 6 April 2006 | Murder of Halit Yozgat in Kassel (Hesse) |
| 5 October 2006 | Robbery of a Savings Bank in Zwickau (Saxony) |
| 7 November 2006 | Robbery of a Savings Bank in Stralsund (MWP) |
| 18 January 2007 | Robbery of a Savings Bank in Stralsund (MWP) |

| | |
|---|---|
| 25 April 2007 | Murder of Michèle Kiesewetter and attempted murder of Martin Arnold in Heilbronn (Baden-Wuerttemberg) |
| 7 September 2011 | Robbery of a Savings Bank in Arnstadt (Thuringia) |
| 4 November 2011 | Bank robbery in Eisenach (Thuringia) |
| | Suicide of Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Böhnhardt in Eisenach (Thuringia) |
| | House Explosion in Zwickau (Saxony) |
| 8 November 2011 | Beate Zschäpe turns herself in to the police in Jena (Thuringia) |
| 23 February 2012 | Official Commemoration Ceremony for the NSU victims in Berlin |
| 6 May 2013 | Beginning of the trial against Zschäpe and NSU supporters at the Higher Regional Court in Munich (Bavaria) |
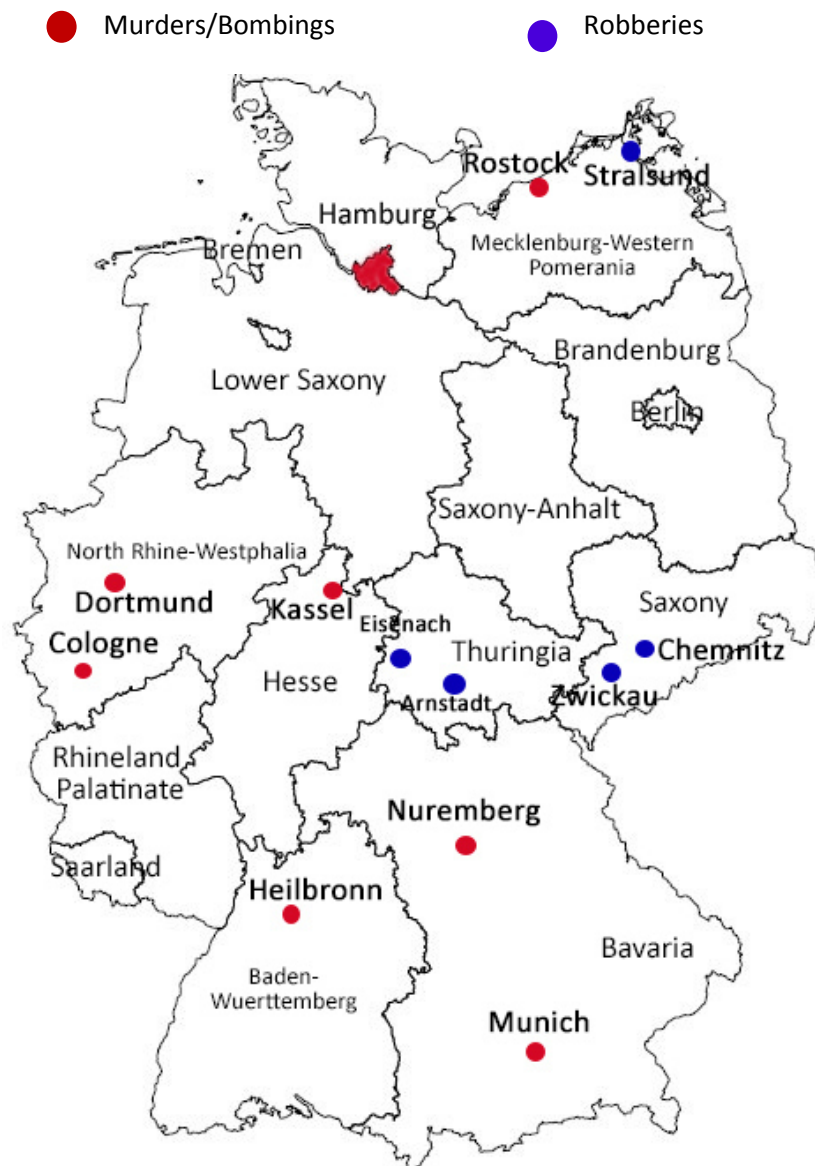
# APPENDIX 2

## ARCHIVAL WORK – LIST OF SEARCH TERMS

| THE CRIMES | PERPETRATORS |
|---|---|
| Döner | NSU / Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund |
| Döner-Morde / Dönermorde | Zwickauer Zelle |
| Döner-Mordserie | Zwickauer Trio |
| Überfall Zwickau / Sparkasse Zwickau / Filiale Zwickau | Rechte Terrorzelle |
| Überfall Chemnitz / Sparkasse Chemnitz / Filiale Chemnitz | Rechter Terror |
| Phantom Heilbronn | Uwe Böhnhardt / Böhnhardt |
| Polizistin Heilbronn | Uwe Mundlos / Mundlos |
| | Beate Zschäpe / Zschäpe |

| MURDER VICTIMS | | |
|---|---|---|
| Enver Şimşek / Şimşek | **INVESTIGATION** | |
| Abdurrahim Ozudoğru / Ozudoğru | Soko Halbmond / Sonderkommission Halbmond | |
| Süleyman Taşköprü / Taşköprü | Soko Bosporus / Sonderkommission Bosporus | |
| Habil Kılıc / Kılıc | Soko Sprengstoff / Sonderkommission Sprengstoff | |
| Mehmet Turgut / Turgut | Soko Parkplatz / Sonderkommission Parkplatz | |
| İsmail Yaşar / Yaşar | Mordkommission Café / Café | |
| Theodoros Boulgarides / Boulgarides | ABO Trio / Aufbauorganisation Trio | |
| Mehmet Kubaşık / Kubaşık | | |
| Halit Yozgat / Yozgat | **PLACES** | **OBJECTS** |
| Michelle Kiesewetter / Kiesewetter | Holländische Straße | Wattestäbchen |
| Martin Arnold / Martin A. | Eisenach | Wohnwagen |
| | Heilbronn | Ceska / Česká |

| KEY POLITICANS | |
|---|---|
| Sebastian Edathy / Edathy | Barbara John |

# APPENDIX 3

## TEXT CORPUS

| YEAR | MONTH | Number of articles | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | SZ | FAZ | FAS | BILD | BamS | Spiegel |
| 2000 | September | 2 | | | | | |
| 2001 | June | 1 | | | | | |
| | August | 1 | | | | | |
| | September | 2 | | | 1 | | |
| | November | 1 | | | | | |
| 2002 | April | 1 | | | | | |
| | October | 2 | | | | | |
| 2004 | June | 8 | 5 | | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| | July | 4 | 4 | | 2 | | |
| | September | 1 | | | | | |
| | October | | | | 1 | | |
| 2005 | June | 10 | 1 | | | | |
| | July | 1 | | | | | |
| | December | 1 | | | | | |
| 2006 | April | 4 | 7 | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | June | | 1 | | | | |
| | July | 2 | 2 | | 2 | | 2 |
| | August | 2 | | | 1 | | |
| 2007 | March | 3 | | | | | |
| | April | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | |
| | May | 4 | | | | | 1 |
| | June | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| | August | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| 2008 | January | 1 | | | 1 | | |
| | February | | 2 | | | 1 | |
| | March | 2 | 1 | | | | 1 |
| | April | 2 | 2 | | 2 | | |
| | May | | 1 | | | | |
| | August | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| | December | 1 | | | | | |
| 2009 | January | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| | February | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | |
| | March | 3 | 6 | 2 | 5 | | 1 |
| | April | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| | December | 1 | 2 | | 2 | | 1 |
| 2010 | January | | 1 | | | | |
| | March | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| | April | 1 | | | | | |
| | August | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| 2011 | February | 2 | 1 | | | | 1 |
| | August | 1 | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TOTAL 09/2000-10/2011 | | 76 | 46 | 6 | 27 | 6 | 13 |
| | | | | | | | 174 |
| 2011 | November Includes: | 111 | 101 | 21 | 88 | 12 | 9 |
| | transition 8-11 Nov | 4 | 4 | -- | 4 | -- | -- |
| | 12 November only | 2 | 2 | -- | 3 | -- | -- |
| | December | 80 | 56 | 13 | 25 | 4 | 11 |
| 2012 | January | 64 | 29 | 7 | 14 | 3 | 10 |
| | February | 63 | 41 | 6 | 18 | 3 | 6 |
| | March | 37 | 34 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 6 |
| TOTAL 11/2011-03/2012 | | 355 | 261 | 52 | 154 | 23 | 42 |
| | | | | | | | 887 |
| TOTAL | | 431 | 307 | 58 | 181 | 29 | 55 |
| | | | | | | | 1,061 |

# APPENDIX 4

## LIST OF AUTHORS[1]

| Name | Job description | Personal and professional background | pages |
|------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| **Süddeutsche Zeitung** | | | |
| Bisky, Jens | Senior Feuilleton Editor | *1966 Leipzig, GDR; oldest son of PDS/The Left politician and MEP Lothar Bisky; degree in Cultural and German Studies and PhD in Art History; Feuilleton editor at *Berliner Zeitung*; since 2001 *SZ* Feuilleton editor, responsible for non-fiction and audiobooks as well as reports relating to cultural politics and Berlin; has published several books on contemporary German history and Heinrich von Kleist | 286, 287 |
| Blechschmidt, Peter | *former* Parliamentary Correspondent | *1948 Dusseldorf, NRW; parliamentary correspondent for *Stern* in Bonn and editor-in-chief for German services at news agency *Reuters*; 1989-2004 *SZ* managing editor in Munich; 2004-2012 *SZ* parliamentary correspondent in Berlin; 2013 spokesperson for the FDP and editor-in-chief for its party magazine *elde*; since 2014 managing partner of Blechschmidt Metschan Communication PR Agency in Berlin | 264 |
| Braun, Stefan | Parliamentary Editor | *1964; PhD in Political Science (Free University of Berlin); trainee, editor-in-chief and 1999-2005 correspondent in Bonn and Berlin for *Stuttgarter Zeitung*; 2006-2008 editor at *Stern*; since 2008 *SZ* parliamentary editor in Berlin; focus on Angela Merkel, the CDU/CSU and, since 2013, on German foreign policy, the Greens and the Federal Ministry of the Interior | 213 |
| Bielicki, Jan | Political Editor | Parliamentary correspondent for the *Deutsche Allgemeine Sonntagsblatt*, *Woche* and *Stern* in Bonn and Berlin; since 2001 *SZ* political editor | 257, 258, 322, 323 |
| Deininger, Roman | Political Editor for Baden-Wuerttemberg | *Ingolstadt, Bavaria; freelancer writer for *Donaukurier*; degree in Political Science, American Studies and Theatre Studies (Munich); PhD in Political Science (University of Vienna); worked for the national and foreign news desks of the *FAZ*; internship at *dpa* in Washington DC; *SZ* trainee and | 176 |

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[1] Guest authors are highlighted in bold.

| | | correspondent for the Franken region; now political correspondent for Baden-Wuerttemberg and editor for "Page Three"; since 2014 also editor for politics/Feuilleton of the *SZ* weekend issue | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dörries, Bernd | NRW Correspondent | *1974 Stuttgart, Baden-Wuerttemberg; degree in Political Science (Tübingen, Berlin, New York); trainee at *SZ* (Dusseldorf, Munich, Berlin); 2004-2009 Baden-Wuerttemberg correspondent in Stuttgart; since 2010 NRW correspondent in Dusseldorf | 160, 164, 168, 224 |
| **Davutoğlu, Ahmet** | *former* Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs | *1959 Konya, Anatolia, Turkey; degree in public administration and PhD in Political Science and International Relations (Boğaziçi University, İstanbul); 1993-1999 researcher at Marmara University; 1999 Professor at Beykent University, Istanbul; 1995-1999 columnist for daily *Yeni Şafak*; 2003-2009 chief advisor to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan; 2009-2014 Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs; 2014-2016 Prime Minister of Turkey and leader of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) | 216 |
| Drobinski, Matthias | Home Affairs Editor | *1964; degree in History, Catholic Theology and German Studies at the Universities of Gießen and Mainz; journalistic training at Henri-Nannen-School of Journalism in Hamburg; 1993-1996 editor for biweekly ecumenical newspaper *Publik-Forum* as well as *Die Woche*, *Hessian Broadcasting Corporation* (HR) and *NDR*; since 1997 *SZ* home affairs editor in Munich, responsible for church and religious communities | 244 |
| Fahrenholz, Peter | Deputy Head of the Bavaria Department | Head of "mobile life and supplements" department and deputy head of Bavaria department | 210 |
| **Foroutan, Naika** | *former* Research Lead at the Humboldt University Berlin | *1971, Boppard, Rhineland Palatinate; family lived in Iran and moved back to Germany in 1983; degree in Political Science, Romance and Islamic Studies at the University of Cologne; PhD in International Relations at the University of Göttingen, supervised by Bassam Tibi; 2006-2009 Lecturer at Free University of Berlin; 2008-2015 principal investigator on the project "Hybrid European-Muslim Identity Models" (HEYMAT); since 2011 leader of the research group "New Islam-related Topics in Germany" (JUNITED) at Humboldt University Berlin; since 2014 Deputy Director of the | 200, 201 |

| | | Berlin Institute for Empirical Integration and Migration Research (BIM) and leader of the research area "Integration Research and Social Policy"; since 2015 Professor for Integration Research and Social Policy at Humboldt University Berlin | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fried, Nico | Parliamentary Correspondent in Berlin | *1966 Ulm, Baden-Wuerttemberg; MA degree in Political Science (Hamburg and Munich); has been living in Berlin since 1996, working for *Berliner Zeitung*; since 2007 head of the *SZ* Parliament Office in Berlin; since 2000 *SZ* parliamentary correspondent with focus on German foreign policy, the then PDS, the Greens and, since 2004, the SPD | 287 |
| Fuchs, Florian | *former* Local News Reporter | *1982; degree in Political Science, History and Communication Studies (Munich); worked for online desks, magazine publishing houses and the *SZ* as a student; writer for two newspapers in Ghana; *SZ* traineeship and reporter for the local news section (police and society); now managing editor of the *SZ* local news section | 224 |
| **Graumann, Dieter** | *former* President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany | *1950, Ramat Gan, Israel; 1952 move to Frankfurt/Main; degree in Economics from the University of Frankfurt/Main and Law at King's College London; 1979 PhD on the European Monetary Union, followed by a position at the economics department of the German Bundesbank; 2010-2014 President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany; since 2013 Vice President of the Jewish World Congress | 323, 324 |
| Heims, Hans-Jörg | *former* NRW Correspondent | *1963; 2002-2003 editor for the *SZ* NRW edition in Dusseldorf; 2003-2009 *SZ* NRW correspondent in Dusseldorf; 2010-2011 *SZ* Managing Editor; 2011-2014 head of communications at real estate company Vivawest; since 2015 head of the media department within the communication division of special chemicals company EVONIK industries | 145, 146, 147, 149, 150, 153, 155, 156 |
| Höll, Susanne | *former* Parliamentary Correspondent in Berlin | *Kassel, Hesse; degree in Political Science and Economics; worked for the European Commission in Brussels; *Reuters* correspondent in Bonn, Vienna, Warsaw and Moscow; 2000-2004 *SZ* parliamentary editor; 2005-2007 *SZ* senior editor of the news desk in Munich; 2008-2013 parliamentary correspondent in Berlin; since 2014 head of the *SZ* Frankfurt/Main Office, reporting from | 198, 225, 287, 289, 290, 308 |

| | | Hesse, Rhineland Palatinate and Saarland | |
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| Janisch, Wolfgang | Karlsruhe Correspondent | *1960, Baden-Wuerttemberg; 1987 degree in Law; Journalism Studies at the University of Mainz and reporter for *Mainzer Rhein-Zeitung*; 1989 reporter for *FAZ*; 1992-1993 visiting student at Yale Law School; 1995-1996 *Ulmer Südwest Presse*; 1997-2009 *dpa* correspondent at the BVerfG and BGH in Karlsruhe; since 2010 *SZ* Karlsruhe correspondent | 298, 321 |
| Käppner, Joachim | Domestic Politics Editor | *1961 Bonn, NRW; 1980-1985 degree course in History and Political Science at the University of Bonn; 1982-1983 freelance author for *Bonner General-Anzeiger*; 1986-1987 German School of Journalism in Munich; freelance author for *ZEIT Magazine* and *profil*; 1992-1998 editor and reporter for *Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt* in Hamburg; 1998 PhD in History at the Research Centre for Contemporary History Hamburg; since 1999 *SZ* editor with focus on security policy; 2002 deputy head of the *SZ* domestic politics department; 2006-2010 head of the local news desk; has published several books on WWII and the Holocaust | 128, 139, 140, 141, 298 |
| **Kermani, Navid** | Scholar and Writer | *1967 Siegen, NRW; wrote for the *Westfälische Rundschau* as a teenager; degree in Oriental Studies, Philosophy and Theatre Studies at the Universities of Cologne, Cairo and Bonn; 1998 PhD and 2006 Postdoctoral Qualification (*Habilitation*) in Oriental Studies at the University of Bonn; 1996-2000 Feuilleton writer for the *FAZ*; 2000-2003 Fellow at the Berlin Institute for Advanced Studies; 2006-2009 member of the German Islam Conference; 2009-2012 Senior Fellow at the Institute for Cultural Studies Essen (NRW); regular contributor for *Spiegel* and *DIE ZEIT*; 2015 Peace Prize of the German Book Trade; works as freelance writer in Cologne | 251 |
| Kister, Kurt | Editor-in-chief | *1957 Dachau, Bavaria; 1978-1983 degree course in History, Political Science and Communication Studies (Munich) and training at the German School of Journalism in Munich; worked for the *SZ* Dachau local news room, news agencies and the *ARD Tagesschau*; 1983-1988 *SZ* domestic politics editor with focus on security and defence politics; 1989-1991 *SZ* (deputy) head of the | 313 |

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| | | "Page Three" department; 1991-1996 *SZ* correspondent in Washington DC; 1996-1998 head of the *SZ* foreign policy department; 1998-2004 head of the parliamentary office in Bonn/Berlin; 2005-2010 *SZ* deputy editor-in-chief; since 2011 *SZ* editor-in-chief | |
| Kohl, Christiane | *former* Reporter for East Germany | *1954 Frankenberg, Hesse; degree course in German Studies, Politics and History at University of Gießen; worked for *Gießener Anzeiger* and the *Kölner Express* as political correspondent in Bonn; 1986-1988 press officer for the Ministry of Environment in Hesse; 1988-1998 *Spiegel* Italy correspondent and deputy head of the Germany II department; 1999-2004 *SZ* Italy correspondent and research on German war crimes in Italy; 2005-2013 *SZ* reporter for Thuringia, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt; published six books between 1997-2005, one of which was adapted for German cinema and another one for German TV; currently freelance writer and manager of a family country hotel in Hesse | 176, 231, 234, 262, 265, 284 |
| Leyendecker, Hans | Head of the Investigative Research Department | *1949 Brühl, NRW; traineeship at *Stader Tageblatt* and freelance journalist in Eichstätt, Bavaria; degree in History; local editor, news editor and reporter at *Westfälische Rundschau* in Dortmund; 1979-1997 *Spiegel* NRW correspondent in Dusseldorf, office manager in Bonn, columnist and head of the special unit department in Hamburg; focus on domestic politics and secret services; since 1997 *SZ* senior political editor and later head of the investigative research department; member of the advisory board of Transparency International; one of the most prominent investigative journalists in Germany (e.g. 1982 Flick Affair; 1994 Plutonium Affair; 1999 CDU donation scandal; 2009 script affair); has (co-) authored several books | 186, 206, 213, 234, 237, 238, 242, 250, 251, 254, 262, 264, 265, 267, 268, 284, 287, 294, 296, 297, 303 |
| Prantl, Heribert | Head of the Domestic Politics Department and Editor-in-chief | *1953 Nittenau, Bavaria; 1974-1979 degree course in Law, History and Philosophy at the University of Regensburg and parallel training as a journalist; 1981 Second State Examination in Law; 1982 PhD in Law, followed by a career | 197, 198, 199, 200, 220, |

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| | | as state attorney and judge in Bavaria; 1988 *SZ* domestic politics editor; 1992-1995 deputy head and since 1995 head of the *SZ* domestic politics department; since 2002 visiting lecturer in Law at the University of Bielefeld; since 2011 *SZ* editor-in-chief; left-liberal orientation with focus on the interaction between law, politics and morality | 238, 277, 280, 281, 282, 296, 300, 301, 308, 309, 324 |
| Przybilla, Olaf | Northern Bavaria Correspondent | *1972 Wertheim, Baden-Wuerttemberg; grew up in Bavaria; degree in German Studies, History, Political Science and Sociology at the Universities of Erlangen-Nuremberg and Heidelberg; Lecturer in Modern German Literature and Literary History at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg; since 2001 *SZ* correspondent for northern Bavaria; since 2008 head of the *SZ* Office for the Franken region in Nuremberg | 124, 125, 129, 132 |
| Richter, Nicolas | *former* Investigative Research Editor | *1973 Geneva, Switzerland; degree in Law (Munich and Paris); worked for the New York office of the German news agency *dpa* and the *ZDF*; *SZ* traineeship; *SZ* author in the foreign policy department with a focus on international (criminal) law and counter-terrorism; 2009-2012 editor for the *SZ* investigative research unit; since 2013 *SZ* correspondent in Washington DC | 234, 250, 251, 262, 265, 287 |
| Schmitz, Thorsten | "Page Three" Reporter | *1966 Frankfurt/Main, Hesse; degree in Political Science and Sociology at the University of Frankfurt/Main and training at the German School of Journalism in Munich; editor and reporter for the *SZ* "Page Three" department and *SZ Magazine*; 1998-2009 *SZ* Israel correspondent; since 2010 again reporter for the *SZ* "Page Three" department, writing also for other *SZ* departments | 198 |
| Schneider, Jens | *former* Northern Germany Correspondent | *1963 Hamburg; 1991-1996 *SZ* foreign policy editor with focus on the Balkans; 1996-2005 *SZ* correspondent for Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia based in Dresden; 2005-2007 *SZ* parliamentary correspondent in Berlin; 2008-2012 *SZ* northern Germany correspondent in Hamburg; 2013 *SZ* correspondent for Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland in Frankfurt/Main; since 2014 *SZ* correspondent for Berlin, Brandenburg and Mecklenburg- | 285 |

| | | Western Pomerania | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Schultz, Tanjev | *former* Domestic Politics Editor | *1974 Berlin; MA in Philosophy, Psychology, Communication Studies, Political Science and German Studies at the Free University of Berlin, the Distance University Hagen and Indiana University Bloomington; PhD in Political Science at the University Bremen; research associate at University of Bremen, amongst others working on a study of identities of Turkish immigrants; several scholarly publications in sociology; worked as freelance and guest journalist during and after his university studies for different media, including *Spiegel*, *Tagesspiegel* and *WDR*; 2005-2011 *SZ* editor with a focus on educational and higher education politics; since 2012 *SZ* domestic politics reporter with a focus on the NSU, the enquiry committees and the trial in Munich; (co-) author of several extended research projects for the *SZ*; since 2016 Professor of Journalism at University of Mainz; has (co-) authored several books | 297 |
| Staud, Toralf | Freelance Journalist | *1972 Salzwedel, Saxony-Anhalt; worked for an info paper of the oppositional *Neue Forum* and the *Altmark Zeitung*, both in Saxony-Anhalt; 1998 Diploma in Journalism and Philosophy at the Universities of Leipzig and Edinburgh; worked as freelance journalist for different media, including *AP*, *Central German Broadcasting* (MDR), *Sächsische Zeitung*, *Neues Deutschland*, *tageszeitung* and *DIE ZEIT*; 1998-2005 political editor for *DIE ZEIT* in Hamburg and Berlin and senior editor of *DIE ZEIT* right-wing extremism portal *netz-gegen-nazis.de*; now freelance journalist and writer; (co-)author of several books about reunification, right-wing extremism and climate policy | 316 |
| Szymanski, Mike | *former* Political Correspondent for Bavaria | *1977 Bremen; worked for the *Norddeutsche*, a local edition of the *Weser Kurier* (Bremen); degree in Journalism Studies and Political Science at the Free University of Berlin; freelancer at *Berliner Zeitung*; wrote for *Frankfurter Rundschau* before his *SZ* traineeship in 2003; 2005-2009 *SZ* correspondent in Augsburg, Bavaria; 2010-2014 *SZ* political correspondent for the Bavaria editorial office; since 2015 *SZ* correspondent for Turkey, Greece and Cyprus | 292, 324 |

| von Bullion, Constanze | Parliamentary Correspondent | *1964 Munich, Bavaria; degree course in History; author and reporter for various daily newspapers, including *Tagesspiegel*; 1999-2004 *SZ* correspondent for Berlin and Brandenburg; since 2004 *SZ* Berlin correspondent with a focus on the Federal President, the Left Party and family policy | 187, 188, 189, 286 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wimmer, Susi | -------------------- | ------------------------------------------------------------ | 141, 210, 224 |
| Winkler, Willi | Feuilleton author and writer | *1957 Sittenbach, Bavaria; degrees from Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich and University of Missouri; German translations of John Updike, Anthony Burgess, Saul Bellow and Keith Richards; editor for *Merkur* and *DIE ZEIT*, and head of the culture department at *Spiegel*; since 1998 *SZ* Feuilleton author with a focus on book and film reviews and (polemic) commentaries; has published several books, including a standard volume on the RAF (2007) | 227, 247 |
| Zielcke, Andreas | Feuilleton author | *1943 Königsberg, Prussia (today Kaliningrad, Russia); PhD in Law; author for *Spiegel*; 2000-2007 head of the *SZ* Feuilleton in Munich; continues to work as *SZ* Feuilleton author | 196, 241, 321 |
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## Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung / Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung

| Anhalt, Utz | Freelance Writer | *1971 Hanover, Lower Saxony; 2000 MA in History and Political Science at the University of Hanover; since 2000 editor for *sopos*, a socialist online magazine; 2007 PhD in Zoology at the University of Hanover; several publications and TV documentaries on the interaction between humans and animals and related concepts (e.g. social Darwinism, racism) | 249, 250 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Becker, Wibke | -------------------- | ------------------------------------------------------------ | 246 |
| Bingener, Reinhard | *former FAZ* Political Editor | *1979 Regensburg, Bavaria; degree course in Protestant Theology at Universities of Halle-Wittenberg, Chicago and Munich; research associate at Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich; 2008 *FAZ* political editor; since 2014 political correspondent in Hanover, responsible for Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Bremen as well as the protestant church in Germany | 234 |
| Burger, Reiner | *FAZ* Political Correspondent in NRW | *1969 Konstanz, Baden-Wuerttemberg; internship with *Südkurier*; 1996 Diploma in Journalism Studies, History, Political Science | 246, 315, 316 |

| | | and Art History at Catholic University Eichstätt and Drake University Des Moines, Iowa; 1999 PhD in Political Science; 1998-1999 *FAZ* traineeship; 2000 *FAZ* news reporter; 2001-2009 *FAZ* political correspondent in Saxony; since 2009 *FAZ* political correspondent for NRW; received the Saxon Constitutional Medal for his services to the liberal-democratic development of the Free State | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Carstens, Peter | *former FAZ* Parliamentary Correspondent in Berlin | *1962 Cologne, NRW; MA in History, Political Science and Philosophy at universities in Vienna, Paris and Berlin; 1991-1994 Senate Chancellery in Berlin; 1994-1996 *FAZ* news reporter; 1997-2001 correspondent for Saxony; 2001-2013 *FAZ* parliamentary correspondent in Berlin; since 2014 parliamentary correspondent for the *FAS* | 258, 278, 302, 305 |
| Frasch, Timo | *former FAZ* Trainee | *1979 Illertissen, Bavaria; 1999-2005 degree studies in Political Science, History and Romance Studies at the Universities of Würzburg and Bonn; internships in the entertainment department of the *Bunte* and the sports desk of *Bavarian Television* (BR); guest author for the *FAZ* news desk; 2006-2007 *FAZ* traineeship; 2008-2012 author for *FAZ* politics desk; 2012-2014 author for *FAS* politics desk; since 2014 *FAZ/FAS* reporter for Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland | 135, 136 |
| Geyer, Christian | *FAZ* Senior Editor in the Non-fiction Books Department | *1960 Aachen, NRW; degree course in Philosophy, History and German Studies at the Universities of Bonn and Cologne; traineeship and higher educational politics editor at *Welt*; since 1992 *FAZ* Feuilleton editor, first for the humanities supplement, now senior editor of the "new non-fiction books" department; has edited several books on Niklas Luhmann, bio politics, brain research and freedom of the will | 219 |
| H., G. | -------------------- | ------------------------------------------------------------ | 241, 242 |
| Holl, Thomas | *former FAZ* Political Correspondent in Wiesbaden | *1960 Mainz, Rhineland-Palatinate; MA in German Studies, History and Journalism Studies with a dissertation on victims in German detective novels at the Free University of Berlin; internships at *Weser Kurier* and *Radio Bremen*; (freelance) author for *Neue Zeit* (Berlin), traineeship at *FAZ* and other media; 1995 *Welt* politics reporter and later senior editor for Berlin/Brandenburg; 2001-2003 political editor for *FAS*; 2003 | 169 |

| | | political editor for *FAZ*; 2007-2014 *FAZ* political correspondent in Wiesbaden, responsible for Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland; 2014 senior political editor for *FAZ online* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jäger, Lorenz | *former FAZ* Feuilleton Editor | *1951 in Bad Homburg, Hesse; Diploma in Sociology at the Universities of Frankfurt/Main and Marburg; 1985 PhD in German Studies at the University of Frankfurt/Main; lecturer in Japan and teaching fellow at the University of Stanford; 1997-2015 *FAZ* Feuilleton editor; since 2015 head of the *FAZ* humanities department; has authored and edited several books on modern history of ideas and images | 253, 263, 264 |
| Kaube, Jürgen | *former* Head of the *FAZ* Feuilleton Humanities Department | *1962 Worms, Rhineland-Palatinate; degree course in Philosophy, German Studies, Art History and Economics (Free University Berlin); assistant in Sociology at University of Bielefeld; since 1992 author for the *FAZ* Feuilleton; 1999-2000 correspondent in Berlin; 2000-2008 *FAZ* Frankfurt/Main office with focus on (higher) educational politics; 2008-2011 head of the *FAZ* humanities department; 2012 head of the *FAZ* "new non-fiction books" department and deputy Feuilleton head; since 2015 general editor | 269, 270 |
| Klaubert, David | *former FAS* "Life" Editor | *1983; degree course in Journalism Studies and Latin American Studies at Catholic University Eichstätt; *FAZ* traineeship and editor for the *FAS* "Life" department; since 2014 political editor for *FAZ online* | 173, 177, 184 |
| Kohler, Berthold | *FAZ* Editor-in-chief | *1961 Marktredwitz, Bavaria; degree course in Political Science at the University of Bamberg and London School of Economics; 1988-1989 *FAZ* traineeship; 1989 author for the *FAZ* politics department; 1991-1999 *FAZ* correspondent for central and southeast European countries based in Prague and Vienna; since 1999 *FAZ* editor-in-chief; 2009 and 2010 participant at Munich Security Conference | 310, 311 |
| Krüger, Karen | *former FAZ* Feuilleton Editor | *1975 Marburg, Hesse; High School Diploma in Istanbul; degree course in History, Sociology and Romance Studies at universities in Bielefeld, Berlin and Bordeaux; member of the postgraduate programme for social history at University of Bielefeld; several research stays in Africa and publications about the Ruanda | 220, 222 |

| | | Genocide; research associate at Humboldt University Berlin on a project about Africa's past and present; freelance journalist for different newspapers; 2006-2008 *FAZ* traineeship; 2008-2011 *FAZ* Feuilleton and travel editor; since 2012 *FAS* Feuilleton editor in Berlin | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger, Sabine** | *former* Federal Minister of Justice (FDP) | *1951 Minden, NRW; first (1975) and second (1978) state examination in Law; 1978 entry into the FDP (left-liberal wing); 1979-1990 German Patent Office in Munich; 1990-2013 MdB; since 1991 member of the FDP federal executive board; since 1993 member of the FDP Presidium; 1992-1996 (CDU/CSU-FDP coalitions under Helmut Kohl) and 2009-2013 (CDU/CSU-FDP coalition under Angela Merkel) Federal Minister of Justice; 2000-2013 FDP chair in Bavaria | 191, 255, 256 |
| Lohse, Eckart | *former* Head of the *FAS* Berlin Office | *1963 Göttingen, Lower Saxony; degree course in Political Science, Modern History and Romanic Philology at the University of Bonn; PhD in History at universities in Paris and Munich; local news reporter for different newspapers during his studies; *FAZ* traineeship; 1994 *FAZ* political news editor; 1996-2002 *FAZ* parliamentary correspondent in Bonn and Berlin; 2003-2014 head of the *FAS* Berlin office, since 2015 for the *FAZ*; 2004-2008 member of the board of the Federal Press Conference; has co-authored several books on federal politics and was "Journalist of the Year" (*Medium Magazine*) together with Markus Wehner in 2011 | 203 |
| Minkmar, Nils | *former FAS* Feuilleton Editor | *1966 Saarbrücken, Saarland; German and French citizenship; degree course in Modern History at the University of the Saarland; 1996 PhD in Modern History at the University of the Saarland and EHESS Paris; 1997 editor for *ZDF* programme "Willemsens Woche"; freelance journalist for *SZ*, *Geo* and *Merian* (reportage/travel); 1999-2001 editor for *DIE ZEIT*; 2001-2011 *FAS* Feuilleton editor; 2012-2013 head of the *FAZ* Feuilleton; 2012 "Cultural Editor of the Year" (*Medium Magazine*); 2014 *FAZ* cultural correspondent for Europe; since 2015 *Spiegel* author | 292, 294 |
| Müller, Claus Peter | *FAZ* Correspondent for Northern | *1960; degree course in Journalism Studies and Political Science; since 1991 *FAZ* political editor and correspondent for northern Hesse | 173, 177, 189, |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | Hesse and Thuringia | and Thuringia based in Kassel; focus on social and health policy | 223, 232, 283, 284, 287, 295 |
| Müller, Reinhard | *FAZ* Political Editor | *1968 Walsrode, Lower Saxony; 1988-1993 degree course in Law and History at the University of Münster; 1993 first state examination in Law; 1996 PhD in International Law at Technical University of Dresden; junior lawyer at the department for GDR injustice of the Public Prosecution in Dresden, the press office of the Saxon Ministry of the Interior, the University for Administrative Sciences in Speyer and the UN headquarters in New York; 1997 second state examination in Law; since 1998 *FAZ* political editor with a focus on legal affairs and domestic politics; since 2008 senior editor of the "state and law" page; since 2012 also senior editor for "current affairs" | 281 |
| **Nehm, Kay** | *former* Federal Attorney General | *1941 Flensburg, Schleswig-Holstein; 1971 second state examination in Law; 1972 state prosecutor in Kiel; 1973 research associate at Federal Prosecutor's Office in Karlsruhe; 1978 assistant to constitutional judge Walter Rudi Wand; 1980 senior state prosecutor at the Federal Prosecutor's Office; 1988 promotion to Federal Public Prosecutor; 1991 judge at the Federal Court of Justice; 1994-2006 Federal Attorney General; now retired; no party affiliation | 293 |
| **Nešković, Wolfgang** | *former* Federal Judge and MdB for the Left Party | *1948 Lübeck, Schleswig-Holstein; 1974 first state examination in Law at the University of Hamburg; 1975-1977 research assistant at the University Hamburg and junior lawyer; 1977 second state examination; attorney at the Higher Regional Court Schleswig; 1978 judge in the regional court borough Lübeck; 1979-1994 SPD member and member of the SPD executive board in Schleswig-Holstein; 1981 judge and 1990 chief judge at the district court Lübeck; 1995-2005 member of the Green Party; 1995-1999 head of the state association "Democracy and Law"; 2002 judge at the Federal Court of Justice; 2005-2013 MdB for the Left Party/independent; 2005-2012 member of the Parliamentary Control Commission; 2015 editor of the German | 218, 256 |

| | | edition of the CIA Torture Report | |
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| Sattar, Majid | *FAZ* Political Editor in the Berlin Office | *1970, NRW; degree course in Political Science and History at the Universities of Saarbrücken and Freiburg; 2000 PhD in Political Science at the University of Freiburg; 1997-1999 traineeship and politics author at *Heilbronner Stimme*; 2000-2003 *FAZ* online desk; 2004-2009 *FAZ* politics desk; since 2010 *FAZ* political editor in Berlin with a focus on the Federal Foreign Office and the SPD | 234, 326 |
| Schilder, Peter | *former FAZ* NRW Correspondent | *1950; Diploma in Catholic Theology at the University of Münster; freelance writer for the *Westfälische Nachrichten* as a student; traineeship and editor at *Bonner General-Anzeiger*; 1981-1996 *FAZ* news desk; 1997-2009 *FAZ* correspondent for NRW; 2009-2014 *FAZ* correspondent in Saxony | 146, 148, 150, 155, 341 |
| Soldt, Rüdiger | *FAZ* Baden-Wuerttemberg Correspondent | *1966 Bad Gandersheim, Lower Saxony; 1997 MA in History, Political Science and Journalism Studies at universities in Göttingen and Berlin; student intern and freelance writer for different newspapers, a city magazine and broadcasting; 1993 editor training at Berlin School of Journalism; freelance writer in the politics department of *Deutschlandradio*; editor for *Welt*; 2001-2005 *FAZ* political editor with a focus on the German states, communes, social and family policy, and parties; since 2006 *FAZ* Baden-Wuerttemberg correspondent in Stuttgart; co-authored a book on the post-Kohl CDU | 160, 162, 168, 169, 204, 211, 232 |
| Sundermeyer, Olaf | Freelance Writer | *1973 Dortmund, NRW; degree course in Law at the University of Bochum, Journalism at the University of Dortmund and Communication Studies at Havana University, Cuba – no degree; traineeship at *Hessische/Niedersächsische Allgemeine* in Kassel; freelance writer for national print media, including *FAZ* and *DIE ZEIT*, as well as radio and TV; since 2012 freelance reporter for *Broadcasting Berlin-Brandenburg* (RBB); focuses on domestic security (e.g. extremism, crime, football violence) and has published several books on the right-wing extremist scene, violence and the NPD | 319 |
| Truscheit, Karin | *FAZ* Editor in the *Germany and the World* department | *1969 Wuppertal, NRW; 1996 MA in Modern History, German and Communication Studies at universities in Essen, Edinburgh and Montpellier; student freelance writer for | 169 |

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| | | *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*; visiting politics author at *Bertelsmann Foundation* and the German permanent representation at the UN headquarters in New York; worked for the communications department of the Gerling Corporation in Cologne; 1998 *FAZ* traineeship; since 2000 *FAZ* editor in the "Germany and the World" department with a focus on crime reporting | |
| **Volkmann, Uwe** | *former* Chair for Philosophy of Law and Public Law at the University of Mainz | *1960 Lünen, NRW; 1981-1987 degree course in Law at the University of Marburg; 1987-1990 (junior) lawyer in Frankfurt/Main; 1992 PhD in Law at the University of Marburg; 1994-1997 research assistant and 1997 Habilitation, both at the University of Marburg; 1999 Professor and 2001 Chair for Philosophy of Law and Public Law at the University of Mainz; since 2015 Professor and Chair for Public Law and Philosophy of Law at the University of Frankfurt/Main; regular contributor for the *FAZ* | 327 |
| von Altenbockum, Jasper | Head of the *FAZ* Domestic Politics department | *1962 Schwäbisch Hall, Baden-Wuerttemberg; degree course in History and German Studies at universities in Tübingen, Berlin and Münster; 1986 MA in Politics, History and Comparative Literature at Washington University, St Louis; PhD in History at the University of Münster; student freelance author for local newspapers in Reutlingen, Waiblingen and Schwäbisch Gmünd; 1989-1993 author for the *FAZ* political news desk; 1994-1996 *FAZ* correspondent for Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg Western-Pomerania; 1996-2001 *FAZ* correspondent for Scandinavia and the Baltic States based in Stockholm; 2001-2011 head of *FAZ* political news department; since 2011 head of *FAZ* domestic politics department | 246, 250, 312, 313 |
| Wehner, Markus | *FAS* Berlin Correspondent | *1963 Fulda, Hesse; 1992 MA in East European History, Political Science and Slavic Studies at universities in Freiburg, Moscow and Berlin; 1992-1996 freelance writer for the *FAZ* with a focus on humanities and political books; 1996 PhD in Political Science; 1996 author for *FAZ* news desk; 1999-2004 *FAZ* correspondent in Moscow; since 2004 *FAS* correspondent in Berlin; has co-authored several books on federal politics; 2011 "Journalist of the Year" (*Medium Magazin*) | 190, 240, 245, 289 |

| | | together with Eckart Lohse | |
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| Wermelskirchen, Axel | *FAZ* Editor in the *Germany and the World* department | *1951 Koblenz, Rhineland-Palatinate; degree course in German Studies, Political Science, Sociology and Journalism Studies at the University of Mainz; 1977 state examination for authorisation to teach German and Social Education at grammar schools; postgraduate studies in Journalism at the University of Mainz; local news editor for *Hanauer Anzeiger*; since 1984 *FAZ* editor for the "Germany and the World" department; 1999-2002 co-responsible for the *FAZ* supplement "Berlin Pages" as political correspondent | 169, 173, 177 |
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## BILD / BILD am Sonntag

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|---|---|---|---|
| Baldauf, Angi | *former BILD* Political Editor | Politics and economics editor for *BILD* Hanover; since 2013 editor-in-chief of *BILD* Bremen | 214, 215 |
| Bektas, Aysun | *BamS* | -------------------------------------------------------------- | 113, 130, 133 |
| Dogan, Kazim | *BamS* | -------------------------------------------------------------- | 113, 130, 133 |
| **Elitz, Ernst** | *former* Director of the *Deutschland-radio* | *1941 Berlin; 1960-1968 MA in German Studies, Theatre Studies, Political Science and Philosophy at the Free University of Berlin; wrote theatre reviews and worked for radio channel *RIAS Berlin* and as freelance writer for *DIE ZEIT* while at university; 1969 *Spiegel* editor for the Germany department with a focus on (higher) educational and research politics; 1974-1975 visiting lecturer in radio journalism at the University of Göttingen; 1974-1982 moderator of "Kennzeichen D" at *ZDF* Berlin with responsibility for East/West Berlin and the GDR; 1983-1985 deputy head and moderator of the *ZDF* "heute journal"; 1985-1993 TV editor-in-chief of *Süddeutscher Rundfunk*; 1994-2009 director of *Deutschlandradio*; since 1992 visiting lecturer in Communication Studies at different universities; 2004 First Class Order of Merit of the FRG; since 2005 Honorary Professor at Free University of Berlin; since November 2006 director of the Berlin Media Professional School at FU Berlin; writes essays for the newspaper *Parliament* of the *Bundestag* and regular comments for the *BILD* | 288 |

| Feldhaus, Kai | *BILD* Chief Reporter in Berlin | *1975 Bottrop, NRW; state examination in English and Sports at universities in Essen and Cape Town; 2003-2004 traineeship at Axel Springer School; *BILD* foreign news editor; 2004 Journalism Prize "Voluntary Engagement" of the *Robert Bosch Foundation*; 2007 London correspondent for *BILD* and *BamS*; 2007 Axel Springer Prize; since 2008 *BILD* chief reporter in Berlin | 165 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gaedt, Tina | *former BILD* Chief Reporter in Stuttgart | *1960 Berlin; MA in German Studies, Political Science and Information Science at the University of the Saarland; 1990-1994 *BILD* Hamburg, *Neue Revue* and *Für Sie* (boulevard and women's magazine); 1995-2014 (chief) reporter for *BILD* Stuttgart with a focus on crime and human interest stories, society and entertainment | 165 |
| Hellemann, Angelika | *former BamS* Editor | *1977; *BamS* editor; since 2014 deputy head of the *BamS* politics department | 256 |
| Kiewel, Maximilian | *former BILD* News Reporter | *1986 Berlin; 2009 dual BA in business economics and journalism at Ravensburg College and *ZDF*; 2010-2011 traineeship at Axel Springer Academy; 2012-2015 reporter and editor for the *BILD* news desk; 2011 Axel Springer Prize; since 2015 reporter for the "Germany and the World" department at *BamS* | 208, 213, 234, 269 |
| Kurtz, Martina | *BILD* Editor in Leipzig | ------------------------------------------------------------- | 208, 213, 234, 269 |
| Lemuth, Carolin | Freelance Writer | since 2007 freelance photographer and journalist; has worked for different print and online media; until 2013 focus on Thuringia, now on northern Bavaria | 208, 213, 234, 269 |
| Ley, Josef | *BILD* Chief Reporter | ------------------------------------------------------------- | 208, 213, 234 |
| Löhr, Oliver | *former BILD* Editor in Thuringia | *1967; law degree at the University of Frankfurt/Main; 1999-2004 lawyer with own office; 2004-2015 *BILD* editor for Thuringia; since 2015 press officer at the Thuringian Ministry of the Interior and Communes in Erfurt | 171, 232, 269 |
| Meckelein, Martina | --------------------- | ------------------------------------------------------------- | 165 |
| Özkök, Ertuğrul | Turkish Journalist and *BILD* Columnist | *1947 Izmir, Turkey; degree course in Political Science and PhD in Information Science in Paris; 1990-2009 editor-in-chief of the | 194, 218 |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | | internationally published Turkish newspaper *Hürriyet*; supports the modernisation of Turkey, women's rights in Islam and Turkish EU membership; regular *BILD* column on German-Turkish themes | |
| Reichelt, Julian | *former BILD* Chief Reporter | *1980 Hamburg; 2002-2003 *BILD* traineeship, mainly as foreign correspondent and war reporter from the Middle East; 2007 *BILD* chief reporter; since 2014 editor-in-chief of *Bild.de* | 208, 213, 234, 269 |
| Schlitter, Luisa | *BILD* Dresden Reporter | --------------------------------------------------------- | 171 |
| Schneider, Frank | *BILD* NRW Chief Reporter | --------------------------------------------------------- | 163, 295 |
| Schuler, Ralf | Head of the *BILD* Parliamentary Office in Berlin | *1965 Berlin; apprenticeship as a mechanic; 1989 distance degree course in Literature and Cultural Studies; 1985 author at *Neue Zeit*; freelance writer for *FAZ*, *DIE ZEIT* and *Tagesspiegel*; 1995-1998 editor at *Welt*; 1998-2011 head of politics department at *Märkische Allgemeine* (Potsdam); since 2011 head of the *BILD* parliamentary office in Berlin with a focus on the CDU/CSU and Angela Merkel | 269 |
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| Strehlau, Bernd | --------------------- | --------------------------------------------------------- | 163 |
| Wagner, Franz Josef | *BILD* chief columnist | *1943 Olmütz, Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (today Olomouc, Czech Republic); no school leaving certificate; traineeship at *Nürnberger Zeitung*; 1966-1985 war/chief reporter for *BILD* in Hamburg; 1988 editor-in-chief of *Bunte* in Munich; founded the tabloid paper *Super!* in 1991; 1998-2000 editor-in-chief of the *B.Z.* and *B.Z. am Sonntag*; since 2001 chief columnist for *BILD* and (until 2005) for *Welt am Sonntag*; 2002 Journalism Prize "Golden Feather" for his *BILD* column | 186, 187, 260 |
| Vehlewald, Hans-Jörg | *BILD* Chief Reporter for German and European politics | *1964; 1989 Diploma in Political Science at the Free University of Berlin; 1991 training at Henri-Nannen-School of Journalism in Hamburg; 1991-2001 editor and correspondent in various German states for *Spiegel*; 2001-2011 and again since 2013 *BILD* chief reporter for German and European | 295 |

| | | politics; 2012-13 consultant for communication and campaigns in the SPD's federal executive board and later communication head of its press and communication team; particular focus on contemporary history (Third Reich, RAF, Stasi) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Völkerling, Jörg | Freelance Reporter | Freelance (photo) reporter (*BILD* and *RTL*, among others) with a focus on crime | 138, 139, 141, 142, 232 |
| Wicking, Malte | *BILD* Senior Editor in NRW | Diploma in Journalism Studies at the University of Dortmund; *BILD* senior editor in Essen, NRW | 171, 232, 295 |
| Winterstein, Tania | *BILD* Senior Editor | ------------------------------------------------------------ | 208, 213, 232, 234 |
| Wojtuschak, Uwe | *BILD* Reporter in NRW | 2014-2015 traineeship at *Hamburger Abendblatt*; *BILD* (photo) reporter in Dusseldorf, NRW | 113, 130, 133 |
| (zu) Castell (-Rüdenhausen), Alexandra | *former BILD* Chief Reporter; since 2010 *BILD* Deputy Managing Editor in Stuttgart, | ------------------------------------------------------------ | 165, 208, 213, 234 |
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| **SPIEGEL** | | | |
| Baumgärtner, Maik | Freelance Investigative Journalist | Freelance investigative journalist and writer based in Berlin; focus on right-wing extremism, anti-democratic movements and organised crime; writes regularly for *Spiegel*, but also for other newspapers and magazines, TV, radio and think tanks; has published books on the NSU (2012) and Crystal Meth (2015); takes explicitly leftist positions | 232, 237, 238, 243, 268 |
| Becker, Sven | Editor in the Germany department | *1982 Bonn, NRW; 2002-2008 degree course in Political Science at the University of Bamberg; 2009-2010 training at Henri-Nannen-School of Journalism in Hamburg; since 2011 editor in the *Spiegel* Germany department in Berlin; focus on lobbyism, party financing and public-private-partnerships | 184, 258, 267, 277, 299 |
| Berg, Stefan | Berlin Reporter | *1964 East Berlin; 1986-1990 editor for various church newspapers; 1991 editor at *Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt*; since 1996 *Spiegel* Berlin reporter; published a book about his experiences with Parkinson in 2011 | 184, 258, 267, 277, 299 |

| | | and his letter exchange during the 1980s with writer Günter de Bruyn in 2014 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dahlkamp, Jürgen | Investigative Reporter | *1965 Werne, NRW; 1985-1991 Diploma in Journalism Studies at Technical University of Dortmund; student writer for *Westfälischer Anzeiger*; journalism traineeship at the Bishopric of Münster's magazine *Church and Life*; 1992-1997 *FAZ* Rhein-Main editor; 1998-1999 *Spiegel* Baden-Wuerttemberg correspondent in Stuttgart; since 2000 *Spiegel* editor and investigative reporter in the "Germany II" department in Hamburg; focus on political affairs | 232, 237, 238, 268, 299, 317, 318, 323 |
| Deggerich, Markus | Berlin Editor in the Germany Department | *Elte, NRW; training at the German School of Journalism in Munich; internship at *Leipziger Volkszeitung*; freelance author and *dpa* correspondent in Leipzig; training at Henri-Nannen-School of Journalism in Hamburg; internships at *Stern*, *SZ* and *Spiegel Online*; Berlin correspondent for *Spiegel Online*; currently *Spiegel* Berlin editor in the Germany department | 184, 258, 267, 277, 299, 309, 311, 313 |
| Demmer, Ulrike | *former* Berlin Correspondent | *1973 Solingen, NRW; 1998 first state examination in Law at the University of Bonn and Humboldt University Berlin; 1998-2000 project manager in the communication and marketing department of "Radio Eins" at *RBB* in Berlin; 2000-2001 training at Berlin School of Journalism; 2001-2002 freelance journalist for *NDR* and *SZ Magazine*; 2002-2003 traineeship at *ZDF*; 2004-2005 editor and reporter for the *ZDF* "Morgenmagazin" in Berlin; 2006-2009 *Spiegel* editor in the Germany II department; 2009-2012 *Spiegel* Berlin correspondent for defence and security policy; 2013-2015 deputy head of the *Focus* Berlin office; 2015-2016 head of the Berlin office of *RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland*; since 2016 deputy spokesperson and deputy head of the Press and Information Office of the Federal Government | 196 |
| Fleischhauer, Jan | Editor in the Germany Department in Berlin | *1962 Hamburg; degree in Literature and Philosophy at the University of Hamburg; training at Henri-Nannen-School of Journalism; since 1989 *Spiegel* editor; 2001-2005 *Spiegel* business correspondent in New York; since 2005 *Spiegel* editor in the Germany department in Berlin; has published a bestselling book on the dynamics between | 184, 258, 267, 277, 299 |

| | | conservatism and the political left (2009) that was adapted for German TV; since 2011 *Spiegel Online* columnist, since 2014 also for the print issue | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gude, Hubert | Editor in the Germany Department | *1964; MA in Sociology, Psychology and Journalism Studies at universities in Hamburg and New York; 1992 radio reporter for *NDR 2*; 2001 northern Germany correspondent and head of the Hamburg office for *Focus*; since 2012 *Spiegel* editor in the Germany department with a focus on domestic security, security authorities and Islamism | 311 |
| Heise, Thomas | Deputy Editor-in-chief of *Spiegel TV* | *1959 East Berlin; 1990-1993 free journalist; since 1994 reporter for *Spiegel TV*; 2003-2011 managing editor of *Spiegel TV* magazine; since 2011 deputy editor-in-chief for *Spiegel TV* | 184, 208, 240, 298 |
| Kaiser, Simone | Stuttgart Correspondent | ------------------------------------------------------------ | 159, 164, 232, 237, 238, 268 |
| Kleinhubbert, Guido | Editor in the Germany Department | ------------------------------------------------------------ | 113, 130, 131, 132, 137 |
| Kurbjuweit, Dirk | *former* Co-head of the Berlin Office | *1962 Wiesbaden, Hesse; degree course in economics and training at the Cologne School of Journalism for Politics and Economics; 1990-1999 editor for *DIE ZEIT*; 1999-2001 *Spiegel* editor; 2002-2012 deputy/co-head of the *Spiegel* Berlin office; 1998 and 2002 Egon-Erwin-Kisch Prize; 2012 German Reporter Prize; author of several non-fiction books and novels, some of which were adapted for German TV; since 2015 *Spiegel* deputy editor-in-chief | 196 |
| Latsch, Gunther | Editor in the Germany Department | *1960; 1980-1986 degree course in Political Science, History and Philosophy at universities in Mainz, Paris and Hamburg; 1987-1989 writer for *NDR* magazine "Panorama"; 1989-1997 co-creator of *Spiegel* TV, later editor-in-chief; since 1997 *Spiegel* editor, now in the Germany department; 2010 Henri-Nannen-Prize and 2014 "Journalist of the Year" (Team) | 184, 258, 267, 277, 299, 317, 323 |
| Ludwig, Udo | *former* Editor in the Germany Department | *1958 Werl, NRW; trainee and editor at *Westfalenpost*; 1984 degree studies in Social Sciences and Sport Sciences at the University | 299 |

| | | of Münster; freelance journalist for various newspapers and weekly magazines; since 1990 *Spiegel* editor in the sports and Germany department; 2008 Henri-Nannen-Prize and 2009 German Journalism Prize (both as team); since 2016 head of the *Spiegel* sports department; focus on sports, medicine and consumer protection; has (co-)published several books on sports journalism, doping and cancer treatment; lectures in journalism in Hamburg | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mascolo, Georg | *former* Editor-in-chief | *1964 Stadthagen, Lower Saxony; German and Italian citizenship; apprenticeship as paralegal; traineeship at *Schaumburger Zeitung*; 1988-1991 *Spiegel TV*; 1992-1999 deputy head of the *Spiegel* Berlin office; 2000-2004 head of the *Spiegel* Germany II department; 2004-2007 *Spiegel* political correspondent in the US; 2007-2008 co-head of the *Spiegel* Berlin office; 2008-2013 *Spiegel* (co-)editor-in-chief; since 2014 head of the research collaboration between *SZ*, *NDR* and *WDR*; 2014 "Journalist of the Year"; member of the core group of the Munich Security Conference; appears regularly as a "terrorism expert" on *ARD* | 269 |
| Neumann, Conny | *former* Editor in Munich | *1961; 1980-1990 trainee and editor at *Aichacher Zeitung* and *Donau Kurier*; 1990-2000 freelance journalist for *SZ*, *Stern*, *ZDF* and *ARD* with a focus on Bavarian politics and political journalism; 2000-2016 editor in the *Spiegel* Munich office | 113, 130, 131, 132, 137, 142, 232, 237, 238, 268 |
| Popp, Maximilian | *former* Dresden Correspondent | *1986 Passau, Bavaria; degree course in International Relations (Istanbul); student freelance writer for *Spiegel Online*, *Stern*, *DIE ZEIT Online* and *FAZ*; training at Henri-Nannen-School of Journalism in Hamburg; since 2010-2013 *Spiegel* Dresden correspondent; since 2013 *Spiegel* editor in the Germany II department; focuses on migration, Islam and racism; 2015 Journalism Prize of the South East European Society | 298, 298, 299, 317, 323 |
| Röbel, Sven | Germany Editor in the Berlin Office | *1972 Ludwigshafen, Rhineland-Palatinate; freelance journalist for various daily and weekly newspapers; 1995 traineeship at | 137, 184, 208, |

| | | *BamS*; editor for *Spiegel TV*; since 2000 *Spiegel* editor in the Germany department in Berlin | 232, 237, 238, 240, 268, 281, 298, 299, 317, 323 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scheuermann, Christoph | *former* Germany Editor | *1977; degree course in Political Science at the Universities of Cologne and Birmingham; 2005-2007 training at Henri-Nannen-School of Journalism; 2009-2012 *Spiegel* editor in the Germany department; since 2012 *Spiegel* London correspondent; published a book on the UK in 2016 | 188, 208 |
| Schröder, Catalina | Freelance Writer | *1985; degree course in Linguistics, Business Administration and Political Science at the Universities of Hildesheim and Vaasa (Finland); internships at *ZDF* (Mainz and Berlin) and *Spiegel* (Berlin); 2011-2012 training at German School of Journalism in Munich; freelance author for *Spiegel* Berlin and *DIE ZEIT* in Hamburg; since 2014 economics editor for *Impulse* Magazine and freelance journalist | 311 |
| Stark, Holger | Head of the Germany Department | *1970 Berlin; 1989-1991 training at the German School of Journalism in Munich and the Berlin School of Journalism; 1991-1993 editor at *Berliner Zeitung*; 1993-1998 Diploma in Political Science at Free University of Berlin; student freelance editor and reporter for *ORB* and *Radio Fritz* (Brandenburg); 1999-2001 editor at *Tagesspiegel* (Berlin); 2001-2006 *Spiegel* correspondent; 2006-2010 (deputy) head of the *Spiegel* Germany department; since 2013 *Spiegel* correspondent in Washington DC | 184, 208, 232, 237, 238, 240, 268, 269, 281, 298, 299, 317, 323 |
| Ulrich, Andreas | Germany Editor | *1962; 1990-1999 crime reporter in Hamburg; since 1999 *Spiegel* editor in the Germany department with a focus on crime and terrorism; has co-authored a bestselling volume on 9/11 (2002) and a biography of a member of the Mafia in Germany (2007) | 142, 159, 164, 166, 232, 237, 238, 268, 299 |
| Wassermann, | Editor in the | *1962; degree course in History, Political | 317, |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Andreas | Berlin Office | Science and Literature at the University of Hamburg – no degree; traineeship at *Hamburger Rundschau*; editor and correspondent in Hamburg, Bonn and Dresden for *Hamburger Rundschau*, *Dresdner Morgenpost*, *Stern* and *Leipziger Volkszeitung*; 1995-2001 *Spiegel* correspondent in Dresden; 2002-2005 *Spiegel* correspondent in Frankfurt/Main; since 2006 *Spiegel* editor in the Berlin office | 323 |
| Weinzierl, Alfred | Head of the Germany II Department | *1959 Cologne, NRW; degree course in Political Science at the University of Bonn; traineeship at *German Sports Press* Cologne; 1986 editor for the monthly magazine *Sport-Illustrierte*; 1986-1987 editor-in-chief of *Auto BILD*; 1988-1996 *Spiegel* editor in the Culture III department; 1996-2006 head of the *Spiegel* sports department; 2006-2015 head of the *Spiegel* Germany II department; since 2015 *Spiegel* deputy editor-in-chief responsible for investigative research projects; published a book on the 1989/90 revolution in 2015 | 269 |
| Winter, Steffen | *former* Munich Correspondent | *1960 Thuringia; 1994-1999 political correspondent for *Thüringische Tageszeitung* in Erfurt; since 1999 *Spiegel* correspondent in Berlin; 2001-2010 *Spiegel* correspondent in Dresden; since 2010 *Spiegel* correspondent in Munich; since 2013 again head of the *Spiegel* Dresden office | 232, 237, 238, 268, 281, 298, 299, 317, 323 |
| Zand, Bernhard | *former* Deputy Head of the Foreign Politics Department | since 1998 *Spiegel* Middle East correspondent in Istanbul, Cairo and Dubai and deputy head of the foreign politics department; since 2012 *Spiegel* correspondent in Beijing | 245 |

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