

**Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe:  
A Comparative Analysis**

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## **Preface and acknowledgements**

This PhD project follows in the wake of a national disaster: the 22 July terrorist attacks in Norway in 2011. These attacks – prepared and carried out by a single perpetrator – left 77 mostly young people dead, 46 severely wounded, and hundreds of victims and relatives injured or traumatized. The attacks also exposed important gaps in our present knowledge about the characteristics, extent, and dynamics of right-wing terrorism and violence in Western Europe. Without such knowledge, it is difficult to place events such as the 22 July attacks in a larger picture and to determine whether they should be seen as an outlier event, or as signalling an emergent threat. A key motivation for this PhD project has therefore been to generate new knowledge that may help answer such questions.

I first learned about the 22 July attacks upon arrival at my parents' house in Italy, where I was going to spend some time together with my wife and a couple of Norwegian friends. As we arrived at the house in the early afternoon, my father came running towards us, telling us that something terrible was happening at home. We spent the next hours and days dumbfounded in front of the TV, watching the events unfold. Norway is a small country. It soon turned out that one of my friends who was there with us knew one of the people killed by the bomb in the Government Quarter. I remember a feeling of helplessness and a strong desire to return to Oslo.

I immediately downloaded the compendium distributed by the terrorist shortly before the attacks (later to become known as his Manifesto in the media), which I read intensely for days, trying to figure out what was going on. I was puzzled by the facts that he grew up in the same part of Oslo as I did, that we were almost the same age, and that we had frequented some of the same places (perhaps at the same time?). Little did I know then that this event would also change my life when, a few months later, Thomas Hegghammer (then Director of Terrorism Research at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, FFI) called to ask me if I would consider applying for a PhD scholarship on right-wing terrorism. Despite having no prior experience of researching terrorism, or the extreme right for that matter, I realized that this was a unique opportunity that I could not miss out on.

Because this project started as a blank slate entitled “Something about right-wing terrorism”, it would have never materialized without the help of many others. First, I would like to thank my two outstanding supervisors Tore Bjørgo and Jon Hovi for carefully shepherding this project to its final destination. I had to persuade Jon into doing it, because he was initially

uncomfortable supervising a topic he was unfamiliar with. In hindsight, making Jon change his mind about this project was the best investment I could have made, as his stringent and experienced advice on structure, methods, and language has proven invaluable to me. Tore was not unfamiliar with the topic, to put it mildly, and having him by my side throughout this process has been a privilege. His steadfast encouragement and support, not to mention his excellent homebrewed beer, has given me the necessary confidence to bring this project into new territories left largely unexplored by existing research.

I also owe special thanks to Thomas Hegghammer, who in many ways has served as my third supervisor. This entire project was Thomas's idea, as he quickly realized that this type of knowledge would be in demand after the 22 July attacks. Having an experienced and distinguished terrorism scholar such as Thomas by my side during the project's initial phase was of critical importance, as my own immature thoughts and ideas were floating all over the place, and I needed someone who could pull them together and send them off in the right direction.

Thomas also masterminded FFI's hiring of Johannes Due Enstad, who came to be (and still is) my closest working partner in this field. Having just completed his PhD on history of Soviet Russia under Nazi occupation, Johannes was tasked to study the extreme right in post-Soviet Russia, a severely understudied yet critically important topic. Thus, as two newcomers to this field, we were able to ask each other silly questions and delve into the unknown together, which has been a major advantage. Johannes also happens to be one of the most talented scholars I know, and his sharp observations and clear thinking have surely benefited my own analytical faculties.

Johannes and I represented "the extreme right" of FFI's Terrorism Research Group (Terra), whose accomplished "Jihadi" members besides Thomas – Anne Stenersen, Petter Nesser, Truls Tønnesen, Henrik Gråtrud, Erik Skare, and Brynjar Lia – deserves my gratitude for providing an inspiring and challenging working environment, and for giving me helpful comments and feedback on this manuscript and on several of my articles.

I would also like to thank FFI for giving me the opportunity to pursue an academic career ever since I started working there as student intern back in 2008, followed by two-and-a-half years working as a research fellow, before receiving this PhD scholarship in 2012. In particular, I wish to thank all the friendly people in the Analysis Division for providing me with a stimulating working environment. Special thanks go to Bård Eggereide for helping me build

and analyse my own events dataset, to Andreas Forø Tollefsen for helping me with statistical analysis (although I ended up not using it), and to Alida Skiple for dragging me along to observe right-wing militants in action, and for commenting on one of my manuscripts. Finally, I thank my close friend and colleague Stian Kjeksrud, who was the one who hired me in the first place, who also became my first research partner and field work companion as we travelled together to distant conflict zones, and whose kind support, encouragement, and personal friendship mean a lot to me.

In April 2016, the Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX) was officially opened at the University of Oslo. With FFI being one of five Norwegian partner institutions, I was given the opportunity to spend the last months of my PhD project at C-REX together with other PhD students and scholars working in this field, an experience that has been truly enlightening and inspiring. In particular, I wish to thank C-REX affiliates Birgitte Prangerød Haanshuus, Ingvild Magnæs Gjelsvik, Lars Erik Berntzen, Nina Høy-Petersen, Eviane Leidig, and Astrid Hauge Rambøl for creating an inspiring and feel-good atmosphere in the otherwise stressful life of a PhD student about to complete his thesis. I also thank Dagfinn Hagen for giving me all the administrative support I needed, and Emilie Silkoset for being my part-time research assistant over the past few months – a privilege most PhD students can only dream of. Finally, I owe special thanks to Anders Ravik Jupskås, Deputy Director at C-REX, for constantly luring me into long and hard discussions about the essential elements of our field and the meaning of the work we do – discussions that have been tremendously rewarding and cleared my thinking about several issues. Anders has also provided excellent and truly demanding comments on every part of this thesis, for which I am very grateful.

Besides the people at FFI and C-REX, a few others deserve special mention. From the Department of Political Science at the University of Oslo, I thank Olav Schram Stokke and Scott Gates for giving me valuable feedback during my trial public defence. I also thank Vegar and Trine from the Norwegian Police for bringing me along to activist demonstrations and gatherings in Norway and abroad, and for granting me insights into their excellent police work. To Ellen H. and her team (you know who you are), thank you for being so including and for your good spirits (you know what I mean).

A few colleagues from abroad also merit my gratitude. First and foremost, I wish to thank my friend and colleague Daniel Köhler from the German Institute on Radicalization and De-radicalization Studies (GIRDS) for facilitating my research stay in Berlin in 2015, for sharing

relevant events data from GIRDS' Database on Terrorism in Germany, and for sharing with me his extensive knowledge about the German extreme right scene. I would also like to thank Damian Ghamlouche for inviting me as visiting scholar to the Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research at Humboldt University. Next, I would like to thank Leena Malkki and Mats Fridlund for inviting me to contribute to their conference on terrorism in the Nordic countries at the University of Helsinki, and to the special journal issue that will follow. I would also like to thank Catarina Froio and Pietro Castelli Gattinara for including me in their European Consortium for Political Research panel on "the radical right beyond the electoral arena" from which several fruitful discussions emerged, and for providing useful comments on one of my manuscripts. Finally, I wish to thank Professor Charles Ragin for introducing me to his intriguing world of fuzzy sets and Boolean algebra during his PhD course on qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) at the University of Oslo in 2015. Following this course, I have learned that QCA is a method that, once mastered, opens an entire new world of possibilities.

Two weeks before my wife and I arrived in Italy on 22 July 2011, I received another life-changing piece of news, but this time of a more joyful character: we were expecting our first child. Nine months later (and three months into this PhD project) our first daughter was born, followed by her little sister two-and-a-half years later. Having two kids during the course of a PhD project is certainly a challenge, but, more importantly, a rewarding experience. I would therefore like to extend my final thanks to my two daughters, Tiril and Ebba, and to my dearest wife Mari, for being the most wonderful distractions in this world, for supporting me throughout this project, and for keeping me grounded.



## Introduction

Strange as it may sound, studies of the human mind have found that some people are bound to experience liberal democracy as utterly unfair and morally misguided (Haidt, 2012; Stenner, 2005). Today, most of these people express their discomfort relatively peacefully, for example by voting for radical right parties (Art, 2011; Kitschelt & McGann, 1995; Mudde, 2007), by voicing their concerns online (Bartlett & Littler, 2011; Caiani & Kröll, 2015), or by joining a protest movement (Berntzen & Weisskircher, 2016; Busher, 2016). However, some of them – a very small subset indeed – end up using violence and terrorism to express their antipathies, or to generate political change. This thesis is about those people – or more precisely about the terror and violence they produce, and the political and societal conditions that promote or discourage it. Specifically, the thesis examines the evolution of right-wing terrorism and violence (RTV) in post-WWII Western Europe, documents its most recent developments, and provides explanations of why some West European countries have experienced more RTV than others.<sup>1</sup>

This last question remains largely unanswered in the existing literature on the extreme right (Mudde, 2004, pp. 205–208). Indeed, Koopmans (1996) gave it an honest try, but his theory about elites' negative framing of immigrants and weak radical right parties must be read with caution because of limited and unreliable data (Bjørgero, 2003). Other scholars have also looked into RTV's underlying causes (Bjørgero, 1997; Heitmeyer, 1993; Hoffman, 1982; Kaplan, 1995; Sprinzak, 1995; Weinberg, 1995; Weinberg & Eubank, 1987; Wilkinson, 1995; Willems, 1995; Witte, 1995), but their diverse propositions (including but not limited to authoritarianism, fascism, fear, immigration, isolation, leftism, policing, politics, poverty, public opinion, religion, repression, and unemployment) have yet to be investigated systematically across more than a handful of cases. In other words, we have been presented with a number of plausible hypotheses, but little systematic evidence has been offered to disprove or support them.

Poor evidence notwithstanding, RTV remains a challenge to Western liberal democracies. Perpetrators of RTV repeatedly target minorities, political opponents, and government representatives (Köhler, 2017). Furthermore, such violent attacks may provoke repressive countermeasures from the state that are essentially illiberal in nature, thereby undermining the

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<sup>1</sup> By Western Europe, I mean all European countries that did not form part of the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War.

very virtues they are meant to protect (Minkenberg, 2006; Pedahzur, 2001). Countering RTV without compromising core liberal democratic principles such as freedom of expression or political freedom for all people, including those on the far right, is a challenging balancing act (Eatwell & Mudde, 2004; Kirshner, 2014). To help policymakers and practitioners perform this balancing act with more precision, this thesis offers new and updated knowledge about contemporary RTV perpetrators, their methods, and their victims. It also demonstrates how certain combinations of political and societal conditions may create inflammable environments from which extensive RTV is more likely to emerge.

Before moving on to present the structure and contents of this thesis in more detail, let me first say a few words about case selection. I have limited this study to Western Europe for three reasons. The first is that other Western liberal democracies, most notably the United States, are already well covered by existing research (Adamczyk et al., 2014; Chermak et al., 2013; Hamm, 1993; Hewitt, 2003; Kaplan, 1995; Kerodal et al., 2015; Lipset & Raab, 1970; Michael, 2012; Perliger, 2012; Simi, 2010; Simi et al., 2016). By contrast, research on RTV in Western Europe has been scarce since it peaked during the 1990s (key contributions include Bjørgo, 1995a, 1997; Bjørgo & Witte, 1993a; Koopmans, 1996; Wilkinson, 1995). Yet much has happened in this region since that turbulent decade, and there is an increasing demand for new and updated RTV studies (recent contributions answering to this demand include Caiani et al., 2012; Köhler, 2017; Taylor et al., 2013).

The second reason is that Western Europe constitutes a particularly useful empirical universe for conducting comparative studies at the cross-national level. Such comparative studies have been endemically lacking in this field, which is heavily dominated by case studies of specific individuals, groups, and movements (notable exceptions include Bjørgo, 1997; Caiani et al., 2012; Koopmans, 1996). As a result, we know a lot about the micro-dynamics of RTV, but much less about RTV's macro-structural causes, or how to connect these causes with relevant conditions at the meso- and micro-levels.

Finally, a third reason why this region needs studying is that several experts have warned that an outbreak of RTV is brewing in Western Europe (see e.g. Bartlett & Birdwell, 2011; Fekete, 2016; Ramalingam, 2014). Such concerns have in turn been intensified by the ongoing migration crisis, by Islamist terrorism, and by growing support for radical right parties. However, because our knowledge about RTV's underlying causes remains limited, and because updated events data are lacking, it is difficult to assess the credibility of these warnings, and to

identify the most relevant countermeasures for dealing with the emergent threat they are warning us against.

## **Research questions and outline**

Against this backdrop, three knowledge gaps in particular inform the structure and content of this study. The first is the lack of a systematic categorization of key RTV actors in post-WWII Western Europe. Following the 22 July terrorist attacks in Norway, some experts argued that they were indicative of West European right-wing terrorism more generally, portrayed as a relatively rare phenomenon characterized by large-scale attacks with many casualties, such as the Bologna train station bombing in 1980, or the Oktoberfest bombing in Munich, also in 1980 (see e.g. Engene, 2011). However, except for large casualty numbers, these two events and their assumed perpetrators have little in common with the 22 July attacks. Most notably, the 22 July attacks were carried out by a mentally disturbed lone actor unaffiliated to any right-wing militant group (Melle, 2013; Ravndal, 2012). By contrast, the bombings in Bologna and Munich are believed to have been orchestrated by some of the largest and most influential right-wing terrorist organizations in Western Europe's post-WWII history (Ferraresi, 1996; Fromm, 1998; Paterson, 2015). Thus, to develop precise explanations of such different terrorist attacks, it is useful first to identify some key characteristics of the different perpetrator types involved. A typology of right-wing terrorism and violence in post-WWII Western Europe is therefore needed.

The second knowledge gap concerns the lack of updated events data suitable for analysing variation of RTV across time and place. The most relevant existing datasets, such as the Terrorism in Western Europe: Events Data (TWEED) dataset (Engene, 2007) and the Domestic Terrorism Victims (DTV) dataset (De la Calle & Sanchez-Cuenca, 2011), do not include events from the past decade. Furthermore, a majority of events registered by TWEED and DTV are from the Cold War period when the communist threat was still a primary concern for most right-wing militants (Hoffman, 1982). Today, this communist threat has in the eyes of many activists been replaced by the threat from immigration, Islamism, and the ruling political elites (Mammone et al., 2012, 2013). Furthermore, while some of the most influential right-wing terrorist groups from the Cold War period received financial and operational support from members of the political elites to fight the communist threat (Cento Bull, 2007; Ferraresi, 1996; Harrison, 1989), today's extreme right activists operate under considerably more hostile and repressive conditions (Bleich, 2007; Minkenberg, 2006). This change of operating environment

influences the motives, target selection, and mobilization opportunities of today's activists. Yet because systematic events data have been lacking, we know little about the extent and characteristics of contemporary RTV, including whether it is a rising or declining phenomenon, whether some countries are experiencing more RTV per capita than others, or who the main perpetrators and victims are. New and updated RTV events data are therefore needed.

Finally, we have limited knowledge about why RTV has been more extensive in some countries than in others. This limitation follows directly from the lack of systematic events data described above. Without such basic information, it is difficult to carry out comparative studies to develop and test RTV theories. Indeed, a number of explanations have been proposed by the existing literature (see the literature review below). However, these explanations have yet to be tested systematically across more than a few cases. More comparative RTV research is therefore needed to identify the conditions under which RTV is most – and least – likely to occur.

To help fill these three gaps, this PhD project sets out to answer the following three research questions:

1. What characterizes the most important RTV perpetrator types in post-WWII Western Europe?
2. What is the record of RTV events in Western Europe between 1990 and 2015?
3. Why have some West European countries experienced considerably more RTV than others between 1990 and 2015?

This thesis addresses these three questions in four articles. Question one is considered by the first article, question two by the second article, while question three is considered by the third and fourth articles. I will now give a brief synthesis of these four articles to illustrate how they relate to each other. I then move on to define some key concepts used in this thesis, before reviewing existing theory and literature in this field, highlighting relevant shortcomings therein. Next, I present my underlying philosophical assumptions and the mixed methods research design employed in this thesis. I then summarize the contents of each article, before drawing on my main findings to answer each of the three research questions introduced above. Finally, this introductory chapter closes by discussing the thesis's main contributions to existing research, by proposing some ideas for future research, and by discussing how some of my findings might inform future policies aimed at combating violent extremism on the far right.

## Synthesis of articles

To avoid repetition, I will not say too much about each article's substantive contents now, because that information is provided in the article summaries below. Here, I simply present the main idea behind each article and show how these ideas connect to each other.

The main idea underlying Article I is to set the scene by offering a comprehensive historical overview of the most important RTV perpetrator types in post-WWII Western Europe. In doing so, the article illustrates how RTV perpetrators have changed fundamentally since the end of WWII in response to changing environmental conditions. Most notably, large and well organized elite-sponsored groups involved in large-scale terrorist campaigns have been replaced by more loosely organized subcultural networks, groups, and individuals, whose violence and target selection is of a less terroristic nature. To identify the most important perpetrator types, the article mainly draws on events data from the TWEED dataset. Although this dataset proves helpful for painting the larger picture, TWEED only covers the period 1950–2004 and is less helpful for capturing more recent developments. Article I therefore closes by calling for new and updated RTV events data.

Article II answers this call by introducing a new dataset covering RTV events in Western Europe between 1990 and 2015. In particular, this dataset may be used to analyse variation in RTV over time and between countries. I show that, contrary to common perceptions of a growing threat, deadly RTV events have decreased considerably in Western Europe since the 1990s, culminating in no deadly events in 2014, and only one in 2015. However, notwithstanding this general decline, the dataset also shows that RTV remains more widespread in some West European countries than others. The article therefore closes by calling for more comparative RTV research aiming to explain such cross-national variation.

Article III responds to this call by offering a comparative study of RTV in 18 West European countries between 1990 and 2015. This analysis results in two explanatory models, each containing three causal conditions, the combination of which appears to fuel hostility, polarization, and violence. The first (North European) model involves the combination of high immigration, low electoral support for anti-immigration (radical right) parties, and extensive public repression of radical right actors and opinions. The second (South European) model involves the combination of socio-economic hardship, authoritarian legacies, and extensive left-wing terrorism and militancy. Together, these two models consistently distinguish countries with extensive RTV experience from countries with moderate or low RTV

experience. Notably, both models contain elements of “grievances” and “opportunities”, suggesting that these two theories, which are conventionally seen as contrasting, may be more fruitfully seen as complementary. However, considering the causal distance between the conditions included in this analysis and their outcome variable (RTV), these findings would benefit from being complemented by more in-depth case studies. Article III therefore closes by calling for more case-oriented research to investigate further the causal mechanisms implied by each model.

Finally, Article IV answers this call by further investigating the North European model, seeking to explain why right-wing terrorism and militancy have been more widespread in Sweden than in Denmark, Finland, and Norway. In doing so, the article draws on a theoretical framework proposed by social movement scholars as particularly helpful for explaining extreme right mobilization, using concepts such as political opportunities, organizational resources, and framing (Caiani et al., 2012). By applying this framework to the Nordic countries, the article finds that Sweden’s outlier position may originate in different WWII experiences, leaving Sweden with a stronger and more resilient extreme right movement, but also from receiving more immigrants while lacking influential anti-immigration (radical right) parties, and from conducting a more restrictive public debate on immigration, leaving little room for anti-immigration concerns in the public sphere.

## **Concepts and definitions**

Before proceeding to review existing theory and literature, let me first clarify my own understanding and use of three sets of concepts at the heart of this thesis. The first two sets are used to define the thesis’s subject matter. The third set prepares the ground for my explanation of it. All three sets share the characteristic that they represent different types of political spectrum: (1) a spectrum of political ideas, ranging from left to right; (2) a spectrum of political violence, ranging from criminal (hate crimes) to terrorist; and (3) a spectrum of political actors, ranging from radical to extreme.

### **Left versus right ideas**

The left–right distinction originated during the French Revolution in 1789. The French king’s supporters (those wanting to keep their privileges) sat to the right of the National Assembly’s president, while the revolution’s supporters (those wanting liberty, equality, and fraternity) sat

to his left. Since those dramatic days and weeks, many new meanings have been attached to these two terms, and a shared understanding of their essence has been lost along the way (Arian & Shamir, 1983; Jahn, 2011). For the purpose of this thesis, I lean on Bobbio's (1996) classic distinction between those on the left who support egalitarian policies designed to reduce social inequality, and those on the right who regard social inequality – or hierarchical order – as inevitable, natural, or even desirable.

Furthermore, to distinguish between democratic moderates and antidemocratic extremists, Bobbio introduces a second spectrum ranging from libertarianism (individual freedom) to authoritarianism (imposed law and order). Bobbio's categorization thus yields four types: the extreme left (authoritarian egalitarians), the moderate left (liberal egalitarians), the moderate right (liberal inegalitarians), and the extreme right (authoritarian inegalitarians).

Bobbio's distinction between authoritarian and libertarian politics is echoed by Stenner's (2005, pp. 14–15) conceptualization of authoritarian and libertarian personality types. According to Stenner, authoritarians are characterized by an inherent need for sameness, oneness, and submission to group authority, while libertarians celebrate diversity and individual autonomy. By implication, authoritarians may be distinguished from libertarians in that they are intolerant towards diversity, that is, anyone perceived as a threat to the uniformity, order, and authority of the group or community they adhere to. In the case of right-wing authoritarians, this group or community is often extended to the nation-state, resulting in some form of nativism or ethnic nationalism, as is also suggested by Mudde's (1995) review of extreme right definitions, summarized as an ideology made up of five features: nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy, and a strong state (authoritarianism).

### **Criminal versus terrorist violence**

The distinction between criminal and terrorist violence is not always clear-cut. "Violent criminal" and "terrorist" are both pejorative terms whose definitions rely on existing jurisdictions and norms rather than on the nature or intention of an act itself. For example, if a Muslim immigrant kills a random native European in the name of Allah, it is probably more likely to be labelled terrorism than if a native European kills a random Muslim immigrant to defend his country from Islamism. The latter type of attack is usually referred to as "hate crime" rather than terrorism. While some scholars see hate crimes and terrorism as close cousins (see e.g. Mills et al., 2015), others deem them as rather distant relatives (Deloughery et al., 2012). However, the concept "hate" offers a rather superficial and potentially misleading

understanding of the nature of these types of events. “Fear” might be a more appropriate term, although “love” (of nation, people, or culture) could in some cases be equally relevant. In any case, how activists *feel* is probably not the best indicator for distinguishing between criminal violence (hate crimes) and terrorism (and would be impossible to measure anyway).

To distinguish between criminal and terrorist violence, I therefore emphasize targeting strategy and stated motive rather than feelings and inner motivation. One practical reason is that the types of open sources used in this study, such as newspaper articles, typically contain enough information to establish whether a victim was attacked because (s)he belongs to some pre-defined target group, or because of some non-political or personal motive. All violent attacks causing physical harm and whose target selection – minority groups, political adversaries, or government representatives – are determined by authoritarian right-wing ideas (intolerance towards difference from a nationalist or ethnic majority point of view) are here considered to be right-wing violence, irrespective of what the perpetrator’s inner motivation or feelings (hate/fear/love/confusion) might have been.

Furthermore, if available information can establish that such violent attacks were also

ineluctably political in aims and motives; designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target; and conducted *either* by an organization with an identifiable chain of command or conspirational cell structure or by individuals or a small collection of individuals directly influenced by the ideological aims or example of some existent terrorist movement and/or its leaders

(Hoffman, 2006, p. 40)

they qualify as terrorism. In most cases, such information is not available, and the question of criminal violence versus terrorism remains open. However, to remedy this inherent limitation, I distinguish between spontaneous and premeditated attacks in the dataset that I developed for this thesis. Spontaneous attacks rarely qualify as terrorism. Premeditated attacks are closer to fulfilling the criteria of most standard terrorism definitions (Schmid, 2011a), although one can never know for sure unless the perpetrators openly reveal their targeting strategy and motive.

### **Radical versus extreme actors**

To investigate RTV’s underlying causes in the context of Western liberal democracies, I have found it necessary to distinguish between far right actors operating within the democratic rules, such as political parties, and antidemocratic extra-parliamentary actors. I therefore propose a slightly altered version of Bobbio’s distinction between democratic moderates and



antidemocratic (authoritarian) extremists, dividing his extremists into two subtypes: (1) radicals, whose political ideas may be authoritarian, but who use conventional democratic means such as elections or peaceful demonstrations to influence politics; and (2) militants or extremists, who openly reject democracy and favour violent or other non-conventional means to generate revolutionary change.

This radical–extreme distinction has proved important for two reasons. The first is that some existing literature tends to conflate radical and extreme right actors, resulting in the potentially bewildering notion that non-violent and violent behaviour can be explained using the same theories (Copsey, 2013; Fekete, 2012; Wilkinson, 1981, 1995). In other words, it is assumed that radical right parties pave the way for more extreme forms of activism, including violence and terrorism. This assumption seems to be motivated by a strong desire, particularly among anti-fascist groups, to portray radical and extreme right actors as similar components of a larger phenomenon seen as a fundamental threat to Western liberal democracy: fascism. However, besides being an exceptionally evasive concept, the diffusion of fascist ideas in West European societies remains a rather trivial explanation of RTV. To be sure, many such violent events may be related to fascist ideas or sentiments. However, rather than exposing these actors' proclivity towards fascism (whatever that is), one should rather try to identify the conditions under which such ideas translate into actual violence and terrorism.

The second reason why the radical–extreme distinction has proven important relates to the symbiotic relationship between radical and extreme actors. Contrary to existing assumptions about radical right actors paving the way for extreme right activism and violence (see e.g. Bonikowski & Gidron, 2016, p. 12), my research suggests that these two actor types may be involved in a negative symbiotic relationship. That is, where the radical right is strong, the extreme right appears to be weak, and vice versa. This is certainly not a new idea, but is one that has been observed by several scholars before (Caiani et al., 2012, pp. 77–78; Koopmans, 1996). However, more research is still needed on this relationship before drawing any final conclusions.

In any event, the radical–extreme distinction remains essential to anyone interested in understanding why some right-wing activists turn to terrorism and violence, while the large majority remain non-violent (while being mindful that this distinction involves several grey zones in practice). I therefore distinguish consistently between radical (democratic/non-violent)

and extreme- (antidemocratic/violent) right actors in this thesis, while referring to the far right as a collective term comprising both actor types when appropriate.

## **Existing theory and literature**

The existing RTV literature may be characterized as diverse, disorganized, and discontinuous, which is also reflected in existing reviews and discussions of it (Bjørge, 1995b; Bjørge & Witte, 1993b; Heitmeyer, 2003, 2005). Dominant theories or ongoing theoretical debates are hard to come across, exempting Sprinzak's (1995) theory of split delegitimization, which has been considered as incomplete by a number of scholars.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the existing literature is made up of contributions from many different disciplines that rarely speak to each other, including but not limited to history (Ferraresi, 1996; Harrison, 1989; Löow, 2000; Macklin, 2017), criminology (Chermak et al., 2013; Hamm, 1993; Kerodal et al., 2015), sociology (Fangen, 2001a; Simi et al., 2016; Willems, 1995), political science (Lipset & Raab, 1970; Sprinzak, 1995; Weinberg, 1995), and political psychology (Adorno, 1950; Stenner, 2005). Providing a concise review of the RTV literature is therefore a challenging task.

I begin my review by briefly discussing the relevance of three more general yet closely related fields: (1) the study of radical and extreme right politics; (2) terrorism studies; and (3) social movement studies. I do so because, at face value, all three fields come across as highly relevant, while a closer look shows that the first two (politics and terrorism) generally concern phenomena that are slightly different from RTV, while the third (social movements) may offer a more fruitful foundation for developing new RTV theory. Next, I present different explanations proposed in existing RTV research. I have categorized these explanations according to their corresponding levels of analysis (macro-meso-micro). Alternative ordering principles would certainly be possible, such as by way of discipline, method, time, or geography. However, I believe this categorization is most relevant for preparing future theory development, which should combine elements from different levels of analysis. Finally, I briefly discuss three shortcomings that constrain current RTV research from moving ahead: (1)

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<sup>2</sup> Sprinzak merits recognition for having developed the first universal RTV theory. However, his theory and corresponding typology have been criticised for being “too simplistic” (Bjørge, 1995b, p. 7), for ignoring the dynamics of mass politics (Wilkinson, 1995), for underestimating the state as primary enemy (Kaplan, 1995, pp. 74–87), for being inconsistent with empirical evidence (Köhler, 2017, pp. 252–253), and for not satisfying basic typological criteria (Ravndal, 2015). Furthermore, it is rarely applied in current research (an exception being Kerodal et al., 2015).

a lack of comparative designs; (2) a lack of complex explanations, and (3) a lack of multilevel analysis.

## **Related fields**

### ***Radical and extreme right politics***

A logical starting point for students of right-wing terrorism and violence would be the study of radical and extreme right politics. (For a recent review of this literature, see Mudde, 2016.) However, anyone browsing this field will soon realize that it is heavily dominated by research on political parties and their voters, while studies of the extra-parliamentary far right (e.g. those using violence) are rare, particularly within the top journals. We must therefore consider whether theories meant to explain electoral support to political parties may also be used to explain terrorism and violence. While some general preconditions could be relevant for understanding both right-wing voting and right-wing violence, such as grievances related to immigration, they do not help distinguish cases with extensive RTV from cases with moderate or low RTV. For example, Sweden, Denmark, and France have all experienced problems related to high immigration, but only Sweden experienced extensive RTV relative to population size between 1990 and 2015, as this thesis shows. One should keep in mind that, unlike voting, political violence is a rare event in today's Western Europe, a phenomenon that most people never experience and that occurs only under special circumstances. Right-wing voting and right-wing violence therefore require different explanations because voting theories cannot explain when and why some activists turn to violence and terrorism, while the large majority remain non-violent.

### ***Terrorism studies***

To answer this last question, a second logical starting point for students of right-wing terrorism and violence would be the field of terrorism studies. However, most terrorism research is concerned with organizations, groups, and networks whose levels of strategy and organization far exceed those of most contemporary violent perpetrators on the far right in Western Europe. This apparent mismatch between organized terrorist groups and networks on one hand, and less organized violent right-wing perpetrators on the other is also reflected in the relatively low number of articles on RTV in leading terrorism journals such as *Terrorism and Political Violence* (TPV) and *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (SCT), particularly during the 2000s (see Figure I).

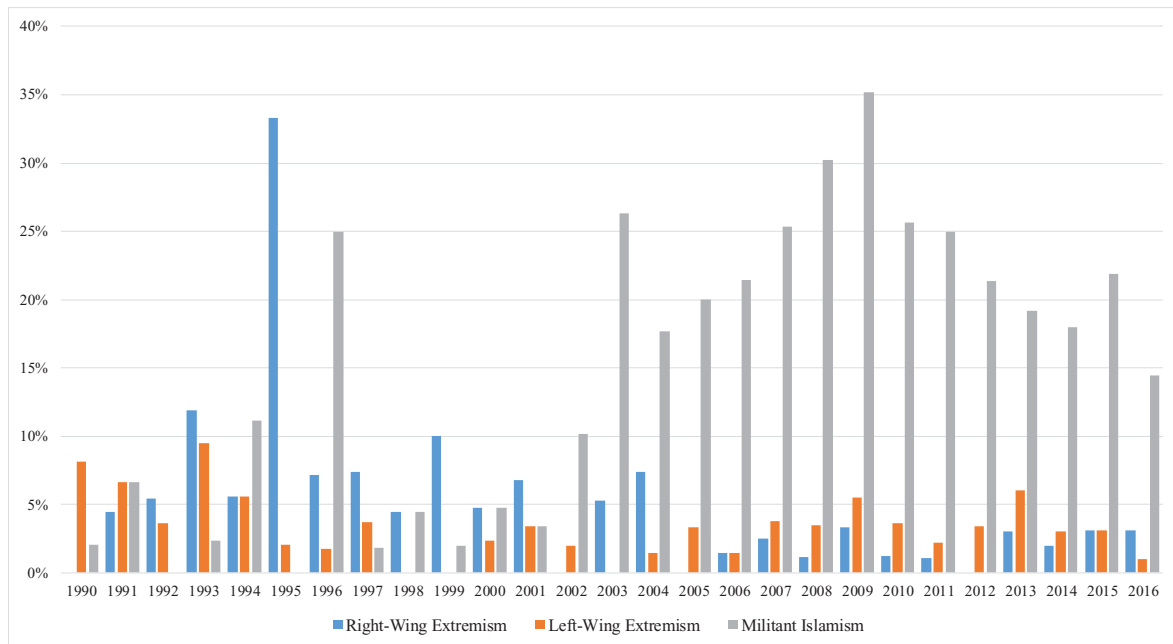


Figure 1. Share of articles covering right-wing extremism, left-wing extremism and militant Islamism in TPV and SCT. Note that in 1995, TPV published a special issue on terror from the extreme right.

Most violent acts committed by right-wing perpetrators in Western Europe over the past years simply do not qualify as terrorism (as defined above), thereby making terrorism studies less relevant for explaining this type of more loosely organized and often spontaneous violence (apart from those few events that actually qualify as terrorism). Furthermore, although terrorism research has expanded exponentially over the past 15 years, the field has become heavily dominated by studies of Islamist terrorism (see Figure 1). Unlike RTV, Islamist terrorism is rooted in ongoing armed conflicts and orchestrated by well-organized transnational terrorist networks, including in those attacks that occur in Europe (Nesser, 2015). Islamist terrorism therefore seems to grow out of different conditions than RTV. Finally, on a more general level, terrorism studies have been criticized for being too politicized and theoretically underdeveloped by several prominent scholars within this field (Ranstorp, 2007, pp. 1–29; Schmid, 2011b, pp. 11–17; Silke, 2004).

### ***Social movement theory***

Similar criticisms have been raised by social movement scholars, noting that terrorism research has been “oriented more toward developing antiterrorist policies than toward gaining a social science understanding of the phenomenon” (della Porta, 2013, p. 11). Social movement theory has therefore been proposed as a more promising field for explaining terrorism and political violence by small clandestine groups (Beck, 2008; della Porta, 2013, pp. 12–18). Social movements are generally understood as informal networks of groups and individuals using

unconventional means to promote or oppose social change (della Porta & Diani, 2006, pp. 20–22). As such, social movement theory does indeed come across as a promising field, considering that RTV appears to emerge from loose networks of different actors promoting similar goals. Although social movement research has traditionally covered non-violent forms of protest, an increasingly large number of studies apply social movement theory to analyse terrorism and political violence (key contributions include della Porta, 1995, 2013; Tilly, 2003; Wieviorka, 1993), including studies of extreme right violence (Berntzen & Sandberg, 2014; Caiani et al., 2012; Caiani & Kröll, 2015; Gattinara & Froio, 2014; Koopmans, 1996). In other words, there seems to be untapped potential in using social movement theory as a foundation for developing new RTV theory.

### **Existing explanations**

Because dominant theories and theoretical debates about the underlying causes of RTV are hard to come across, it is useful to categorize some existing explanations proposed in the literature. In the following, I organize these explanations according to their corresponding levels of analysis (macro-meso-micro). By macro-explanations, I mean explanations emphasizing societal characteristics at the country level, such as the economy, the political system, or national history. By meso-explanations, I mean explanations emphasizing internal and external dynamics at the group level, such as internal group radicalization mechanisms, as well as extreme right groups' interactions with external actors, such as left-wing activists or the police. By micro-explanations, I mean explanations emphasizing personal characteristics at the individual level, such as socio-economic background, psychological profile, and personality type.

#### ***Macro explanations***

At least five macro-explanations may be derived from the existing literature: ideology, authoritarian experiences, grievances, opportunities, and repression. First, some scholars are mainly concerned with ideology in general and fascism in particular. They tend to highlight the violent but also appealing nature of revolutionary fascism in an increasingly modernized and fluid world as a key to understanding why RTV occurs (Copsey, 2013; Griffin, 1999, 2012; Wilkinson, 1981). Ideology is undoubtedly important for understanding any RTV event because, without the ideological component, the event would not be classified as right wing to begin with. However, the aim here is not to explain single events but rather to explain cross-national variation. Provided that the essence of fascism does not vary substantially over time or

between countries, it does not really help us explain why RTV has been more extensive in some countries than in others, all other things being equal.

Fascism may still matter, however, but more as an experience than as an idea. West European countries with former fascist regimes may be more predisposed to RTV because of certain aftereffects from these authoritarian experiences, such as a more pronounced left–right conflict, a higher acceptance of fascism among certain segments of the population, or historical legacies creating favourable (discursive) opportunities for mobilizing on the extreme right (Gattinara & Froio, 2014). In that case, we would expect RTV to be more extensive in countries with former authoritarian (fascist) regimes than in countries lacking such authoritarian experiences.

Another explanation much inspired by Ted Gurr's book *Why Men Rebel* (1970) relates to social grievances caused by such factors as increased immigration, unemployment, and socio-economic deprivation. According to this approach, people turn to violence because they are angry, and they are angry because they believe they are being denied something they are entitled to, such as a job, or the right to promote the interests of their ethnic group. Immigrants may then easily become scapegoats, and thereby also targets of right-wing violence. This is the dominant explanation provided in Lipset and Raab's (1970) landmark study of the American extreme right. It has also been fronted by the German sociologist Wilhelm Heitmeyer (1993). In addition, more recent research has found a positive association between levels of unemployment and extreme right crimes in Germany (Falk et al., 2011), although previous research shows that unemployed youth only represented a small subset of German RTV offenders (Willems, 1995). In any event, according to grievance-oriented theory, RTV would be more likely in countries with high immigration, high youth unemployment, or extensive socio-economic hardship.

Grievance theory has been criticized, most notably by social movement scholars, for not being able to explain cross-national variation of right-wing violence (Koopmans, 1996), and for failing to connect macro-causes with micro-behaviours (Caiani et al., 2012, p. 9). As an alternative to grievances, these scholars argue that analysing political and discursive opportunities may provide better explanations. More specifically, extreme right mobilization and violence is seen as more likely in countries where support to radical right parties is limited or blocked, thereby channelling people with radical right sympathies into more extreme forms of activism (Koopmans, 1996). Furthermore, racist violence is seen as more likely when the

political elites and the media create favourable discursive opportunities for the extreme right, most notably by framing immigrants as a societal threat (Koopmans, 1996; Koopmans & Olzak, 2004). Thus, according to opportunity-oriented social movement research, RTV should be more extensive in countries where radical right parties have limited support, in particular if immigrants are also being framed negatively by the political elites and the media.

Finally, some scholars have noted that repressive measures meant to curb radical right actors and opinions have a tendency to fuel more extreme forms of activism (Art, 2011, pp. 44–49; Minkenberg, 2006). These observations tie into a larger debate on how to approach radical right parties, and whether repression and exclusion of such parties and their sympathisers have the desired effects, or if such measures only contribute to further polarization (Eatwell & Mudde, 2004; Kirshner, 2014; Pedahzur, 2001; Van Spanje & Van Der Brug, 2007). On this note, existing research finds that high stigmatization increases the inner spirit of extreme right groups (Simi & Futrell, 2009). Furthermore, different forms and degrees of stigmatization appear to have opposite effects on different types of extreme right activists (Linden & Klandermans, 2006). While extensive repression and stigmatization might fuel violence and militancy, a complete absence of repression and stigmatization might also lead to the same outcome (given that a sizeable militant movement exists), as seems to have been the case in Russia (Enstad, 2015). High or low repression and stigmatization should, in other words, not be seen as mutually exclusive causal conditions, but rather as two alternative paths that may lead to a similar outcome (equifinality).

### *Meso explanations*

At the meso-level, at least two sets of explanations may be derived from the existing literature. While the first set relates to the *internal* dynamics of extreme right groups, the second relates to the *external* dynamics caused by confrontations between these groups and their enemies, such as left-wing activists or the police. Both types of dynamics are present in Sprinzak's (1995) theory of right-wing terrorism, where a process of "spilt delegitimization" between extreme right groups and their enemies may become accelerated by the internal "psychodynamics" of terrorist groups. Notably, Sprinzak (1995, p. 21) argues that "violence, and gradually terrorism, will only emerge when the group involved feels increasingly insecure or threatened [by their enemies]". A number of other studies have also documented these types of internal and external radicalization mechanisms, which appear to be of a universal nature (Bjørge, 1997; Fangen, 2001a; Hamm, 1993; Löow, 1993; Simi et al., 2016). The most systematic exposition to date is provided by della Porta in her recent book *Clandestine Political Violence* (2013), tracing causal

mechanisms such as “escalating policing” and “competitive escalation” (within and between extremist groups) across different contexts and ideological spaces, including the extreme right. Considering the universal nature of these dynamics, it is primarily the external confrontational dynamics that can be expected to vary substantially across countries. We would thus expect RTV to be more extensive in countries where the militant left is strong and active, or in countries with the most repressive forms of policing.

### ***Micro explanations***

At the micro-level, three sets of explanations are routinely used to explain the violent behaviour of RTV perpetrators: (1) their socio-economic background, (2) their psychological profile, and (3) their personality type. First, there seems to be little doubt that a considerable proportion of RTV perpetrators come from troubled backgrounds, and that joining an extremist group often represents compensation for some personal problem rather than a desire to promote a political agenda. Previous research shows that many of those who join extreme right groups do it for some non-political reason such as a search for meaning and belonging, protection, a sense of brotherhood, or simply adventure seeking (Bjørge, 1997; Blazak, 2001; Simi et al., 2016; Willems, 1995).

Second, a considerable proportion of RTV perpetrators, most notably those operating alone, suffer from some sort of personality disorder or mental illness (Corner & Gill, 2015; Gill et al., 2014). Psychological problems have also been prevalent among organized members of extreme right terrorist groups (Hoffman, 1982, pp. 18–19), and in many cases such problems can be related to childhood trauma (Simi et al., 2016).

Finally, political psychologists have for decades been trying to disentangle the relationship between the so-called “authoritarian personality” and various forms of intolerant behaviour, including violence. The authoritarian personality was originally introduced by Adorno et al. (1950) as an attempt to understand the atrocities committed by Nazi Germany during WWII. This book has generated an extensive but also highly contested body of research, aiming to identify certain personality traits making some people more susceptible to authoritarian or fascist ideas and behaviour than others (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988, 1996; R. Christie & Jahoda, 1954). As late as 2001, this research strand was described as “the most deeply flawed work of prominence in political psychology” (Martin, 2001, p. 1), mainly because it continually failed to match empirical evidence with theoretical expectations. However, that was before Stenner’s



(2005) theory of the authoritarian dynamic was introduced, resolving many of the empirical inconsistencies and tautologies that this field had been marred with for more than half a century.

Stenner's empirically dense analysis – combining surveys, psychological experiments, and interviews – includes the following relevant findings and implications: (1) intolerance towards difference is not necessarily rare or extreme, but rather a stable and inherently human trait or innate predisposition present among segments of most populations; (2) such intolerant (authoritarian) predispositions only translate into actual intolerant attitudes and behaviour when the people holding them experience threats against their inherent need for sameness, oneness, and group authority; (3) being an innate human disposition, intolerance cannot be easily unlearned; and (4) “exposure to difference, talking about difference, and applauding difference – the hallmarks of liberal democracy – are the surest ways to aggravate those who are innately intolerant, and to guarantee the increased expression of their predispositions in manifestly intolerant attitudes and behaviours” (Stenner, 2005, p. 330).

Summing up, in line with grievance theory, research on RTV perpetrators' socio-economic backgrounds suggests that we would expect more RTV in countries where the proportion of people living in poor socio-economic conditions is high. Regarding the psychology of RTV perpetrators, it is difficult to ascertain whether the proportion of people suffering from psychological problems varies enough between West European countries also to have an influence on the extent of RTV. Finally, although the proportion of people with authoritarian dispositions seems to be stable across populations, Stenner shows that it is the extent to which these people experience threats against their preferred way of life that matters. Therefore, we would expect RTV to be more extensive in countries experiencing threats to “the authoritarian lifestyle”, such as high exposure to diversity, poor leadership, or societal fragmentation and polarization.

### **Shortcomings**

As the above review illustrates, the RTV literature is rather diverse, involving many different explanations at different levels of analysis. Notwithstanding this theoretical diversity, much of the literature suffers from the same three shortcomings: (1) a bias towards case studies and a lack of comparative designs suitable for theory testing; (2) a failure to develop complex explanatory models investigating combinations of causal conditions rather than trying to isolate the effects of only one or two independent variables; and (3) a failure to connect explanations from different levels of analysis. This thesis primarily answers the first two shortcomings,

although I do propose a new theoretical framework that might cater to the third in my discussion of future research at the end of this introductory chapter.

### ***Lack of comparative designs***

Unlike many other conflict research fields, most notably the civil war literature, the RTV literature includes few comparative studies, particularly at the cross-national level (notable exceptions include Bjørge, 1997; Caiani et al., 2012; Koopmans, 1996). This shortcoming follows directly from the lack of systematic events data described earlier. Consequently, the literature is heavily dominated by historical, ethnographic, and micro-sociological case studies of specific individuals (Berntzen & Sandberg, 2014; S. Christie, 1984; Gardell, 2015; Hemmingby & Bjørge, 2016), groups (Fromm, 1998; Gattinara & Froio, 2014; Harrison, 1989; Jackson, 2014; Köhler, 2014; Lowles, 2001), networks (Griffin, 2003; Jackson et al., 2011; Schlembach, 2013), and national movements (Fangen, 2001a; Ferraresi, 1996; Ibarra, 2011; Karpantschov & Mikkelsen, 2016; Köhler, 2017; Löow, 1995; Pekonen et al., 1999; Skenderovic, 2009). Such case studies are highly valuable for investigating local dynamics and mechanisms at the meso- and micro-levels. However, to develop a consistent RTV theory, we need to compare these mechanisms across cases and contexts and connect them with relevant conditions at the macro-level.

### ***Lack of complex explanations***

Considering the multitude of different explanations introduced above, placing your bets on only one or two of them seems risky. Most likely, RTV typically results from different combinations of different conditions in different contexts. However, in those few cases where scholars have been able to generate events data suitable for analysing variation across time or place, they tend to investigate the isolated effect of only one or two independent variables, such as unemployment (Falk et al., 2011), immigration (Garcia, 2015), or at best the interaction between economy and immigration (McLaren, 1999), rather than trying to understand how several different variables might interact. This shortcoming may result from methodological rather than theoretical constraints, because causal complexity involving three or more interacting variables is difficult to model using conventional statistics. However, as I explain in the methods section below, alternative methods designed precisely to capture such causal complexities do exist.

### ***Lack of multilevel analysis***

A final shortcoming illustrated by the above review is that much RTV research investigates dynamics on only one level of analysis, thereby failing to develop explanations that connect with the other levels. However, two notable exceptions to this rule might guide us out of this quagmire. The first is a conceptual framework for analysing mobilization on the extreme right, developed by social movement scholars precisely to capture causal mechanisms that intervene between macro-causes and micro-behaviours (Caiani et al., 2012). By integrating concepts such as political opportunities, organizational resources, framing, and action repertoires into one framework, this contribution may serve as a blueprint for multilevel analysis in future research.

The second notable exception is Stenner's (2005) theory of the authoritarian dynamic. By combining individual dispositions at the micro-level with societal conditions at the macro-level, most notably the extent of societal polarization, Stenner convincingly explains why intolerant attitudes and behaviours have been more prevalent in some countries than in others. Although Stenner does not analyse violence specifically but rather all forms of intolerant behaviours and attitudes, I believe that her theory is relevant for explaining how intolerant opinions may become salient within a large segment of a population, preparing the ground for extreme right mobilization and violence.

## **Research design**

I will now present the research design of the thesis, that is, my overarching strategy for answering the three research questions introduced earlier. I begin by outlining my underlying philosophical assumptions. I then describe the different methods used to answer my three research questions. Finally, I describe the different types of data used in this thesis.

### **Philosophy of science**

This thesis is founded on a philosophy of science that is fairly optimistic about the possibility of making reasonably accurate inferences about (mostly non-observable) causal relationships and mechanisms based on theoretically informed empirical investigations and observations. More specifically, I adhere to the *scientific realist* philosophy of science, characterized by (1) a belief in the existence of a world independent of our minds (while recognizing that our world observations are influenced by prevailing concepts, ideas, and theories); (2) by believing that this world consists of both observable and unobservable (social) phenomena that may be fairly

accurately described and explained by matching theories with empirical evidence; and (3) by seeking ever deeper layers of explanation by mechanisms (Bhaskar, 1978; Churchland, 1979; Elster, 1989; Lane, 1996; Suppe, 1989).

Although explanation by mechanisms may be seen as an ideal, or perhaps rather as a final stage of the research process, the extent to which such causal mechanisms can be fully spelled out and subsequently tested empirically via process tracing (Bennett & Checkel, 2015) depends on the level of progress any given research field has reached. Causal mechanisms typically serve to explain how some independent variable or causal condition influences the dependent variable or outcome of interest (Checkel, 2006; Elster, 1989; George & Bennett, 2005; Hedström & Swedberg, 1998; Mayntz, 2004; Tilly, 2001). In other words, before investigating the causal mechanisms linking some variable or condition X with the outcome Y, this hypothetical causal relationship between X and Y must first be established, at least theoretically, if not also empirically.

As the above theory and literature review shows, a number of causal relationships have been proposed by the existing RTV literature. However, few of them have been tested empirically using comparative designs. Thus, instead of cherry-picking only one or two proposed causal relationships for deeper analysis by mechanisms or statistical analysis, and thereby risking making the wrong selection or missing out on some other important causal condition, I begin with a wider selection of conditions proposed by the existing literature as conducive to RTV. I then compare cases systematically to identify the most relevant (combinations of) of these conditions. Such comparative analysis may thus be seen as a first and necessary step towards more case-oriented analysis aimed at tracing the causal mechanisms implied by the causal conditions that turn out to be the most relevant.

## **Methods**

To answer my three research questions, this thesis employs a mixed-methods research design (Johnson et al., 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), combining typological analysis (RQ 1), descriptive analysis of old and new events datasets (RQs 1 and 2), qualitative comparative analysis (RQ 3), and comparative case analysis (RQs 1 and 3). In the following, I briefly describe how these methods are used to answer my three research questions.

***RQ 1: What characterizes the most important RTV perpetrator types in post-WWII Western Europe?***

To answer this question, I first developed a practical method for reviewing and developing typologies. Becoming an increasingly popular analytical tool in the study of terrorism and political violence, typologies are useful for categorizing data, characterizing and comparing cases, and developing theory (Ganor, 2008; Marsden, 2014; Marsden & Schmid, 2011). However, to maximize a typology's scientific utility, certain criteria must be fulfilled. I therefore identified frequently cited publications on typologies in quality social science journals (D. Collier et al., 2012; Doty & Glick, 1994; Elman, 2005) as well as authoritative books (Bailey, 1994; George & Bennett, 2005; McKinney, 1950). I then developed a list of five criteria that good typologies should satisfy according to this literature (see the summary of Article I below).

Next, I used these criteria to review critically one existing RTV typology (Sprinzak, 1995) and to propose a new typology, specifically tailored to the case of Western Europe. In creating my own typology, I also used descriptive statistics on attack and casualty frequencies derived from the TWEED dataset, in combination with comparative case studies, to identify and characterize the most important RTV perpetrator types in post-WWII Western Europe. These case studies were in turn primarily based on secondary sources, most notably historical and journalistic accounts of some of the most important right-wing terrorist actors in post-WWII Western Europe (Bocca, 1968; S. Christie, 1984; Ferraresi, 1996; Fromm, 1998; Harrison, 1989; Henissart, 1971; Heléne Lööw, 2000; Ryan, 2003; Salas, 2003; Schmidt, 1993).

***RQ 2: What is the record of RTV events in post-1990 Western Europe?***

To answer this question, I had to create a new dataset using available open source information documenting right-wing violence across Western Europe (Ravndal, 2016). Developing a fairly consistent account of such an obscure and poorly documented phenomenon as RTV has indeed been a challenge. As the number of violent events is far too large to be dealt with rigorously and systematically, the RTV dataset therefore includes only the most severe types of events. Such events are fewer in number and less likely to go unnoticed. More specifically, the dataset includes (1) attacks with a deadly or near deadly outcome, (2) attacks involving active use of deadly weapons such as knives, firearms, and bombs, (3) major attack plots involving use of deadly weapons, (4) discoveries of bomb-making materials or major arms depositaries belonging to right-wing activists, and (5) other violent events that undoubtedly qualify as acts

of terrorism. Vandalism and other attacks causing material damage only, such as fire bombs targeting empty buildings at night, are not included.

A majority of events included in the RTV dataset are based on online newspaper articles. Other key sources include activist autobiographies, official and unofficial RTV chronologies and datasets, anti-fascist blogs and bulletins, personal communication with RTV experts, court documents, online videos, and in some cases secondary literature. Multiple sources have been gathered for nearly all events, most of which are available online from links embedded in the publicly available dataset.<sup>3</sup>

The dataset comprises 578 events, including 190 deadly events causing 303 deaths. I have manually researched each event and coded them on a range of variables, including time and location, perpetrator and victim characteristics, organizational affiliations, weapon types, and number of casualties. I have also made an effort to include *all* deadly events, for example by contacting RTV experts from different West European countries. Considering the severity of political and racist murders, such events rarely go unnoticed. We may therefore assume that the dataset covers (nearly) all deadly RTV events between 1990 and 2015. Furthermore, deadly RTV events arguably also constitute a reasonably good indicator of right-wing violence more generally. Political and racist murders rarely occur in complete isolation from less severe forms of violence. The dataset can therefore be used to compare frequencies of deadly events across time and space, and to make causal inferences about RTV more generally from these patterns with reasonable confidence.

***RQ 3: Why have some West European countries experienced considerably more RTV than others between 1990 and 2015?***

To answer this question, I first applied qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) to investigate how six causal conditions proposed by existing research as being conducive to RTV (immigration, socio-economic hardship, authoritarian legacies, radical right support, radical right repression, and left-wing terrorism and militancy) relate to the extent of RTV in 18 West European countries. QCA is a set-theoretic method (Mahoney, 2001, 2007, 2008; Ragin & Rihoux, 2009; Schneider & Wagemann, 2013) invented and still being developed by the American sociologist Charles Ragin (Ragin, 1987, 2008, 2014). Ragin developed QCA because he was getting increasingly frustrated with the difficulties of modelling complex causal relationships using conventional statistics (Ragin, 2014, pp. vii–xxx). To investigate causal

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<sup>3</sup> The dataset is available at <http://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/rtv>

complexity such as equifinality (multiple causal paths to the same outcome) and conjunctural causation (conditions that become necessary or sufficient for an outcome only in combination), correlation-based methods such as statistical analysis require extensive interaction modelling whose results may be difficult to interpret meaningfully once the number of interacting variables exceeds two or three. Unlike correlation-based models designed to isolate the effects of only one or two independent variables on an outcome variable, set-theoretic methods – and QCA in particular – are specifically designed to capture causal complexities such as equifinality and conjunctural causation (Schneider & Wagemann, 2013, pp. 78–79).

Regarding cross-national variation of RTV, both forms of causal complexity appear to be present. For example, immigration may be relevant for explaining why countries such as Sweden and Germany have experienced extensive RTV. At the same time, immigration has been limited (until the recent migration crisis) in countries such as Italy and Spain where RTV has nevertheless been extensive, indicating equifinality. Furthermore, high immigration alone does not necessarily lead to extensive RTV, as illustrated by cases such as Switzerland and France, unless it is combined with other conditions, indicating conjunctural causation. Thus, by using the QCA method, I was able to match every logically possible combination of my six causal conditions with the available empirical evidence. This analysis resulted in two so-called causal recipes (configurations of causal conditions) that consistently distinguish countries with extensive RTV experience from those with moderate or low RTV experience.<sup>4</sup>

In Article IV, I go on to investigate one of these recipes using a more conventional comparative case study design, also known as the method of structured focused comparison (George & Bennett, 2005, pp. 67–72). Originally developed by Alexander George (1979), this method:

is “structured” in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings of cases possible. The method is “focused” in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined.

(George & Bennett, 2005, p. 68).

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<sup>4</sup> I also experimented with different statistical models using the number of deadly RTV events per country-year (N=450) as my dependent variable. Although several statistically significant relationships were identified, the different models (the most relevant being a negative binominal count model) yielded inconsistent findings, most likely reflecting limited variation on my independent variables, and the fact that some variables seem to be relevant in some cases but not in others.

In my study, I focus on the extent of right-wing terrorism and militancy in four Nordic countries between 1990 and 2015, aiming to explain why right-wing terrorism and militancy have been more widespread in Sweden than in Denmark, Finland and Norway. In doing so, I first describe and compare the extent of violent events and militant activism in each country. I then pursue questions related to the Nordic militant movements' organizational resources, political opportunities, and collective action framing – concepts proposed by existing social movement research (Caiani et al., 2012) as particularly relevant for explaining extreme right mobilization.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the arguments presented in Article IV are also set-theoretic in nature (i.e. they could have been presented in terms of set relations), although the article does not make this point explicit because no particular set-theoretic method was used in this more conventional comparative case study. QCA can thus be fruitfully complemented by case studies in the same way as large-N statistical analyses can be (Schneider & Rohlfing, 2013). However, as opposed to large-N statistical analysis, QCA may also be used for medium- and even low-N studies. Yet adopting a QCA design should not be justified in terms of case numbers. Its justification should rather rely on an expectation that the phenomenon of interest is best understood in terms of set relations (Schneider & Wagemann, 2013, p. 12). Such relations are particularly relevant if you expect there to be more than one causal path to your outcome of interest (equifinality), and if you expect these paths to contain causal condition that become necessary or sufficient for the outcome only in combination (conjunctural causation).

## **Data**

This thesis builds on extensive and varied data. Of the many different types of data sources I have used, the internet constitutes the most important. Besides online sources, the thesis also draws on existing datasets as well as on a large collection of written primary and secondary sources. In the following, I briefly describe how each type of data has been used in my research.

### ***Online sources***

This thesis would not have existed without the internet. I have used online sources for two main purposes. The first was to create my own events dataset, which was also made publicly available online in 2016. Most events registered in the RTV dataset are based on online sources, usually including two or more independent sources per event.

The second purpose was to trace the evolution of right-wing terrorism and militancy in the Nordic countries between 1990 and 2015. The 2000–2015 period is poorly covered by existing



research, and the internet has therefore proven to be an invaluable source, considering the large amount of information posted by these actors themselves, by their leftist adversaries, and by journalists. Combined, this information gives a reasonably accurate picture of these movements' activities. However, such information must be handled with caution and checked against other sources when possible.

I have gathered and organized most of these online sources in a digital library, using the web-based research tool Zotero. My RTV Zotero library currently counts more than 2500 different items (webpages, newspaper articles, online documents, videos, blogs, literature etc.) organized in different folders, including one for each West European country.

### ***Datasets***

My second most important data source has been various datasets. Most notably, I analyse events data from the TWEED dataset (available online in SPSS format) in my first article to identify the most important RTV perpetrators in post-WWII Western Europe. In Article III, I also use events data from the DTV dataset (available online in SPSS format) to corroborate my own RTV data, and to inform my assessment of the extent of left-wing terrorism in Western Europe between 1990 and 2015. I have also used Nesser's (2015) jihadi terrorism dataset to compare the extent of Islamist terrorism across West European countries since 1990.

Besides these terrorist events datasets, I use Eurostat data to assess annual asylum seeker frequencies in West European countries between 1990 and 2015, the extent of ethnic diversity in each country, and people's risk of poverty or social exclusion in each country. Finally, I have used data from the World Bank to determine the average level of youth unemployment in all West European countries between 1990 and 2015.

### ***Written primary and secondary sources***

Written primary and secondary sources have been used in this thesis for two main purposes. The first was to code events for the RTV dataset. Although a majority of RTV events are based on online sources, a considerable proportion is also derived from different offline written primary and secondary sources such as activists' autobiographies, historical and journalistic accounts, academic studies, and various reports on racist violence published by international, governmental, and non-governmental organizations (Human Rights First, 2008; Sunderland et al., 2012; Sunderland & Ward, 2011).

The second purpose was to carry out case studies of the most influential groups and movements. For example, the typology proposed in Article I draws on case studies of *l'Organisation de l'Armée Secrete* in France (Bocca, 1968; Harrison, 1989; Henissart, 1971), *Ordine Nero* and *Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari* in Italy (Cento Bull, 2007; Ferraresi, 1996; Laurent & Sutton, 1978), *Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann* in Germany (Fromm, 1998), and Combat 18 in the UK (Lowles, 2001; Ryan, 2003). Furthermore, Article IV provides a comparative case study of right-wing terrorism and militancy in Denmark (Karpantschov & Mikkelsen, 2016), Finland (Pekonen et al., 1999), Norway (Bjørge, 1997; Fangen, 2001a) and Sweden (Löow, 2000, 2015), as well as a case study of the most important contemporary group in the Nordic countries, the Swedish Resistance Movement, and its sister divisions in Finland, Norway and Denmark. To carry out this last case study, a collection of written primary sources published by the Swedish Resistance Movement, including activist magazines, handbooks, and even fiction, was particularly useful.

## **Article summaries**

### **Article I**

#### **Thugs or Terrorists? A Typology of Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe**

Published in *Journal for Deradicalization*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2015.

Article I begins by introducing a new method for reviewing and developing typologies. This method is introduced for two reasons. The first is that a systematic categorization of key RTV perpetrator types in post-WWII Western Europe has been lacking. Considering RTV's multifaceted and complex nature, such categorizations may facilitate sharper distinctions between terrorists and violent thugs, and thereby inform future RTV theories that try to reconcile such different perpetrator types within the same theoretical framework.

The second reason is that the most frequently cited and most widely known publication on right-wing terrorism (Sprinzak, 1995) proposes a typology of right-wing terrorism. This typology is in turn derived from Sprinzak's theory of split delegitimization, also introduced in this same publication. A logical starting point for this PhD project was therefore to assess critically the scientific merits of Sprinzak's theory and corresponding typology, using

established typological criteria. From a broad reading of social science literature on typologies, I therefore derived five criteria that good typologies should satisfy. They should:

1. clearly define the overarching concept of the typology;
2. specify whether the typology is descriptive or explanatory;
3. describe in detail how the types are (inductively and/or deductively) constructed;
4. propose an intuitive model or matrix of the typology; and
5. consider a simpler solution with mutually exclusive types.

Next, by applying these criteria to review Sprinzak's typology step by step, I find that his typology does not fully satisfy any of them. I therefore conclude that an alternative typology of right-wing terrorism and violence is needed.

The article then uses the same five criteria to develop a new typology of right-wing terrorism and violence, specifically tailored to the case of Western Europe. In developing this new typology, I combine events data from the TWEED dataset with a number of case studies to describe and categorize the most salient right-wing terrorist actors and violent perpetrators in post-WWII Western Europe. Having compared different actor types on a range of different variables, including organizational structure, leadership, size, political strategy, affiliations to former regimes, access to military resources, and international connections, I finally reduce the number of variables included in my typology to two: strategy and organization.

Table 1. Typology of right-wing terrorism and violence in Western Europe

	<i>Political strategy</i>	
<i>Organization</i>	Yes	No
Strong	Elite-sponsored groups	Crime syndicates
Loose	Autonomous groups/cells	Mobs/gangs/ hooligans
Absent	Lone actors	Violent loners
<i>Type of violence</i>	Terrorism	Criminal violence

By emphasizing differences in the strategy and organization of perpetrators, this proposed typology offers sharper distinctions – both between different types of perpetrators and between

different forms of violence – than conventional terrorist typologies based primarily on ideological differences.

## **Article II**

### **Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe: Introducing the RTV Dataset**

Published in *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 2016.

This article introduces the RTV dataset, explains how it has been constructed, discusses its strengths and weaknesses, and presents some of its key findings. In addition, the last section of the article proposes six hypotheses aimed at explaining what is perhaps the most puzzling finding emerging from the RTV dataset: that the number of deadly events has declined considerably under conditions commonly assumed to stimulate RTV. These conditions include increased immigration, growing support for radical right parties, Islamist terrorism, and booming youth unemployment rates.

Part one of the article reviews existing terrorism databases and other relevant event chronologies, demonstrating that they do not satisfy the increasingly pressing demand for more systematic RTV events data. This review finds that existing databases and event chronologies are either outdated, miss right-wing events, lack contextual information, rely on poor or no longer available information, omit terrorist plots or non-lethal events, apply overly lax inclusion criteria, or contain data that cannot be compared.

Part two explains how the RTV dataset has been constructed and specifies its inclusion criteria. Most notably, the dataset includes only those events where the target selection – minority groups, political adversaries, or the government – is based on authoritarian right-wing ideas (as defined previously). Furthermore, the dataset includes only violent events of a certain severity, and those with a terroristic quality, as explained in more detail in the methods section above.

The article then moves on to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the RTV dataset, such as the types of open sources used to code each event. This discussion concludes by recognizing that the dataset may be skewed towards countries and time periods that are better documented by available sources, and that deadly RTV events therefore represent the most definitive and reliable measure for analysing variation across time and place.

Next, the article presents some key findings emerging from the dataset, most notably that the number of deadly RTV events has declined considerably in Western Europe since the 1990s (see Figure 2).

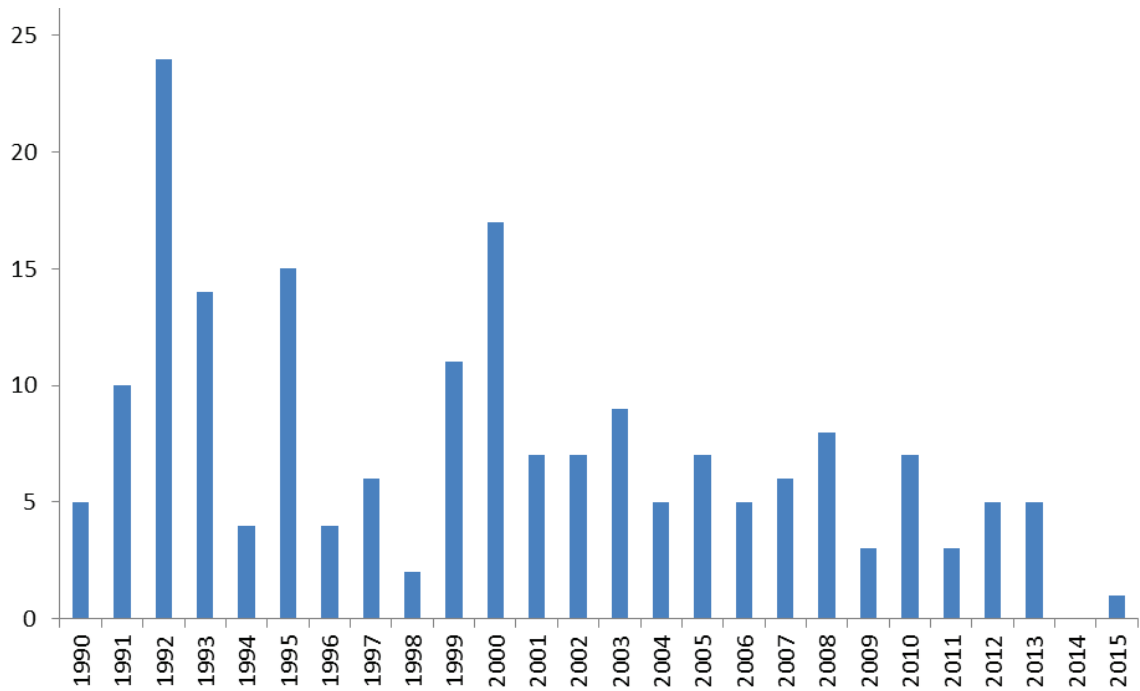


Figure 2. RTV deadly events in Western Europe, 1990–2015 (N=190)

The third and final part of the article briefly introduces six hypotheses that might help explain this decline: less conventional political activism, a shift towards more internet activism, less crime in general, different subcultural practices and action repertoires, more favourable political opportunities, and acceptance of multicultural societies. Finally, the article closes by calling for more comparative RTV research at the cross-national level to investigate how these and other relevant hypotheses might be explored further to identify the conditions under which RTV is most – and least – likely to occur.

### **Article III**

#### **Explaining Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe: Grievances, Opportunities, and Polarization**

Unpublished manuscript.

Article III is aimed at explaining why some West European countries have experienced considerably more RTV than others. This question remains largely unanswered in existing RTV research because (1) events data suitable for cross-national comparisons have been lacking, and (2) existing analyses fail to capture RTV's causal complexity, involving multiple causal paths (equifinality) comprising causal conditions that become sufficient for the outcome only in combination (conjunctural causation). To help fill these gaps, the article uses events data from the RTV dataset in a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) research design.

The article begins by documenting that some West European countries – Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, and Greece – have experienced considerably more RTV per capita than others between 1990 and 2015. To explain this cross-national variation, the article then reviews existing theory and literature to identify the most relevant causal conditions proposed as being conducive to RTV. The selection of causal conditions is informed by three theoretical premises derived from existing research. Building on Hewitt (2003), the first premise states that a sufficient number of dedicated militants is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for extensive RTV to occur. Identifying conditions that might fuel militant mobilization on the far right is therefore an important first step, and both grievances and opportunities come across as relevant in this regard. Next, building on the civil war literature (Ballentine & Sherman, 2003; Bara, 2014; P. Collier & Sambanis, 2005, p. 329; Korf, 2005), the second premise states that grievances and opportunities are more fruitfully approached as complementary rather than as contrasting. Finally, building on civil war research on polarization (Esteban & Schneider, 2008; Montalvo & Reynal-Querol, 2005; Østby, 2008), the third premise states that a highly polarized conflict between far right activists and their enemies represents a third necessary condition for extensive RTV to occur. Using these three premises to guide my selection, six causal conditions listed in Table II are finally included in the QCA analysis that follows.

Table 2. Causal conditions included in the analysis

<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Theoretical basis</i>
Immigration and ethnic diversity	Grievances
Socio-economic hardship	Grievances
Radical right support	Opportunities
Authoritarian legacies	Opportunities
Radical right repression	Polarization
Left-wing terrorism and militancy	Polarization

Next, the article measures and scores these six conditions according to standard QCA procedures (Ragin, 2008; Schneider & Wagemann, 2013). When feeding my scores into the fsQCA software, two causal recipes are derived that have a reasonably good solution consistency score (0.88 for the intermediate solution) and coverage score (0.76 for the intermediate solution). The first recipe involves the combination of high immigration, low electoral support to radical right (anti-immigration) parties, and extensive public repression of radical right actors and opinions. The second recipe involves the combination of socio-economic hardship, authoritarian legacies, and extensive left-wing terrorism and militancy. The first recipe covers North European countries with extensive RTV experiences (Sweden, Germany, and the United Kingdom); the second recipe covers South European countries with extensive RTV experiences (Italy, Greece, and Spain). Notably, both recipes contain elements of “grievances” and “opportunities”, suggesting that these two theories conventionally seen as contrasting (Koopmans, 1996) may be more fruitfully seen as complementary.

In combination, these two causal recipes thus offer a fairly consistent account of why some West European countries have experienced considerably more RTV than others. Robustness tests recommended by the QCA literature (Schneider & Wagemann, 2013, pp. 284–294) also indicate that my findings are reasonably robust. However, considering the inherently explorative nature of QCA analysis and the causal distance between many of the conditions included in this analysis and my outcome variable (RTV), these findings should be seen as provisional rather than definite. Therefore, this article closes by calling for more case-oriented research, aiming to further investigate the causal mechanisms implied by each recipe.

## Article IV

### **Right-Wing Terrorism and Militancy in the Nordic Countries:**

#### **A Comparative Case Study**

Accepted for publication in *Terrorism and Political Violence*.

This article begins by documenting and comparing the evolution of right-wing terrorism and militancy in the Nordic countries between 1990 and 2015. This comparative analysis shows that, in Denmark, Finland and Norway, the right-wing militant movements collapsed during the early 2000s and were replaced by more moderate and democratically oriented organizations and political parties. By contrast, the Swedish militant movement has remained strong and active during the 2000s, and has generated considerably more terrorism and violence between 1990 and 2015 than its Nordic counterparts have. In fact, RTV data suggests that Sweden (with a population of 10 million) has experienced more right-wing terrorism and violence than Denmark, Norway, and Finland combined (with an aggregate population of 16 million). Sweden also hosts by far the most influential contemporary militant groups: *Svenska motståndsrörelsen* (the Swedish Resistance Movement, SRM). To further illustrate cross-national differences, the article therefore includes a separate case study of SRM, showing that this organization has been trying to establish sister divisions in Norway, Finland and Denmark, but with far less success than in Sweden.

Having established that Sweden has experienced considerably more right-wing terrorism and militancy between 1990 and 2015 than the other Nordic countries, the article then seeks to account for Sweden's outlier position. In doing so, the article draws on three concepts proposed by social movement research (Caiani et al., 2012) to explain extreme right mobilization: political opportunities, organizational resources, and frame analysis. Applying these concepts to the Nordic countries, the article finds that Sweden's outlier position may originate from different WWII experiences, leaving Sweden with a stronger and more resilient extreme right movement, but also from receiving more immigrants while lacking influential anti-immigration (radical right) parties, and from conducting a more restrictive public debate on immigration, leaving little room for anti-immigration concerns in the public sphere.

While the first and second explanations are consistent with existing social movement research, the third explanation challenges the dominant view on how the public debate on immigration might influence mobilization and violence. Former studies suggest that elites'



negative framing of immigrants legitimates and thereby triggers right-wing violence (Koopmans, 1996). By contrast, this study suggests that an excessively negative framing of anti-immigration actors and opinions might lead to a similar outcome. One reason is that such moralizing frames might cause frustration and anger among people with far-right sympathies, in particular when problems related to high immigration are substantial but anti-immigration (radical right) parties are weak. Furthermore, such moralizing frames resonate well with the frames produced by the extreme right movement, portraying “politically correct” elites as unwilling to confront the challenges posed by high immigration, and accusing them of marginalizing people with anti-immigration concerns. Such polarizing mechanisms may in turn stimulate terrorism and violence, as some activists end up regarding violent revolution as the only viable way of generating true political change.

## **Summary of main findings**

The aim of this thesis has been to generate new knowledge about the characteristics, extent, and dynamics of RTV in Western Europe after WWII. In doing so, three more specific research questions have been pursued. In this section, I draw on my findings to answer each of these three questions.

### **Research question 1**

#### **What characterizes the most important RTV perpetrator types in post-WWII Western Europe?**

One general emerging from my research is that RTV should be seen as a highly diverse and complex phenomenon emerging from different contexts and situations, rather than as a uniform phenomenon always produced by the same set of causal conditions. This inherent diversity notwithstanding, a few generic RTV actor types may still be derived from the available evidence. Analysing TWEED events data, a key finding from my first article is that only a handful of terrorist groups were behind almost half of all registered right-wing terrorist attacks and more than half of all killings in Western Europe between 1954 and 2004. Case studies of some of these groups, such as *l'Organisation de l'Armée Secrete* in France (Harrison, 1989), *Ordine Nero* and *Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari* in Italy (Ferraresi, 1996), and *Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann* in Germany (Fromm, 1998), show that they were large and well organized “elite-sponsored groups”, operating predominantly between the 1960s and the 1980s in countries with

former authoritarian regimes. Such elite-sponsored groups had up to several hundred militants each and were organized hierarchically with a centralized leadership. Their terrorist campaigns were motivated by international conflicts rather than by immigration, which had yet to become a contested issue in Western Europe. More specifically, their campaigns were products of elite-driven strategies meant to reinstall former authoritarian regimes, or to obstruct their communist enemies from obtaining political power.

These types of elite-sponsored groups gradually disappeared from Western Europe as the Cold War came to an end and the legacies of former authoritarian regimes evaporated. By implication, given Western Europe's current political situation, the threat from strongly organized right-wing terrorist groups appears to be significantly lower today than some 30 to 40 years ago. Assuming that the legacies of former authoritarian regimes continue to evaporate, and democracies consolidate, Western Europe provides less fertile ground and an unlikely operating base for such large and well-organized terrorist groups.

Article I also shows how these elite-sponsored groups were replaced by more loosely organized "subcultural networks" during the late 1980s and early 1990s (Merkl & Weinberg, 1997). In contrast to elite-sponsored groups, subcultural networks have little support beyond their own underground movement and therefore operate under considerably more hostile and repressive conditions. Furthermore, the type of violence committed by these subcultural actors – mobs, skinhead gangs, and hooligans – has been generally less terroristic in nature and more spontaneous, typically targeting immigrants, particularly during the early 1990s (Bjørge & Witte, 1993a). However, from the mid-1990s onwards, some of these loosely organized networks developed into more tightly organized "autonomous groups and cells" inspired by the strategy of leaderless resistance (Fangen, 2001b, pp. 90–104; Kaplan, 1997; Köhler, 2017; Heléne Lööv, 2000, pp. 77–122; Ryan, 2003). Unlike mobs, skinhead gangs and hooligans, such autonomous groups do engage in terrorism and have a much higher kill rate per attack – almost 1:1 – as I show in Article II. However, they have also been relatively rare compared to most other generic actor types described in this thesis, such as "lone actors", which brings us to the last terrorist type included in the typology proposed in Article I.

Lone-actor terrorism is in this thesis understood as terrorist attacks or plots that nobody except the individual perpetrator or plotter is aware of until an attack occurs or a plot is discovered (for alternative conceptualizations, see Nesser, 2012). While lone actors carry out their operational planning in isolation, they are generally seen as strongly influenced by existing

political movements, typically through online activities (Berntzen & Sandberg, 2014; Kaplan et al., 2014). Recent research also suggests that, while most terrorists are normal, psychologically speaking, a significant share of lone actors suffer from some form of mental illness or disorder (Corner & Gill, 2015). One study, which analysed 198 lone actor attacks, found that right-wing actors constituted the second largest category (17%), next to attacks in which the perpetrator's ideological conviction remains unknown (Ramón Spaaij, 2012). A similar study of 119 lone actors found that 34% were right-wingers (Gill et al., 2014). In short, lone actor terrorism is not exclusively a right-wing phenomenon, but right-wing motivations have been overrepresented compared to other political ideologies.

## **Research question 2**

### **What is the record of RTV events in post-1990 Western Europe?**

Perhaps the most remarkable finding from my analyses of the RTV dataset is that the annual number of deadly RTV events has declined considerably in Western Europe since the 1990s, culminating in no deadly events in 2014, and only one in 2015. Furthermore, this decline has occurred under conditions normally assumed to foster RTV, such as increased immigration (Garcia, 2015), rising unemployment (Falk et al., 2011), Islamist terrorism (Eatwell, 2006), and growing support to radical right parties (Wilkinson, 1995). Stable or declining attack frequencies are also documented by several national hate crimes statistics covering right-wing violence in different West European countries during the same period, as is shown in Appendix I to Article II. These findings challenge widespread assumptions about RTV being on the rise in Western Europe – a popular misconception partly created by media reports based on anecdotal evidence rather than on systematic events data.

Another relevant finding from the RTV dataset is that premeditated attacks have been carried out predominantly by gangs and lone actors, and less frequently by organized groups or their affiliated members. Furthermore, the majority of killings have been committed by gangs, unorganized groups, and lone actors – and not by organized militants. These findings, too, challenge existing assumptions about who the most important RTV perpetrators are, and support the claim made in Article I that organized RTV is becoming increasingly rare in Western Europe. They also suggest that, while lone actors may pose the most significant terrorist threat today, less spectacular forms of violence committed by unorganized groups and individuals represent the most likely threat. Finally, contrary to recent research which has found that lone actor terrorism is on rise in Europe (Ellis et al., 2016), an increase in the number of

lone actor attacks between 1990 and 2015 cannot be observed in the RTV data. This last finding is in line with RTV research from the United States, finding that lone actor terrorism has generally not increased during the past decade (Gruenewald et al., 2013).

Turning to victims, two groups stand out as by far the most frequently targeted: immigrants (249 events) and leftists (138 events). Other significant target groups include government representatives (25 events), homeless people (25 events), and homosexuals (23 events). Jews have been targeted less frequently (7 events) than Muslims (28 events). This observation resonates with a general ideological reorientation by many extreme right groups that no longer consider their main enemies to be Communists or Zionists, but rather Islamists and Muslims more generally (Mammone et al., 2012, 2013).

In terms of weapons use, RTV perpetrators most often resort to knives (119 events), unarmed beating and kicking (108 events), explosives (86 events), firearms (85 events), and blunt instruments such as iron bars, bats, or wooden sticks (68 events). In addition, firebombs (38 attacks) and arson (20 attacks) have also been frequently used. Truly complex attacks that combine explosives with firearms have so far occurred only once (the 22 July attacks in Norway).

Finally, analysing deadly RTV events across time and space reveals several interesting patterns for further explanatory analysis. One is that, notwithstanding the general decline described above, some West European countries have experienced considerably more RTV than others between 1990 and 2015.

### **Research question 3**

#### **Why have some West European countries experienced considerably more RTV than others between 1990 and 2015?**

Before answering this question, let me begin by presenting some negative findings, that is, causal conditions that were initially included in my analyses but turned out not to form part of any consistent explanation. Most notably, anti-immigration sentiments in the general population do not seem to have a strong influence on RTV. A number of countries that (according to Card et al., 2005) score high on anti-immigration sentiments, such as Finland and Portugal, score low on RTV, while other countries with high RTV scores, such as Sweden and Germany, score low on anti-immigration sentiments. This does not, of course, mean that anti-immigration views do not exist in countries such as Sweden and Germany. However, in these

countries, such opinions could be clustering within certain segments of the population perceived by the majority as racists, while in countries like Finland and Portugal, such opinions could be more widespread and therefore generally perceived as less racist.

A second causal condition that does not form part of any consistent explanation is youth unemployment. A number of countries that score fairly high on youth unemployment, such as Portugal, Finland, Belgium, and France, score low on RTV, while other countries with high RTV scores, such as Germany and the UK, do not have particularly high youth unemployment rates compared to many other West European countries. This may come as a surprise, because we tend to assume that unemployed youths are overrepresented among violent RTV offenders. Yet previous research has shown that unemployed youth only represented a small subset of violent RTV offenders in Germany (Willems, 1995). That being said, we should also be mindful that different patterns might emerge if we disaggregate from the country level to capture sub-national variations (Falk et al., 2011). In any event, youth unemployment does not seem to offer any consistent explanation of RTV, even when being combined with other relevant conditions, as I have done in my QCA analyses.

I now turn to those (combinations of) conditions that, according to my analyses, may be more relevant for explaining why RTV has been more extensive in some countries than in others. In particular, two causal recipes were derived from my QCA analysis. In the first recipe, grievances caused by problems related to high immigration or diversity appear to have become particularly pronounced in a handful of North European countries that also lacked influential anti-immigration (radical right) parties during the period under investigation (1990–2015), thereby creating mobilization opportunities for the extreme right. Such militant mobilization has in turn been fuelled by extensive public repression and stigmatization of radical right actors and opinions in countries such as Sweden, Germany and the UK. The explanation may be that in these countries, people with far-right sympathies have experienced frustration and anger at not having access to political decision making or to public debates, and because of being publicly ridiculed, repressed, and continually labelled as racists, thereby making militant activism a more attractive option than elsewhere. While such repression and stigmatization may discourage some people from joining radical and extreme right groups, it may also push some of the most ardent activists onto more clandestine and revolutionary paths, ultimately leading to violence and terrorism (Klandermans & Mayer, 2006, pp. 272–273; Minkenberg, 2006; Pedahzur, 2001).

In the second recipe, grievances caused by socio-economic hardship combined with the legacies of former authoritarian regimes create opportunities for mobilizing militant extremists on both sides of the political spectrum, intensifying an already polarized left–right divide. Once a sufficient number of militants have been mobilized on both sides, a reciprocal spiral of violence and terrorism is then likely to follow (Weinberg, 1995; Weinberg & Eubank, 1987). These dynamics are also echoed by the RTV dataset, most notably by the Italian and Spanish cases, where a majority of registered attacks have targeted left-wing militants as opposed to most other countries where immigrants constitute the largest target group. While attacks against left-wing militants in Greece are less covered by the RTV dataset (most likely because of limited data), several reports describe an ongoing street war between the militant left and the militant right in Greece (Faiola, 2014; Spillius, 2012) – a conflict that according to local experts is best understood in light of Greece’s former authoritarian regime (Sotiris, 2012). The continuity of these “old” left–right political cleavages is also indicated by the fact that Italy, Spain and Greece still have active communist parties (sometimes with parliamentary representation), a rare phenomenon in the rest of Western Europe (March & Mudde, 2005).

To investigate the North European recipe further, Article IV offers a comparative case study of the Nordic countries, aiming to explain why right-wing terrorism and militancy has been more widespread in Sweden than in Denmark, Finland, and Norway. Notably, this study finds that a number of experts and observers believe that the Swedish immigration debate has been conducted within a narrow “opinion corridor” policed by left-leaning journalists, intellectuals, and politicians who consistently brand and thus marginalize criticism and scepticism towards immigration as racist or conducive to the spread of racism.

Whether the Swedish public debate on immigration has in fact been more restrictive than in the other Nordic countries remains an open question, because we lack comparative studies of this phenomenon, although some existing research supports this claim (Jørgensen & Meret, 2012). However, more important here is the widespread belief that this is indeed the case, not only within the extreme right movement, but also among a number of journalists, academics, foreign observers, and people in general. This belief resonates with frames produced by the extreme right movement, portraying traitorous political elites, unwilling to protect the cultural heritage of its own people, hence the alleged need for violent revolution as the only viable alternative for generating true change. Perceptions of a more restrictive public debate on immigration may in other words have contributed to more militant recruitment and violence in Sweden than in the other Nordic countries, where the public debates on immigration are

generally seen as more open and inclusive, and where radical right parties have gained more access to political power than in Sweden.

## **Implications for research and policy**

In this final section, I explain why and how some of my findings may be relevant to future research and policy. I begin by discussing the main contributions of the thesis to the study of right-wing terrorism and violence. Next, I propose some new ideas for future RTV research, most notably a three-step integrative model that may serve as a stepping stone towards a new RTV theory, as well as a new way of contrasting left and right. Finally, I discuss how some of my findings might inform future policies aimed at combating violent extremism on the far right.

## **Contributions to existing research**

The most important contribution from this thesis to existing research on right-wing terrorism and violence is the RTV dataset, which was made publicly available in 2016. This dataset offers a systematic and updated account of RTV events in Western Europe between 1990 and 2015 – information that may be used to analyse variation across time and place. This means that anyone studying RTV is now free to use this dataset to carry out comparative studies – which have been endemically lacking in this field – and thereby also to begin to test existing and future theories on why RTV has been more extensive in some places than in others.

The RTV dataset also offers new and detailed information on RTV perpetrators and their victims, such as the time and place of each attack, whether it was spontaneous or premeditated, the perpetrator's organizational characteristics and affiliations, casualty numbers, and the types of weapons used by different perpetrator types, in different situations, against different targets. All this information may be cross-analysed in a number of ways that may reveal new and interesting patterns. The dataset may also be used as a point of departure for more detailed investigations of specific regions, countries, militant groups, and perpetrator types. For example, it includes 140 events involving 76 different lone actors whose background and motives could be further explored in future research.

My own analyses of the RTV dataset have resulted in several key findings that both support and challenge existing RTV research. First, the RTV dataset shows that these types of violent attacks have mainly been committed by racist gangs, unorganized groups, and individuals, and not by organized militants with a more pronounced political agenda. This finding supports

previous RTV research that downplay the importance of ideological and political motives in explaining violence, and highlight predominantly social and situational factors such as troubled backgrounds, adventure seeking, confrontational dynamics, a need for protection, a sense of brotherhood, or a search for purpose and meaning in life (see e.g. Bjørge, 1997; Fangen, 2001a; Simi et al., 2016).

Second, while micro-motives may be more social than political, my analyses also suggest that RTV's macro-structural causes may be more political than social, although the two explanations may be more fruitfully seen as complementary. Specifically, I argue that grievances and opportunities – two dominant theories conventionally seen as contrasting in this field (Koopmans, 1996) – are more fruitfully seen as complementary because their implied causal mechanisms do not logically exclude one another. By combining rather than contrasting different elements from these two models such as immigration (grievances), socio-economic hardship (grievances), limited radical right support (opportunities) and authoritarian legacies (opportunities), I was able to distinguish consistently all the West European countries with extensive RTV experience from those with moderate or low RTV experience. On this note, similar claims about the complementarity of these two models, which dominate most conflict-oriented research, have also been made by scholars from other fields, most notably in the civil war literature (Ballentine & Sherman, 2003; P. Collier & Sambanis, 2005, p. 329; Korf, 2005), and convincingly demonstrated empirically using the same type of complexity-oriented methods (QCA) as I have used here (Bara, 2014).

My QCA analysis also shows that no single causal condition (or variable) explains consistently why RTV has been more extensive in some places than in others. The fact that RTV has decreased in Western Europe while conditions normally assumed to foster RTV, such as immigration (Garcia, 2015) and support to radical right parties (Wilkinson, 1995), have increased could suggest that these conditions are less relevant for explaining RTV than previously assumed. However, a more likely interpretation is that they must be combined with other relevant conditions to become part of a consistent explanation.

In doing so, I was able to show that the relationship between radical right support and RTV may (under certain conditions) in fact be negative. This finding supports previous claims, most notably from social movement scholars such as Koopmans (1996). However, unlike Koopmans's theory, in which such limited support must combine with elites' negative framing of immigrants to trigger racist violence, my findings suggest that it is rather elites' negative



framing of radical right actors and opinions that distinguish countries with extensive RTV (e.g. Sweden and Germany) from those with moderate or low RTV experience (e.g. Denmark and Switzerland). As such, this finding challenges the dominant view on how the public discourse on immigration might influence extreme right mobilization and violence. It suggests that a predominantly pro-immigration elite perceived as hostile towards people with anti-immigration concerns might be exploited by the extreme right to mobilize new followers and motivate violent protest.

This argument ties into a more general finding emerging from my research, suggesting that a highly polarized conflict between far-right activists and their enemies, including leftists, political elites, and the public at large, represents a necessary condition for extensive RTV to occur. This finding supports previous research that highlight polarization and threat perceptions as important for explaining RTV (Sprinzak, 1995), political violence more generally (della Porta, 2013), and intolerant attitudes and behaviours across a wide range of countries and contexts (Stenner, 2005).

Methodologically, perhaps the most noteworthy contribution from this thesis is that it provides an example of how QCA may be used fruitfully to compare more than a handful of cases when the outcome of interest entails causal complexities and available data are limited or do not offer sufficient variation for making meaningful inferences using statistical analysis. QCA remains a contested method, and methodologists continue to argue about its added value vis-à-vis conventional statistics (Munck, 2016; Paine, 2016; Schneider, 2016; Thiem & Baumgartner, 2016). As such, this thesis should by no means be read as a case against statistical analysis, but rather as a case in favour of QCA when problems related to causal complexities, too few cases, or limited data make conventional statistical analysis less appropriate.

A final contribution from this thesis is the practical method for reviewing and developing typologies introduced in Article I. In this thesis, I use this method to review one existing RTV typology and to develop a new one. However, this method applies not only to studying RTV; indeed, it can be used to review and develop typologies in any social science field. It may therefore prove helpful to anyone interested in critically assessing some existing typology, or in developing a new one.

## Future research

This thesis has mainly focused on RTV's macro-structural causes, because that is where the most important knowledge gaps are today. However, in working towards a more complete RTV theory, future research should combine insights from all three levels of analysis (macro-meso-micro). As a way of preparing the ground for such multilevel research, I therefore propose a new integrative three-step model that I believe could be a fruitful way forward, combining elements from political psychology (the authoritarian dynamic), social movement theory (opportunities-resources-framing), and sociology (micro-level theory of violence).

First, building on Stenner's (2005) theory of the authoritarian dynamic, step one explains how intolerant opinions may become salient within a sufficiently large segment of a population under certain threatening conditions (societal fragmentation and polarization), preparing the ground for collective mobilization on the far right. Second, building on social movement theory, in particular Caiani, della Porta, and Wagemann's (2012) framework for analysing extreme right mobilization, step two explains when and how this mobilization will result in extreme and militant groups rather than in more democratically oriented organizations and parties. Furthermore, della Porta's (2013) recent book on clandestine political violence brings this analysis one important step forward by introducing group-level mechanisms to explain how mobilized activists might end up as members of small, increasingly isolated, and ultimately violent militant groups and cells. Finally, building on Collins's (2009) micro-sociological theory of violence, step three explains how some but far from all mobilized militants, as well as some unorganized individuals, manage to overcome inherent barriers against violent confrontation in certain situations, and eventually carry out violent attacks.

Thus far, I have not mentioned Collins's micro-sociological theory of violence, mainly because it covers not only political violence, but also physical violence in all its shapes and forms, ranging from domestic family violence via sports violence to outright war. However, I still believe that this universal micro-level theory of violence captures important mechanisms necessary for explaining why violence occurs in some situations rather than in others, namely how violent situations are shaped by what Collins's describes as "an emotional field of tension and fear" (Collins, 2009, pp. 10–19). This theory may be particularly relevant for explaining RTV, precisely because of the "tension and fear" that appear to drive many such attacks. Furthermore, many RTV events are of a rather spontaneous nature, and seemingly resulting from unexpected encounters between the perpetrator(s) and some person(s) belonging to a

predefined target group. These types of random violent encounters resonate with Collins's theory which, unlike much other research on political violence, is primarily concerned with the dynamics of violent situations rather than with the individual predispositions or backgrounds of violent individuals. To be sure, in isolation Collins's theory may come across as somewhat one-sided, ignoring all forms of background conditions that may have been conducive to a violent event. However, I still believe it may be fruitfully added to a broader theoretical framework that also includes relevant background conditions at different levels of analysis, as does the three-step model outlined here.

Besides further developing, testing, and refining this three-step model, I believe future RTV research would benefit from looking more into the dynamics of left-right reciprocal violence and polarization, which in turn ties in to an ongoing debate on so-called cumulative extremism (Busher & Macklin, 2015; Eatwell, 2006). According to Bobbio (1996, pp. 1–17), several observers and activists seem to believe that the left-right divide no longer matters or is not useful for understanding these actors' ideas and behaviour. However, while working with this thesis I have – just like Bobbio – reached the opposite conclusion: that the left-right divide remains a defining feature and a key identity marker for militant activists on both sides (see also Klandermans & Mayer, 2006, pp. 248–268). At the same time, there are also apparent similarities between left- and right-wing militants concerning revolutionary ideas, tactics, aesthetics, an appetite for conspiracies, and activist profiles, perhaps also including some shared personality traits. Future research might benefit from further investigating such similarities and differences between the militant left and militant right, and also consider whether these characteristics might help explain their tendency to end up in violent confrontations.

On this note, while working with this thesis, I have come up with an alternative way of contrasting left and right that might be useful for future research, namely to distinguish between universal solidarity on the one hand, and relational or contingent solidarity on the other. While many on the left promote the universal solidarity of all mankind as a guiding principle for their policies, irrespective of factors such as race, ethnicity, nationality, or culture, many on the right regard solidarity primarily as contingent on the proximity and strength of established relational bonds, ranging from the family, via the local community, to entire nations, ethnic groups, and cultures. This conceptualization may also be related to Haidt's (2012) acclaimed analysis of the different moral foundations that conservatives (usually rightists) and liberals (usually leftists) adhere to.

In this thesis, I have used Bobbio's conceptualization, primarily because it is already well established by the existing literature. However, because Bobbio begins his conceptualization by defining the left (policies aimed at reducing social inequality), and then simply contrasts this rather positively loaded definition, he ends up with a definition of the right that is somewhat negatively loaded: policies promoting social inequality. My impression is that most political activists are motivated by a desire to do something good, but disagree about how this "good" is produced and for whom. My alternative definition of universal versus relational solidarity captures this desire to do good by proposing two definitions that are both positively loaded. I therefore believe that this conceptualization may offer a more precise description of the types of ideas contemporary right-wing activists associate with – and thus be a better conceptual tool for understanding their behaviour.

### **Policy implications**

Some of the findings presented here may also be used to inform policies aimed at combating violent extremism on the far right. The fact that a majority of violent events registered in the RTV dataset have been committed by unorganized groups and individuals suggests that measures targeting organized militants may have limited effect in most countries. In countries with extensive militant movements (Germany, Sweden, Italy), such measures must, of course, still be considered, but should mainly target those who appear willing to actually employ violence and terrorism. As has been previously noted by several scholars (Kirshner, 2014; Minkenberg, 2006; Pedahzur, 2001), repressive or disruptive measures against actors mainly operating within democratic boundaries may have adverse effects by pushing some of the most ardent activists on to more extreme and clandestine paths.

Furthermore, although the internet and social media are not in themselves sufficient to explain why some activists turn to terrorism and violence (Caiani & Borri, 2012; Conway, 2016), they certainly facilitate access to extreme right ideas and to information about operational tactics, in particular for those who lack such information via existing militant groups and organizations (Caiani & Kröll, 2015). However, developing effective countermeasures against unorganized online activists is extremely difficult, if not impossible. For example, although Breivik was an avid internet and social media user in the years leading up to the 22 July attacks, a review of his online posts between 2002 and 2011 revealed that he never discussed his terrorist plans with anyone online (Ravndal, 2013). In fact, his online posts can hardly be described as extreme compared to some of the posts that appear regularly in the

comments sections in mainstream news media. Thus, even if Norwegian security authorities had monitored Breivik's online activity, they would most likely not have responded to it.

If countermeasures targeting organized militants have limited effect in most countries, and if identifying those who might actually radicalize online is difficult if not impossible, it may also be useful to look towards more general societal conditions that might be conducive to violent extremism on the far right. Some of the conditions identified as such in this thesis, such as authoritarian legacies, limited radical right support, or socio-economic hardship, are hard for policymakers to do anything about, at least within a short-term perspective. Other conditions, most notably immigration, invoke a number of humanitarian and societal implications that are arguably more important than the relatively small threat posed by RTV in today's Western Europe. In other words, countering RTV is probably not a sufficient reason for changing immigration policies, although doing so could be an effective measure in some countries.

This leaves us with two conditions. The first concerns the extent of public repression of radical right actors and opinions. If it is the case that public repression and stigmatization of radical right actors and opinions under certain conditions (high immigration and low radical right support) fuel anger and resentment on the far right, and thereby also militant mobilization and violence, as findings from this thesis suggest, then one should perhaps be more careful about how these types of actors and opinions are treated publicly. For example, by dismissing concerns about high immigration as hateful conspiracies, racism, or some form of irrational phobia, Western elites and policymakers (unintentionally) make these threats more real in the eyes of far-right activists, because they regard the elites as an active part of the underlying conflict. Telling someone who is afraid that his or her fears are groundless generally does not help much, especially if you personify the very thing that they fear. This does not mean that one should not contest or challenge intolerant radical right actors and opinions publicly. However, in line with political psychologists who have studied authoritarian and conservative mindsets (Haidt, 2012, pp. 319–366; Stenner, 2005, pp. 328–335), I believe that one should try to do so without coming across as overly aggressive, derogatory, or moralizing, however difficult that may be.

The second condition of potential relevance for policymakers concerns the extent of left-wing terrorism and militancy. If it is the case that left-wing terrorism and militancy fuel right-wing terrorism and militancy, as findings from this thesis suggest, then one should perhaps be more attentive to such polarization mechanisms and to potential ways of disrupting them. For

example, violent extremism on the far right is usually approached by policymakers as an isolated problem, typically as hate crimes, rather than as a response to violent extremism on the far left. Seeing the two forms as interdependent could potentially result in a better understanding of both, and thereby also in more effective countermeasures.

## **Concluding remarks**

Although this thesis follows in the wake of the 22 July terrorist attacks in Norway, these attacks and the person who committed them do not figure prominently in it. The reason is that these attacks in many ways represent an outlier case. First, the number of victims far exceeds that of any other attack since 1990. Second, the perpetrator not only prepared and carried out the attacks alone; unlike most lone actors, he had no ties to any right-wing militant group (Gable & Jackson, 2011). Third, it is the only attack where the perpetrator combined explosives and firearms. Finally, it is one of few attacks where the perpetrator deliberately used terrorism as a tactic to achieve one or several explicitly stated aims.

Despite these outlier characteristics, the 22 July case is also indicative of some general trends. First, those few right-wing attacks from the post-1990 period that truly qualify as terrorism have mainly been committed by lone actors and not by organized militants. Second, there is an increasing body of evidence showing that, unlike most terrorists, a majority of lone actor terrorists suffer from some personality disorder or mental illness (Corner & Gill, 2015; Gill et al., 2014). Third, the rapid development of the internet and social media may facilitate lone actor terrorism, making it extremely unpredictable and difficult to respond to in time (Smith et al., 2016; Ramon Spaaij, 2015).

To conclude, the evidence presented in this thesis suggests that the 22 July attacks should not be seen as a sign of an emergent threat. The overall trend is that RTV has decreased in Western Europe over the past decades, although RTV levels remain considerably higher in some West European countries than in others. That said, one should be mindful that we could be facing a new wave of RTV in the wake of the ongoing migrant crisis, although it is still too early to come to conclusion about this development. So far, it appears that much of the fear and uncertainty created by this situation have been channelled into more democratically oriented radical right or populist parties and organizations, rather than into violent militant groups.

Finally, findings from this thesis suggest that RTV should be seen as a highly diverse phenomenon, consisting of different types of actors, emerging from different contexts, and

driven by different motives. However, these differences notwithstanding, the actors involved appear to share two experiences: The first concerns perceptions of alienation, threat, and repression. By themselves, such perceptions may not constitute a sufficient condition for engaging in RTV. However, combined with these actors' shared experience of liberal democracy as being utterly unfair and morally misguided, they may come close to being a necessary condition, and not an entirely trivial one either.

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## Thugs or Terrorists? A Typology of Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe

By: **Jacob Aasland Ravndal**<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Despite Western Europe's extensive history of right-wing terrorism, a systematic categorization of key actors and events is lacking. This article aims to narrow this gap by proposing the first empirically derived typology of right-wing terrorism and violence in Western Europe. The article begins by introducing a method for reviewing and developing typologies, informed by relevant social science literature. This method is first used to review Ehud Sprinzak's seminal typology of right-wing terrorism. While Sprinzak merits recognition for having developed the only universal typology in the field, the review shows that his typology does not satisfy established criteria for typology building. Combining quantitative and qualitative post-WWII data, a new typology is therefore proposed, based on attack frequencies and differences in perpetrators' strategy and organization. This new typology facilitates sharper distinctions, both between different types of perpetrators and between different forms of violence.

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## Introduction

Having attracted relatively little attention for some time, right-wing terrorism returned to Western Europe's public eye in 2011 with the terrorist attacks in Norway and the disclosure of the German terrorist cell *Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund* (NSU). To determine whether these were isolated events or signal a revival of right-wing terrorism in Western Europe it is helpful to (1) identify and explore past waves of right-wing terrorism and violence in this region and (2) categorize and compare the most important events and actors involved. Such comparative studies of right-wing terrorism and violence in Western Europe have so far been rare. In particular, no systematic categorization of key events and actors exists. Aiming to narrow this gap, this article proposes a typology of right-wing terrorism and violence, specifically tailored to the case of Western Europe.

Becoming increasingly popular in the study of terrorism and political violence, typologies constitute a particularly useful analytical tool for categorizing data, comparing cases, and developing theory (Ganor, 2008; Marsden, 2014; Marsden & Schmid, 2011). However, to boost a typology's theoretical utility, certain criteria must be met (Bailey, 1994; Collier, LaPorte, & Seawright, 2012; Doty & Glick, 1994; Elman, 2005; George & Bennett, 2005; McKinney, 1966). Ehud Sprinzak's (1995) seminal typology of right-wing terrorism remains to date the only universal typology in the field, and is the most frequently cited publication on right-wing terrorism more generally.<sup>2</sup> Its strength lies in being based on an explicit theory of how right-wing activists become terrorists – the theory of split delegitimization. However, as this article argues, this theory builds on vague concepts, shaky assumptions about right-wing activists, and empirical inaccuracies concerning past terrorist attacks. Moreover, it remains unclear exactly how Sprinzak derived his types from his theory, and his typology includes types that are not mutually exclusive. In short, Sprinzak's

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<sup>2</sup> According to search queries on "right-wing terrorism" on Google Scholar and Web of Science.

typology does not satisfy established criteria for typology building. An alternative typology of right-wing terrorism is therefore needed.

Combining quantitative and qualitative post-WWII data, this article proposes the first empirically derived typology of right-wing terrorism and violence in Western Europe.<sup>3</sup> Western Europe was chosen because this region arguably has the world's most extensive history of right-wing terrorism – yet a categorization of such events does not exist. Furthermore, while most right-wing terrorists share some common characteristics, there are important regional dynamics that must be taken into consideration to fully understand why terrorism occurs at a given time and place.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, relevant typologies have been developed for regions such as North America (Kaplan, 1995; Perliger, 2012) and Russia (Laryš & Mareš, 2011), but not for Western Europe. Finally, existing databases on West European terrorism (Engene, 2004, 2007) enables the construction of an empirically derived typology for this region. Unfortunately, similar data is unavailable for Europe as a whole.

The article contributes in four ways: First, it provides a comparative analysis of key right-wing terrorists in Western Europe and their different paths towards terrorism. Notably, this analysis suggests that despite recent terrorist incidents, the threat from *organized* right-wing terrorism to West European citizens is likely significantly lower today than some 20 to 30 years ago.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, reliable and updated data on more loosely

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<sup>3</sup> Sarah V. Marsden (2014) makes a convincing case for the utility of empirically derived typologies in the study of terrorism and political violence.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Wilhelm Heitmeyer (2003, pp. 399–436) argues in his extensive review of the literature on right-wing violence that there are substantial differences between the American, East European, and West European contexts.

<sup>5</sup> This claim is supported by findings from a forthcoming study by this author documenting and analysing about 500 incidents of right-wing terrorism and violence across Western Europe between 1990 and 2015.

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organized forms of right-wing terrorism and violence is lacking, and more research is needed to document recent developments.<sup>6</sup>

Second, the article introduces a practical method for reviewing and developing typologies, informed by relevant social science literature. The method applies not only to studying terrorism and political violence; indeed it can be used to develop and review typologies in any social science field.

Third, by emphasizing differences in perpetrators' strategy and organization, the proposed typology offers sharper distinctions – both between different types of perpetrators and between different forms of violence – than typologies based primarily on ideological differences.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, the typology offers a new contribution to the relatively small literature on right-wing terrorism and violence in Western Europe. While the comparative literature on European radical right parties and movements has grown steadily, the comparative literature on right-wing terrorism and violence in Europe peaked during the 1990s, but then largely stagnated (key examples include Bjørge, 1995, 1997; Bjørge & Witte, 1993; Hoffman, 1982; Koopmans, 1996; Pedahzur, 2001). This article seeks to contribute to an ongoing and much needed revitalization of this field of study (see e.g. Backes & Moreau, 2012; Caiani, Porta, & Wagemann, 2012; Taylor, Holbrook, & Currie, 2013).

The article starts by introducing five criteria that good typologies should satisfy. Next, these criteria are used to conduct a detailed review of Sprinzak's typology. Finally, the criteria are applied to develop a new typology of right-wing terrorism and violence, specifically tailored to the case of Western Europe.

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<sup>6</sup> A commendable contribution is in this regard Daniel Köhler's (2014a) recent study of German right-wing terrorism.

<sup>7</sup> Strategy and organization are among seven variables proposed by Richard Schultz' (1978) in his pioneering article on terrorism typologies.



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## A Practical Method for Developing and Reviewing Typologies

A typology's scientific merit rests on the methods used to construct it and on its creator's ability to communicate these methods to the reader. From a broad reading of relevant social science literature, five criteria that good typologies should satisfy emerge:<sup>8</sup>

1. Clearly define the overarching concept of the typology
2. Specify whether the typology is descriptive or explanatory
3. Describe in detail how the types are (inductively and/or deductively) constructed
4. Propose an intuitive model or matrix of the typology
5. Consider a simpler solution with mutually exclusive types

These five criteria can also be seen as sequential tasks. While task one, three and four are intuitive and straightforward, task two and five may require some further elaboration.

Although typologies serve various functions, scholars seem to agree that two main categories of typologies exist: First, *descriptive typologies* characterize variants of a phenomenon. Routinely being used to organize data and compare cases, they offer a simplified yet systematic and analytically useful depiction of a phenomenon's subtypes and the characteristics distinguishing them.

Second, *explanatory typologies*, also known as typological theories help scholars test or develop theory. They "seek to identify the various causal mechanisms and pathways that link the independent variables of each 'type', or cell in a typology, with its outcome" (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 234).

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<sup>8</sup> My method of enquiry was the following: I identified frequently cited publications on typologies in quality social science journals over the past 20 years, in addition to authoritative books (Bailey, 1994; Collier, LaPorte, & Seawright, 2012; Doty & Glick, 1994; Elman, 2005; George & Bennett, 2005; McKinney, 1966). Next, I developed a list of criteria that good typologies should satisfy according to this literature. Finally, I eliminated criteria considered as too ambitious, such as the criterion of exhaustiveness, which requires knowledge about the entire empirical universe, and the criterion of having at least two dimensions or variables, which excludes one-dimensional typologies.

A couple of examples may be helpful here: In *Politics* (ND), Aristotle introduced one of the first typologies of political systems (Table 1):

TABLE 1

## ARISTOTLE'S TYPOLOGY OF POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Number of ruler(s)	Form	
	Normal	Perverted
One	Monarchy	Tyranny
Few	Aristocracy	Oligarchy
Many	Polity	Democracy

Aristotle's typology is descriptive because its constitutive variables do not follow from any explicit theory about how political systems emerge; they simply characterize different variants. Aristotle's typology marked the beginning of a millennium-long research tradition on political systems, offering more sophisticated and theoretically informed typologies. A famous example is Arend Lijphart's (1968) typology of democratic systems, developing the "polity" and "democracy" cells from Aristotle into an explanatory typology (Table 2):

TABLE 2

## LIJPHART'S TYPOLOGY OF DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS

Elite behaviour	Political culture	
	Homogenous	Fragmented
Coalescent	Depoliticized democracy	Consociational democracy
Competitive	Centripetal democracy	Centrifugal democracy

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In practice, an explanatory typology is a theory presented in a matrix in which the logically possible value combinations of the independent variables determine the possible outcomes on the dependent variable. The idea is that schematically presenting a theory will spur theory development in two ways: first, by encouraging thinking about all possible combinations of independent variables, the outcomes they produce, and the mechanisms linking independent variables with outcomes; and second, by identifying theoretically interesting causal relationships that can be tested empirically through cross-case comparisons and within-case analysis (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 254).

The fifth criterion – consider a simpler solution with mutually exclusive types – is inspired by the principle known as Ockham’s razor. This principle is to select the hypothesis with the fewest assumptions, and proceed to simpler theories as long as explanatory power is not compromised. The principle is clearly relevant for explanatory typologies aiming to develop theory. On this note, a key debate in the typology literature concerns how to reduce the number of cells, also known as “the property space” (Elman, 2005; George & Bennett, 2005, pp. 249–251).

The property space is created by cross-tabulating all variables in a typology – a useful mapping exercise for exploring causal relationships, or, in the case of descriptive typologies, for identifying essential distinguishing characteristics. Cross-tabulated typologies also ensure mutually exclusive types as long as all cases can be meaningfully scored on the selected variables, that is, no case can assume more than one score or value on any of the relevant variables.

The combined number of values on the descriptive/explanatory variables determines the size of the property space which grows exponentially and easily becomes unmanageable. Cells can thus be reduced by eliminating nonessential variables, by limiting the number of values on a variable, by merging similar variables, by merging or eliminating

variables with identical scores, or by eliminating cells that are logically impossible.<sup>9</sup> The theoretical relevance of a variable should ultimately decide whether to keep it or eliminate it.

Finally, some literature stresses that explanatory typologies are more relevant for theory development (Doty & Glick, 1994; George & Bennett, 2005). A general advice is therefore to choose, whenever possible, explanatory typologies over descriptive ones. However, scholars are rarely free to make this choice because explanatory typologies require pre-existing theory (Elman, 2005, p. 296). Proponents of explanatory typologies may thus have overstated these typologies' theoretical relevance at the expense of descriptive typologies. Descriptive typologies can also be relevant for theory development, although they are not premised on pre-existing causal theory (Collier et al., 2012, pp. 227–228). They encourage empirical precision and deep thinking about how and why types differ, and thus ultimately about types' underlying causes – the question explanatory typologies seek to answer (Elman, 2005, pp. 296–298). Descriptive typologies can therefore be seen as a logical and sometimes necessary prelude to explanatory typologies when relevant theory is lacking.

Having completed this general but necessary section on typology building, I now turn to Sprinzak's typology of right-wing terrorism to see how it complies with the criteria outlined above. First, however, it is necessary to summarize his theory.

### **The Theory of Split Delegitimization**

Sprinzak's theory of right-wing terrorism arises from his work on what he called "the process of delegitimization" (Sprinzak, 1991). The essence of this process is a slowly evolving crisis of legitimacy between an insurgent group and the government. Terrorism is

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<sup>9</sup> For a more detailed discussion on cell reduction, see Elman (2005, pp. 300–308).

the peak of this process, which has three stages: (1) a crisis of confidence, (2) a conflict of legitimacy, and (3) a crisis of legitimacy.

Sprinzak seeks to explain how members of political protest groups can transform into brutal and indiscriminate killers. He describes how an initial crisis of confidence between protesters and the government, through confrontations with the police, can escalate into a conflict wherein protesters question the regime's very legitimacy. At this point, the "psychodynamics" of small and isolated protest groups, including a "dehumanization of anyone associated with the regime," leads to a state of crisis wherein protesters can "disengage morally and commit atrocities without remorse" (Sprinzak, 1995, pp. 18–20).

Sprinzak uses this delegitimization process as a baseline for developing a theory of right-wing terrorism. To differentiate right-wing terrorists from other terrorists, Sprinzak distinguishes between "universalistic" terrorist organizations in direct conflict with the ruling government, and "particularistic" (right-wing) terrorist organizations fighting "private wars" against non-ruling groups (Sprinzak, 1995, p. 17).

A "split" occurs when at some point violence is also directed towards the government. This split ensues when a rightist group feels that the government is not protecting them from a perceived threat. In this case, Sprinzak envisages "an intense delegitimization vis-à-vis the unaccepted non-ruling target group and a diluted delegitimization towards the regime" (Sprinzak, 1995, p. 20). Hence, "the issue at stake is one of *split delegitimization, namely, a case where an uneven radicalization of a group of extremists develops against two separate units*" (Sprinzak, 1995, p. 20, italics in original).

### Reviewing Sprinzak's Typology

Having introduced this theory, Sprinzak presents six right-wing terrorist types (revolutionary, reactive, vigilante, racist, millenarian, and youth counterculture) "based on

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the identification of the *dominant principle* around which a rightist group is organized and on its relation to the dynamics of split delegitimization” (Sprinzak, 1995, p. 23, italics in original). In the following section, I discuss how this typology corresponds to the five criteria introduced above.

### 1. Define the Overarching Concept

Sprinzak offers characteristics of right-wing terrorist groups, but no explicit definition. He claims the split delegitimization theory identifies “the distinctive features of right-wing terrorism” (Sprinzak, 1995, p. 17). The split delegitimization theory emphasizes target selection as *the* distinctive feature of right-wing terrorists claiming that they target non-ruling groups before the government. However, this claim is incorrect for a number of important cases. Some of Western Europe’s best known right-wing terrorist groups, such as *l’Organisation de l’Armée Secrète* and *Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionario* directed their terrorist campaigns against the government either directly or indirectly (by attacking civilians). In particular, they did not consider immigrants or other minorities as their primary targets. A more recent example is Anders Behring Breivik, who bombed the Norwegian government quarters (eight persons killed) before murdering 69 members of the then-governing Norwegian Labour Party’s youth wing.

The type of target may indicate who is behind a terrorist attack, but it can be a deceptive indicator. For example, Italian neo-Fascists conducted several attacks disguised as left-wing terrorism (Ferraresi, 1996). Similarly, the 1980 bomb attack on the Jewish synagogue on Rue Copernic in Paris, in the midst of a series of right-wing terrorist attacks in France, was the work of Middle Eastern terrorists (Hoffman, 1982; Shapiro & Suzan, 2003). Yet several analysts, including Sprinzak, continued portraying it as right-wing terrorism (Sprinzak, 1995, p. 25).

A second distinctive feature identified by Sprinzak is how right-wing terrorists come to choose violence as a means for political struggle. According to Sprinzak, violence and terrorism emerge only gradually when the group involved feels increasingly insecure or threatened (Sprinzak, 1995, p. 21). This radicalization pattern may well apply, but is not limited to right-wing terrorist groups. Many other terrorist attacks result from growing anxiety towards perceived threats, normally from a superior enemy.<sup>10</sup> Violent responses to perceived threats are hardly unique to right-wing terrorists, and therefore not a useful distinguishing feature.

Finally, a third feature identified by Sprinzak concerns how right-wing terrorists *feel* about using violence. According to Sprinzak, right-wing terrorists “do not feel remorse about their violence and the atrocities they cause,” and there is “no need to undergo a profound psycho-political transformation to become brutal killers” (Sprinzak, 1995, p. 22). However, no evidence is offered to support this claim; hence, the characteristic appears rather speculative.

## 2. *Specify Whether the Typology is Descriptive or Explanatory*

Is Sprinzak’s typology descriptive or explanatory? According to Sprinzak, the purpose is to organize data and compare cases, indicating a descriptive typology (Sprinzak, 1995, pp. 18, 22). At the same time, the typology is indeed based on an explicit theory of why and under what conditions right-wing groups resort to terrorism, indicating an explanatory typology. The problem is that the theory does not specify its explanatory variables. One possible interpretation, however, is that it has two explanatory variables: (1) perceived threats from non-ruling groups, and (2) government protection from perceived

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<sup>10</sup> The asymmetric relationship between terrorists and their enemies is highlighted by several terrorism scholars as one of several key traits of terrorism. For more details, see Schmid (2011).

threats. If this interpretation is correct, the theory predicts that right-wing groups who feel sufficiently threatened will resort to terrorism, first against non-ruling groups, then against the government if protection is lacking. If we dichotomize these explanatory variables, the theory can be presented in a 2x2 matrix as an explanatory typology (Table 3).

TABLE 3

 EXPLANATORY TYPOLOGY BASED ON THE SPLIT  
 DELEGITIMIZATION THEORY

	Perceived threats from non-ruling groups	
	Yes	No
Government protection		
Yes	Single-targeting terrorism	No terrorism
No	Double-targeting terrorism (split)	No terrorism

This typology contains only two logical types, single- and double-targeting terrorism. How, then, did Sprinzak end up with six types? It appears that the dynamics of split delegitimization played only a secondary role in constructing the typology, while the main constitutive variable was “the *dominant principle* around which the rightist group is organized” (Sprinzak, 1995, p. 23 italics in original). Thus, the typology is not explanatory because this variable is not based on a theory. Rather, it is a descriptive variable identifying principles of group organization.



### 3. *Describe How the Types Are Constructed*

Sprinzak does not elaborate on how this dominant organizing principle has been identified and operationalized. Instead, he systematically discusses the presence or absence of the dynamics of split delegitimization for each type. This discussion reveals that these dynamics are only partially present in most types and completely absent in others (Sprinzak, 1995, pp. 35–37). While Sprinzak could present these findings as an example of theory falsification, he does not acknowledge the apparent lack of consistency between his theory and his typology. Thus, the theory is not rejected, despite the conflicting anecdotal evidence introduced by the author himself.

### 4. *Propose a Model or Matrix*

Sprinzak offers no model or matrix of his typology. Note, however, that Table 3 illustrates one way of presenting the split delegitimization theory in a 2x2 matrix.

### 5. *Consider a Simpler Solution with Mutually Exclusive Types*

Sprinzak has offered the only universal typology of right-wing terrorism to date. This is praiseworthy; however, the typology's broad scope can also be seen as a weakness. By covering the entire world, Sprinzak is forced to include very different actors under the same label. He also lacks systematic data for such a large empirical universe. The typology therefore appears to have been built using anecdotal evidence rather than by systematically employing theoretical or empirical variables.

Furthermore, Sprinzak's types are not mutually exclusive. Although Sprinzak recognizes the problem, he does not try to solve it (Sprinzak, 1995, p. 22). A major weakness of his typology is therefore that several cases can be attributed to more than one type.

Finally, it remains unclear exactly how the typology was created. Rather than extending and patching Sprinzak's typology, I therefore propose to develop a new typology of right-wing terrorism.

### **A Typology of Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe**

I now apply the five criteria introduced earlier to develop a new typology of right-wing terrorism in Western Europe. Note that the emphasis on Western Europe is not intended to challenge the notion of a strong transatlantic relationship between the radical right in Europe and that in North America – a relationship that is well documented by the existing literature (Jackson & Shekhovtsov, 2014; Kaplan & Bjørge, 1998; Kaplan & Weinberg, 1998). Western Europe was chosen because the region lacks an adequate categorization of key actors and key events.

#### *1. Define the Overarching Concept*

The literature on right-wing extremism is a logical starting point for conceptualizing right-wing terrorism. However, the literature offers no unified definition of right-wing extremism. The problem arises from the existence of two distinct approaches to studying political extremism. The first approach relates extremism to political opinion: If your political opinions diverge dramatically from the majority opinion, you are an extremist.<sup>11</sup> The second approach relates extremism to the means activists use in pursuing their political goals: If you support illegal violence, you are an extremist, regardless of your specific political opinions.<sup>12</sup> While these descriptions admittedly exaggerate each approach, they

<sup>11</sup> For an overview of 26 opinion-based definitions of right-wing extremism, see Mudde (1995).

<sup>12</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see Heitmeyer (2003, p. 203).

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serve to illustrate why existing scholarship on right-wing extremism remains ambiguous concerning precisely what and who the objects of study are.

For the purpose of this article, right-wing *extremism* is understood as the support of using illegal violence to promote right-wing policies. What are right-wing policies? The left/right dichotomy originated during the French Revolution.<sup>13</sup> Since then, it has been given many new meanings. At its core, however, remains a fundamental divide between those on the left who support policies designed to reduce social inequality, and those on the right who regard social inequality as inevitable, natural, or desirable (Bobbio & Cameron, 1996). Right-wing extremists thus accept use of illegal violence to promote social inequality. The exact nature of such policies and the criteria used to make corresponding social hierarchies, or rules of segregation, are subject to change across time and space.

The majority of right-wing extremists are not physically involved in violence. Posting extremist messages online (i.e. encouraging violence) involves less risk than participating in violent street activism or even terrorism. Two additional distinctions are therefore helpful: between extremists and militants, and between militants and terrorists. A militant *physically* demonstrates a willingness to use violence to pursue political goals.<sup>14</sup> A terrorist uses or threatens violence strategically to affect an audience beyond the immediate target (Hoffman, 2006, p. 40). I shall not delve further into the terrorism definition debate. Although terrorism remains a contested concept, terrorism scholars broadly agree about its main features (Schmid, 2011). Right-wing terrorists are therefore defined as non-state actors who strategically use or threaten violence to affect an audience beyond the immediate target to promote social inequality.

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<sup>13</sup> The French king's supporters sat to the right of the National Assembly's president and the revolution's supporters sat to his left.

<sup>14</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines militancy as "favouring confrontational or violent methods in support of a political or social cause."

### 2. *Specify Whether the Typology is Descriptive or Explanatory*

Because specific theories of right-wing terrorism are in short supply, notwithstanding Sprinzak's split delegitimization theory, a descriptive typology is proposed.<sup>15</sup> The typology aims to describe and categorize the most salient right-wing terrorist actors and violent perpetrators in Western Europe after WWII. Furthermore, by identifying and highlighting essential differences between key actors, the typology is also intended to generate thinking about the different socio-political conditions from which these actors emerged. As such, the typology may contribute to future theory development and perhaps also to future explanatory typologies.

### 3. *Describe How the Types Are Constructed*

I begin by examining available records of right-wing terrorist attacks in Western Europe post-WWII. The latest edition of Routledge's *Handbook of Terrorism Research* reviews the world's top 20 terrorism databases (Bowie & Schmid, 2011). Only four databases allow isolating right-wing attacks in Western Europe from other attacks. Two recently became unavailable (WITS and MIPT), thereby leaving us with The Terrorism in Western Europe: Events Data (TWEED) and Europol's annual EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> This lack of theories is emphasized by Wilhelm Heitmeyer (2003, 2005) in his two reviews of the literature on right-wing terrorism and violence respectively. Note, however, that the social movement literature has recently produced several fruitful studies of right-wing militancy and terrorism in Western Europe (key examples include Albanese & Froio, 2014; Caiani, Porta, & Wagemann, 2012; Della Porta, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> The TWEED dataset is available at <http://folk.uib.no/sspje/tweed.htm>. TE-SAT is available at [https://www.europol.europa.eu/latest\\_publications/37](https://www.europol.europa.eu/latest_publications/37). A third relevant source not included in this review is the Domestic Terrorist Victims (DTV) dataset available at [www.march.es/dtv](http://www.march.es/dtv). Matching DTV data against TWEED data shows that the main patterns of right-wing terrorism largely overlap.

Coincidentally, the periods covered by these two databases link up. TWEED covers 1950–2004, while TE-SAT covers 2004–2013, although systematically only from 2006 onwards. Combined data from these two databases thus indicate general trends of right-wing terrorism 1950–2013, despite different registration methods.<sup>17</sup> TWEED registered 648 right-wing terrorist attacks 1950–2004 (approximately 6% of a total of 10,239 attacks). TE-SAT registered nine right-wing terrorist attacks 2006–2013, but only two in Western Europe. The remaining quantitative analysis is therefore based on TWEED data only.<sup>18</sup>

TWEED displays three waves of attacks: France in the early 1960s, Italy in the 1970s, and Germany in the early 1990s. France, Italy, and Germany also dominate the aggregate country share of casualties. Figure 1 and Table 4 illustrate attack frequencies and casualties. What do these patterns tell us?

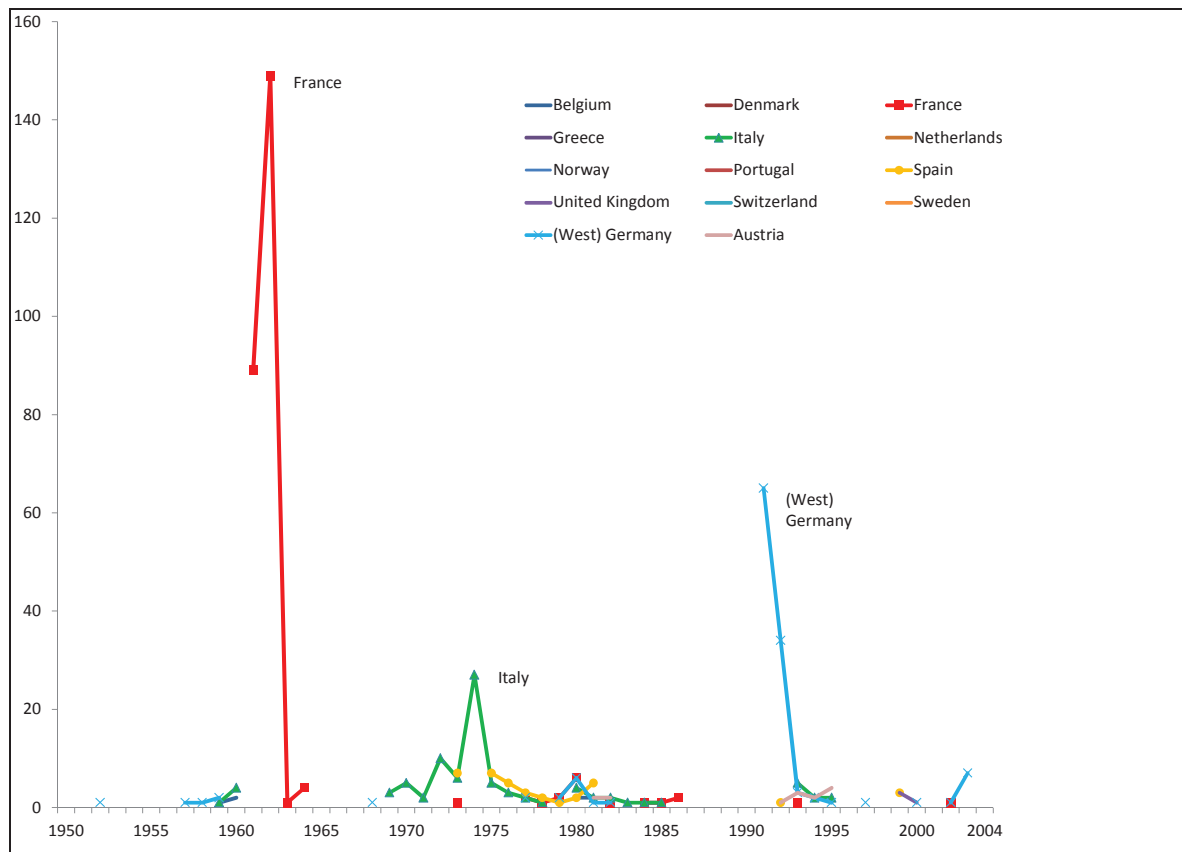
<sup>17</sup> TE-SAT is based on annual reporting from EU member states. TWEED is entirely based on *Keesing's Record of World Events*, available at <http://library.princeton.edu/resource/3894>.

<sup>18</sup> For a more detailed discussion about the validity and reliability of TWEED data, see Engene (2004, pp. 50–58).

FIGURE 1

NUMBER OF RIGHT-WING TERRORIST ATTACKS IN WESTERN EUROPE

1950–2004



Source: TWEED: <http://folk.uib.no/sspje/tweed.htm>.

TABLE 4  
 CASUALTIES OF RIGHT-WING TERRORISM IN WESTERN  
 EUROPE 1950–2004

Country	Killed (Wounded)	Attacks	Intensity
Italy	162 (772)	89	10,5
France	89 (303)	262	1,5
(West) Germany	51 (267)	133	2,4
Spain	15 (56)	36	2,0
Belgium	7 (3)	12	0,8
Portugal	5 (4)	11	0,8
Austria	4 (4)	14	0,6
Switzerland	3 (5)	9	0,9
United Kingdom	2 (115)	10	11,7
Greece	1 (81)	65	1,3
Norway	1 (0)	2	0,5
Sweden	0 (4)	3	1,3
Denmark	0 (0)	1	0,0
Netherlands	0 (0)	1	0,0
Finland	-	-	-
Iceland	-	-	-
Luxemburg	-	-	-
Ireland	-	-	-
Sum	340 (1614)	648	

*Note:* Intensity is the sum of killed and wounded divided by number of attacks.

*Source:* TWEED: <http://folk.uib.no/sspje/tweed.htm>

Individual data for France, Italy, and Germany reveal a striking picture: only four terrorist groups were behind as much as 39% of the 648 right-wing attacks registered in TWEED, and 56% of all killings: *l'Organisation de l'Armée Secrete* (OAS) in France, *Ordine Nero* (ON) and *Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari* (NAR) in Italy, and *Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann* (WSH) in Germany.

While only four groups conducted a significant share of the attacks, a much larger number of mostly unknown groups conducted the rest. Excluding one outlier, 65% of these attacks have unknown perpetrators.<sup>19</sup> Nearly half of these 65% happened in Germany 1991–1992, while the remaining half is distributed evenly across time and space, except for two smaller peaks in Italy in the 1970s.

As many as 42 known groups were behind the remaining 35% of the attacks – also distributed evenly across time and space. Of those 42 groups, only four conducted more than five attacks, and no one group conducted more than ten attacks. The majority of the known groups conducted only one or two attacks.

These numbers suggest that right-wing terrorists in Western Europe can be divided into two categories or types: one consisting of a handful of known groups responsible for a substantial number of attacks and killings, and one consisting of 42 known and even more unknown groups involved in only a few attacks, typically one or two. These initial patterns form the basis of the typology proposed below.

Next, by investigating specific cases from each category, additional type characteristics emerge. Such case studies may help identify new variables that can be used to compare and contrast the corresponding types. In addition, new types may appear that do not fit the original categories. For example, lone actors represent a potential third category or

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<sup>19</sup> On 17 December 1978, the Greek group *Organismos Etnikis Anorthosoos* claimed responsibility for 40 attacks (zero killed or wounded). The group never reappeared.



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type. Thus, based on a broad investigation of relevant cases, the following three *tentative* types are proposed and described below: elite-sponsored groups, subcultural networks, and lone actors.

*Elite-sponsored groups.* Elite-sponsored terrorists operated predominantly in France, Italy, Spain, and Germany between the 1960s and the 1980s. These groups had up to several hundred militants and were organized hierarchically with a centralized leadership. Their terrorist campaigns were motivated by international conflicts rather than by immigration, which had yet to become a contested issue in Western Europe. More specifically, their campaigns were products of elite-sponsored strategies meant to protect or reinstall former authoritarian regimes, and to obstruct their leftist enemies from gaining political power. The OAS, ON, NAR, and WSH are among the most important cases.

OAS is behind the largest number of right-wing terrorist attacks in history. TWEED covers attacks in France, but not in Algeria, where OAS was most active. From 1961–1962, OAS conducted 221 attacks in France, killing 63 persons and wounding 191. Former high-ranking French officers and a handful of civilians created OAS in February 1960. They wanted to protect the large, white, and privileged  *pied noir*  community then living in Algeria. Their strategic aims were therefore to prevent France from granting Algeria independence, and to defeat the socialist revolutionaries from the Algerian  *Front de Libération Nationale* . OAS soon developed into an advanced terrorist organization, benefiting from its founding officers' military experience. At its peak, OAS counted about 1,000 militants, divided into sectors, branches, and Delta commando units of 7–12 members

(Harrison, 1989). These units conducted terrorist campaigns on two continents simultaneously including several assassination attempts on President Charles de Gaulle.<sup>20</sup>

The Black Orchestra refers to a shadowy Italian network assumed to be behind one of history's most extensive right-wing terrorist campaigns (Laurent & Sutton, 1978). Waves of left- and right-wing violence hit Italy between the late 1960s and the early 1980s. Among a multitude of militant factions, four right-wing groups stand out as key protagonists of this violent drama: *Ordine Nuovo*, *Avanguardia Nazionale*, *Ordine Nero*, and *Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari*. These groups are assumed to be behind some of Italy's most devastating terrorist attacks, including the following bombings: Piazza Fontana in Rome (1969), Peteano (1972), the Italicus train (1974), Piazza della Loggia in Brescia (1974), and the Bologna train station (1980). These attacks were part of an elite-driven strategy known as "the strategy of tension" (Cento Bull, 2007). The strategic aim, understandable only in a Cold War context, was preventing Communism's influence in Italy and beyond. Those implementing it, mainly members of Italy's secret service and police, used right-wing militants to conduct terrorist attacks masked as left-wing terrorism to weaken popular support for Italy's Communist Party (Ferraresi, 1996).

Two of the deadliest attacks in the history of right-wing terrorism happened in 1980: the Bologna train station attack (85 killed and over 200 wounded), and the Munich Oktoberfest bombing (thirteen killed and 213 wounded). The latter has by several accounts (including TWEED) been attributed to the German militia *Wehnsportgruppe Hoffmann* (WSH), although this group was never convicted. Recent evidence, however, strengthens the alleged connection between WSH and the Oktoberfest attack (Paterson, 2015). WSH's strategic aim was overthrowing West Germany's socialist government and installing a new

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<sup>20</sup> Alexander Harrison (1989) has written the most authoritative account of the OAS. Other relevant accounts include Bocca (1968), Buchard (1963), and Henissart (1971).

authoritarian regime (Fromm, 1998). They drew inspiration from the paramilitary assault division of the German Nazi Party – *Sturmabteilung* (SA) – that was influential in Hitler’s rise to power. WSH had at least six divisions across Germany, totalling about 400 members (Fromm, 1998). These divisions had access to substantial military resources and the group emulated a professional military organization with uniforms, ranks, and insignia. WSH members were also involved in international terrorism, reportedly collaborating with the Lebanese Phalange and with the PLO (Hoffman, 1982; Schmidt, 1993).

*Subcultural networks.* While elite-sponsored groups diminished in the 1980s, right-wing subcultural networks flourished in the 1980s and 1990s (Bjørge, 1997; Bjørge & Witte, 1993; Merkl & Weinberg, 1997). One contributing factor to this new wave of right-wing activism was the large influx of non-western immigrants that Western Europe experienced during the late 1980s and 1990s, in combination with an emerging and increasingly violent skinhead subculture.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to elite-sponsored groups, subcultural networks have little support beyond their own underground movement. They may express general antipathy towards immigrants, political enemies, and the government through symbols and propaganda, but rarely present concrete political demands. Sometimes, an attack’s primary aim may simply be to gain respect and influence within a group or social network. Subcultural networks are largely nationally oriented and only rarely involved in international terrorism. While concerned about immigration, they are also motivated by their endless street war with leftist militants.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Perhaps the best account of the emergence of the European skinhead subculture is found in the introduction of John Hamm’s (1993) pioneering study of American skinheads.

<sup>22</sup> For insider accounts, see for example Collins (2012), Salas (2003), and Schmidt (1993).

Existing literature suggest that violence by subcultural networks has been distributed over at least two generations: The first generation was behind a wave of attacks (primarily targeting immigrants) in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Koopmans, 1996). Most attacks were conducted by unorganized racist youth mobs, skinhead gangs, and hooligans with limited ideological motivation, and no overarching strategy (Bjørge & Witte, 1993).

The second generation emerged in the mid-1990s and consisted of smaller autonomous groups that were better organized and more ideologically motivated. These groups typically had no leadership beyond their own cell structure, but were connected through a loosely organized network of similar groups, sometimes referred to as a groupuscular network (Griffin, 2003; Jackson, 2014; Virchow, 2004). Compared to the first generation, they conducted fewer but more targeted attacks, not only against immigrants, but also against left-wing and government targets.<sup>23</sup> Many such groups were inspired by the strategic principle of leaderless resistance, introduced by the American white supremacist Louis Beam (1992). Their strategic aim was to incite a revolutionary war between races.

*Lone actors.* Finally, lone-actor terrorism consists of attacks or plots that nobody except the individual perpetrator is aware of. While lone actors carry out their operational planning in isolation, they are generally seen as strongly influenced by existing political movements, typically through online activities (Kaplan, Lööw, & Malkki, 2014). Recent research also suggests that while most terrorists are normal, psychologically speaking, a significant share of lone actors suffer from mental disorders (Corner & Gill, 2014).

One study, which analysed 198 lone actor attacks, found that right-wing actors constituted the second largest category (17%), next to attacks in which the perpetrator's ideological conviction remains unknown (Spaaij, 2012). A similar study of 119 lone actors

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<sup>23</sup> One example would be the UK-based group Combat 18. See Lowles (2001) and Ryan (2011).

found that 34% were right-wingers (Gill, Horgan, & Deckert, 2014). In short, lone actor terrorism is not exclusively a right-wing phenomenon, but right-wing motivations are overrepresented compared to other political ideologies.

#### 4. Propose a Model or Matrix

Having described some key characteristics of and differences between these three tentative types, we may now illustrate them using a model or a matrix. Table 5 offers an initial overview of eight descriptive variables (all of which were used in the above discussion to compare and contrast the three tentative types).

TABLE 5  
TENTATIVE TYPOLOGY OF RIGHT-WING TERRORISM IN WESTERN EUROPE

Variables	Types		
	Elite-sponsored groups	Subcultural networks	Lone actors
Organizational structure	Hierarchy	Network	N/A
Leadership	Centralized	Decentralized	N/A
Group membership	Large (>100)	Small (<50)	N/A
Known political strategy	Always	Sometimes	Sometimes
Affiliation to former right-wing regime	Yes	No	No
Sponsorship	Elites	Subculture	None
Significant access to military resources	Yes	No	No
International terrorism	Yes	No	No

Not yet cross-tabulated, these variables are meant to help illustrate key differences between three *ideal* types as an intermediary step towards a more rigorous categorization. This means that deviations may and will occur. For example, most terrorist attacks from subcultural groups and lone actors occur within a national context. However, there are exceptions to this rule, such as when a Danish affiliate of the UK-based group Combat 18 in 1997 attempted to send letter-bombs from Sweden to UK addresses, or, when the Austrian-based lone actor Franz Fuchs targeted people in Germany, also with letter bombs.

##### 5. Consider a Simpler Solution with Mutually Exclusive Types

As already explained, cross-tabulating variables ensures mutually exclusive types and encourages simple solutions because the number of variables and/or values must be limited to achieve a manageable property space. If all eight variables in Table 5 were to be cross-tabulated, we would end up with  $2^8=256$  cells (assuming only dichotomous cells) and 253 potentially new types in addition to the initial three. Clearly, cell reduction is needed to create a simpler typology.

One technique for reducing cells is merging similar variables. The variables “organizational structure,” “leadership,” and “group membership” can for example be merged into the variable “organization” with three values: “strong,” “loose,” and “absent.” Another cell reduction technique is to merge or eliminate variables with identical scores on several types. Most of the dichotomous variables in Table 5 can be eliminated because they score identically on subcultural networks and lone actors and are therefore not helpful for distinguishing between them.

The theoretically most relevant variables should be kept. Terrorism is always part of a political strategy, which, in turn, helps explain why an actor engages in violence. If a

strategic aim is lacking, or is not political, we are likely not dealing with terrorists. As shown by the preceding discussion, violent attacks from subcultural networks and lone actors are not always motivated by specific political strategies. It may therefore be useful to apply a dichotomous “strategy” variable to distinguish thugs from terrorists, although the former may also have a terrorizing effect on their victims.

Cross-tabulating these two variables (organization and strategy) results in a 3x2 matrix (Table 6). We may then consider whether all types are logically possible, whether they can be populated with relevant cases, and try to find an appropriate label for each type.

TABLE 6

## TYPOLOGY FRAMEWORK

Organization	Political strategy	
	Yes	No
Strong	A	D
Loose	B	E
Absent	C	F

*Elite-sponsored groups* (cell A), such as the OAS and NAR, are strongly organised groups, aiming to conserve or reinstall authoritarian regimes and to undermine their leftist enemies. These groups gradually disappeared from Western Europe as the Cold War came to an end and the legacies of former authoritarian regimes evaporated. Note, however, that large hierarchic militant groups have been active in Western Europe also after the end of the Cold War. Examples include the German *Skinheads Sächsische Schweiz* – a group consisting of up to 140 members that was banned in 2001, or, the still active Swedish group *Svenska Motståndsrörelsen* with well beyond 100 active members in several divisions in Sweden, Finland and Norway. However, these and similar groups have never been accused

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of being involved in large-scale terrorist campaigns. One reason may be that they lack significant elite support – a decisive factor for facilitating and justifying the terrorist campaigns of their predecessors. Indeed, these groups have more in common with more loosely organized subcultural networks.

As described earlier, violence by subcultural networks has been distributed over at least two waves of attacks. The first was attributed to racist *mobs, gangs, and hooligans* (cell E) with limited ideological motivation and no overarching strategy. Although terrorizing their victims, such attacks do not necessarily qualify as terrorism because their strategic aim is unclear. The second wave consisted of more targeted attacks intended to incite revolutionary war. The perpetrators organized in small *autonomous groups or cells* (cell B) inspired by the strategic principle of leaderless resistance. The German NSU-cell provides an example (Köhler, 2014b).

Some lone actors, such as Anders Behring Breivik and David Copeland, expressed their strategic aims clearly through political manifestos or in court. Both were *lone actors* (cell C), Copeland aiming to incite a war between races, Breivik aiming to incite a war between cultures. Other *violent loners* (cell F) fail to express their aims clearly, either because they act spontaneously or because they have no clear strategy. Labelling such perpetrators as terrorists would be misleading.

Finally, some groups appear equally or more interested in making money than in politics. For example, in 2005, 18 members of a Spanish neo-Nazi network were arrested for storing and selling weapons, including dozens of shotguns and a grenade launcher, and for advocating violence through their website (El Temps, 2008). Yet their activities apparently did not involve the planning of terrorist attacks. In 2009, UK police rounded up a global arms ring supplying white supremacists worldwide with firearms and explosives (Bounds & Boxell, 2009). These were right-wing *crime syndicates* (cell D), but not terrorists.



Such criminal groups may however act as supporters of more politically oriented clandestine groups. For example, the Austrian group “Object 21” which controlled large parts of the red light scene at the German-Austrian border, used money and explosives acquired through criminal activity to support other and more politically oriented groups in Germany and Austria (The Vienna Review, 2013).

Summing up the discussion in the last few paragraphs, Table 7 presents a simplified (fewer variables) yet more nuanced (more types) version of the typology introduced in Table 5. The typology includes an additional dimension categorizing perpetrators into two overarching types of violence: terrorism and criminal violence. This dimension is included to illustrate the inherent ambiguity of right-wing terrorism as a concept, and its close relation to other forms of violence, such as hate crimes (see Deloughery, King, & Asal, 2012).

TABLE 7

 TYPOLOGY OF RIGHT-WING TERRORISM AND  
 VIOLENCE IN WESTERN EUROPE

Organization	Political strategy	
	Yes	No
Strong	Elite-sponsored groups	Crime syndicates
Loose	Autonomous groups/cells	Mobs/gangs/hooligans
Absent	Lone actors	Violent loners
Type of violence	Terrorism	Criminal violence

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## Conclusion

The aim of this article has been to systematically categorize Western Europe's most important right-wing terrorists and violent perpetrators after WWII. As such, the proposed typology should only be seen as an initial step towards more explanatory oriented studies of past and present actors. Its strengths lie in its simplicity and in the fact that its types are derived from a combination of empirical patterns (TWEED attack frequencies), case studies, and the typological criteria introduced earlier.

While the proposed typology offers only limited insight into the causal mechanisms underlying its proposed types, certain aspects could be interesting to pursue further in future studies. For example, the interplay between international conflicts, regime types, and elite behaviour could be key for understanding the rise and fall of large-scale right-wing terrorist campaigns. Consequently, given Western Europe's current political situation, the threat from strongly organized right-wing groups appears to be significantly lower today than some 20 to 30 years ago. The reason is that the majority of attacks and killings were conducted by a type of elite-sponsored groups that are less likely to operate in contemporary Western Europe. As long as the legacies of former authoritarian regimes continue to evaporate, and democracies consolidate, Western Europe provides less fertile ground for such large and well-organised terrorist groups.

At the same time, we lack reliable and updated data on more loosely organized forms of right-wing terrorism and violence. This type of violence tends to fall beneath the government radar, and is often reported as hate crime rather than terrorism. The low number of right-wing incidents reported by Europol's annual terrorism report is an indicator of this problem. There is therefore a critical need for more empirical research to document recent developments. A commendable contribution in this regard is Daniel Köhler's (2014a) recent study of German right-wing terrorism.

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In terms of future theory development, the proposed typology also suggests that right-wing terrorism should not be treated as a monolithic phenomenon, and that different actor types must be studied independently. A logical next step would therefore be to develop more actor-specific theories, possibly by use of explanatory typologies. Such actor-specific theories may in fact prove more universally valid than any universal theory or typology of right-wing terrorism. For example, rightist lone actors may not be so different from leftist or jihadist lone actors. Some of the proposed types may thus apply also outside the right-wing extremist domain. The proposed typology could therefore potentially prove useful for analysing other forms of terrorism and political violence, considering the universal nature of its constitutive variables, strategy and organization.

Although the proposed typology is descriptive rather than explanatory, it can be used as a springboard for further explanatory analysis. Rather than contrasting descriptive and explanatory typologies, we should ask how they relate, and how we can move from description towards explanation when relevant theory is lacking. This question has so far not been adequately addressed by the social science scholarship on typologies. A more nuanced understanding would certainly boost the theoretical utility of many typologies, including the one proposed in this article.

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## I. Articles

### Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe: Introducing the RTV Dataset

by Jacob Aasland Ravndal

#### **Abstract**

*What is the record of right-wing terrorism and violence (RTV) in Western Europe post-1990? To date, RTV incident data suitable for temporal and cross-national comparisons have been lacking. Consequently, few comparative studies of RTV exist, and we generally have limited knowledge about the most recent evolution of RTV in Western Europe. To help fill these gaps, this article introduces a new dataset covering RTV incidents in Western Europe between 1990 and 2015. Including the most severe types of incidents only, the dataset comprises 578 incidents, including 190 deadly incidents causing 303 deaths. Each incident has been manually researched by the same person and coded on a range of variables, including time and location, perpetrator and victim characteristics, organizational affiliations, weapon types, and number of casualties. The article also proposes six hypotheses aiming to explain the perhaps most puzzling finding emerging from the RTV dataset: that the number of deadly incidents has declined considerably under conditions commonly assumed to stimulate RTV. These conditions include increased immigration, enhanced support to radical right parties, Islamist terrorism, and booming youth unemployment rates.*

**Keywords:** right-wing extremism; terrorism; violence; Western Europe; database

#### **Introduction**

In Western Europe, right-wing terrorism and violence (RTV) is commonly portrayed either as a marginal problem or as an imminent threat. Political motives aside, the coexistence of these two opposing views originate in a lack of systematic incident data showing variation in attack frequencies over time or between countries. This lack of good incident data limits our knowledge about the extent of RTV in contemporary Western Europe, including whether it is a rising or declining phenomenon, whether some countries are experiencing more RTV per capita than others are, and who the main perpetrators and victims are. Especially important, it constrains the potential for making causal inferences based on temporal and cross-national variation.

To help fill these gaps, this article introduces a new dataset covering RTV incidents in Western Europe between 1990 and 2015. Focusing on the most severe types of incidents, that is, attacks with a lethal or near-lethal outcome, attacks involving the active use of deadly weapons, and extensive plots and preparations for armed struggle, the new dataset offers a modest yet relatively consistent account of RTV in post-1990 Western Europe. In particular, an effort has been made to include all relevant deadly incidents (the dataset comprises 578 incidents, including 190 deadly incidents causing 303 deaths). The dataset can therefore be used to compare frequencies of such incidents across time and space, and also serve to make causal inferences from these patterns with reasonable confidence. The entire dataset is exclusively based on open sources; all data and corresponding sources will become freely accessible online upon the publication of this article via the C-REX website.[1]

To illustrate the need for fresh RTV incident data, the article first reviews existing terrorism databases and relevant incident chronologies. Part II introduces the RTV dataset, explains how it has been built, discusses its strengths and weaknesses, and presents some key findings. Finally, part III proposes six hypotheses aiming

to explain the perhaps most puzzling finding emerging from the RTV dataset: that the number of deadly incidents has declined considerably under conditions commonly assumed to stimulate RTV. These conditions include increased immigration,[2] enhanced support to radical right parties,[3] Islamist terrorism,[4] and booming youth unemployment rates.[5]

### ***Reviewing Existing Incident Data***

Why do we need fresh RTV incident data? One reason is that public opinion about the extent of RTV in Western Europe tends to polarize towards two opposing ends: at one end, various domestic intelligence agencies and other governmental bodies tend to downplay the RTV threat. These actors' position is epitomized by Europol's Terrorism Trend and Situation Report (TE-SAT), based on annual reports of terrorist incidents from EU member states.[6] Since Europol started reporting terrorist incidents systematically in 2006, only nine right-wing incidents (four attacks, five plots) have been reported, two of them happened in Western Europe. By contrast, Europol registered 2,111 "ethno-nationalist and separatist" terrorist incidents during the same period. The discrepancy between right-wing and ethno-separatist incidents may reflect a true yet probably smaller difference in attack frequencies. However, it likely also reflects EU member states' interest in reporting certain types of terrorism and not others. Furthermore, many right-wing attacks remain below these governments' radars, either because they are registered as hate crimes rather than terrorism, or because they are never registered at all.

At the other end of the spectrum we find various anti-racist organizations, policy-oriented think tanks, journalists, and other interest groups. These actors tend to exaggerate the RTV threat, typically by use of anecdotal evidence rather than through a systematic incident analysis.[7] They portray Europe as facing rising levels of right-wing militancy and violence – a situation that if one could believe some accounts, even resembles the interwar period in and around Germany.

These two opposing accounts can only be tested with more systematic incident data. However, existing terrorism databases do not satisfy this demand. Larger and well-known terrorism databases, such as the Global Terrorism Database (GDT) and the RAND Worldwide Database of Terrorism Incidents (RDWTI), both US-based, do not code for the political profile of an attack's perpetrator. Using these American databases, it is virtually impossible to effectively distinguish right-wing attacks from others. A handful of relevant incidents can be found using relevant search queries. However, these incidents appear to have been registered haphazardly, they often lack source references, and substantial information about perpetrators and context is often missing – or even misleading.[8]

Among the top 20 terrorism databases reviewed by Alex Schmid's *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*, only four databases allow isolating right-wing attacks in Western Europe from other attacks.[9] Two of these – the Worldwide Incidents Tracking System (WITS) and the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base (TKB) – recently became unavailable, thereby leaving us with Terrorism in Western Europe: Events Data (TWEED), and Europol's annual EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT).

As already explained, TE-SAT offers scarce information about right-wing terrorism, which, if we are to interpret the reported attack frequencies literally, is close to being non-existent in Western Europe. By contrast, the 648 right-wing terrorist attacks registered by TWEED [10] have proven helpful for identifying and categorizing key right-wing terrorist actors and events in post-WWII Western Europe.[11] However, TWEED only covers the period 1950-2004, and is not helpful for capturing more recent developments. TWEED also relies entirely on a single news source: *Keesing's Record of World Events*. A single source ensures data consistency, but many incidents most likely never made it to the news headlines *Keesing's* daily news digest relies upon. TWEED is therefore helpful for painting the larger picture but less helpful for detailing

lower-scale incidents – a type of violence that may be more characteristic of contemporary right-wing militants.

Another relevant database (not included in Schmid's *Handbook of Terrorism Research*) is the Domestic Terrorism Victims Dataset (DTV) covering terrorist killings in Western Europe 1965-2005.[12] DTV includes two (of five) relevant perpetrator categories: "Extreme-right" and "Neonazi" [sic]. The DTV codebook fails to explain why these two categories were kept apart. It does, however, state that "it was much more difficult to find reliable information about the perpetrators of these killings" (extreme-right and neo-Nazi) and that "the information we have obtained about these killings is, in general, of worse quality than the one on nationalist and leftwing [sic] terrorism." [13] In other words, the main problem with the 250 extreme-right and neo-Nazi murders registered by DTV post-1990 is that they rely on poor sources. Many sources are no longer available online, and those that are available generally include few details about each incident.

While compiling the RTV dataset, the author of this article thoroughly researched every single extreme-right and neo-Nazi murder listed by DTV. This investigation revealed that many incidents should not have been included, either because the target selection was not primarily based on right-wing beliefs or by anti-minority biases, or because their circumstances remain extremely vague. In the creation of a new dataset, the author also came across murders that should have been included in the DTV dataset but were not. Furthermore, by excluding non-lethal incidents and terrorist plots, DTV misses out on important elements of the larger RTV universe. Thus, while DTV can be useful for comparing the modus operandi linked to different perpetrator's ideologies, it is less relevant for analysing contemporary right-wing terrorism in more depth.

In addition to existing terrorism databases, a handful of relevant incident chronologies have been compiled for some countries. Most notably, right-wing murder chronologies have been compiled for Germany,[14] the UK,[15] Spain,[16] and Sweden [17] – some of which were used as key sources for the DTV dataset. Relevant incident chronologies have also been compiled for countries such as Spain,[18] Italy,[19] and Greece [20] by anti-racist activists. However, some of these chronologies have rather broad and vague inclusion criteria. Having checked all registered incidents thoroughly, this author noticed a tendency to include incidents that either cannot be corroborated by credible sources, or whose target selection turned out not to have been primarily based on right-wing beliefs or anti-minority biases.

Potentially more credible sources are the various hate crime statistics published annually in a number of West European countries. Some of these statistics are of great value, such as the annual reports from the German [21] and Austrian [22] domestic intelligence services. These reports distinguish between different types of violence – murders, bomb attacks, arson attacks, and physical assaults – committed by right-wing activists. They do not, however, provide contextual information about each incident.

The majority of official hate crime reports are, however, less helpful for analysing right-wing violence. Some of them, such as the UK statistics, do not distinguish violent from non-violent hate crimes.[23] Instances of racist graffiti or verbal racial abuse are included in the same category as violent attacks. Another problem is that some official hate crime statistics, for example those from Finland, do not distinguish racist crimes (some of which are committed between minority groups) from crimes committed by right-wing activists. [24] In the Danish statistics, left- and right-wing attacks have recently been compiled together.[25] The latest German report no longer distinguishes between different types of right-wing violence, and mixes politically motivated attacks with apolitical crimes such as robberies. Another limitation of many national hate crime statistics is that they only include incidents reported to the police. A considerable number of attacks therefore remain unreported.

Yet the most important reason why most of these statistics are of limited value is that they are ultimately incomparable. Each country uses different definitions, different registration methods, and different inclusion criteria. Some countries also tend to change their methods and criteria from time to time, making time-series

analysis difficult. Some countries do not provide official hate crime statistics at all, including Spain, Greece, Italy, and Portugal.

Finally, a handful of academics have compiled relevant datasets, all of which have been used as background sources for building the RTV dataset. Daniel Köhler has created a database of German right-wing terrorist groups and incidents for the period 1965-2015.[26] Jan Oskar Engene has compiled an extensive dataset of political violence in Norway from 1945 to 2012 (unpublished). René Karpantschov has registered violent and non-violent protest events from the Danish right-wing scene for the years 1990-1997.[27] Aron Kundnani has compiled right-wing murder incidents for post-1990 Europe, largely based on the murder chronologies discussed above.[28] In addition, Kundnani has collected some incident data. However, the number of incidents included in Kundnani's study is limited, and the data have not been systematically organized and categorized, thereby making temporal and cross-national comparisons difficult.

Summing up, existing databases and incident chronologies are outdated (TWEED, DTV), understate right-wing incidents (TE-SAT, GDT, RDWTI), lack contextual information (TWEED, DTV), rely on poor or no longer available information (DTV, GTD), omit terrorist plots or non-lethal incidents (DTV), apply overly lax inclusion criteria (anti-racist incident chronologies), or contain incomparable data (national hate crime statistics). As a result of all this, a new dataset was created by the present author.

### ***Introducing the RTV Dataset***

Counting 578 incidents only, the RTV dataset is smaller than most other terrorist databases. However, compared to most other terrorist databases, RTV includes more information about each incident, including all corresponding sources. This information has been used to code a range of variables such as date, location, incident type, perpetrator's organizational structure, perpetrator's organizational affiliation, target group, type(s) of weapon used, and number of casualties.

#### *Inclusion Criteria*

Each RTV incident has been carefully selected, using the following criteria: The dataset includes only incidents whose target selection – minority groups, political adversaries, or the government – is based on right-wing beliefs.[29] Incidents resulting from physical confrontations initiated by the victim, or violence caused by disputes within or between right-wing groups, are not included.

Furthermore, the dataset includes only violent incidents of a certain severity or those with a terroristic quality. More specifically, the dataset includes (1) attacks with a lethal or near fatal outcome, (2) attacks involving active use of deadly weapons such as knives, firearms, and bombs, (3) major attack plots involving use of deadly weapons, (4) discoveries of bomb-making materials or major arms depositaries belonging to right-wing activists, and (5) other violent incidents that unmistakably qualify as acts of terrorism.[30] Vandalism and other attacks causing material damage only, such as fire bombs targeting empty buildings at night, are not included.

#### *Sources, Strengths and Weaknesses*

The RTV dataset is based on many different sources. A majority of incidents are based on online newspaper articles. Other key sources include activist autobiographies, official and unofficial RTV chronologies and datasets, anti-fascist blogs and bulletins, personal communication with RTV experts, court documents, online videos, and in some cases secondary literature. Multiple sources have been gathered for nearly all incidents, most of which are available online from links embedded in the publicly available dataset. As a general rule, poorly documented incidents whose motivation remains unclear are not included. The number

of incidents that has been considered but not included in the dataset is much larger than the number of incidents that has been included.

The use of multiple sources entails both advantages as well as disadvantages. One advantage is that the number of incidents included is higher than it would have been using only one or a handful of sources, thereby strengthening the potential for making precise descriptive inferences. A disadvantage is that the potential for making causal inferences based on comparisons across time and space is somewhat weak, because the data are skewed towards countries and time periods that are better documented by available sources. For example, regular reports on right-wing violence in Italy have been found only from 2003 onwards, leaving the period 1990-2002 underreported in this particular case.

Because of this inherent limitation, it might be more fruitful to use deadly RTV incidents rather than all RTV incidents as a basis for explanatory analysis (all incidents should, however, be included when descriptive inference about RTV more generally is the main goal, such as exploring hypotheses about operational patterns, targeting, and organizational dynamics). Considering the severity of political and racist murders, such incidents rarely go unnoticed. We may therefore assume that the dataset covers (nearly) all relevant deadly RTV incidents between 1990 and 2015. While compiling the RTV dataset, this author also made an effort to include all incidents with a fatal outcome by asking RTV experts across Western Europe to provide information about relevant cases.[31]

Furthermore, RTV killings arguably constitute a reasonably good indicator of right-wing violence more generally. Political and racist murders rarely occur in complete isolation from less severe forms of violence. In many cases, violent perpetrators have been groomed through other violent episodes before committing a murder. We may therefore expect to find higher levels of right-wing violence in places and during periods with higher murder frequencies.

In addition to attacks and killings, the RTV dataset also includes major plots and preparations for armed struggle, unlike many other terrorist incident databases. Such incidents arguably constitute important elements of the RTV universe because they might have caused considerable harm had they not been discovered in time by the police.

A final strength of the RTV dataset is that all incidents have been researched and coded by the same person, using explicit and standardized inclusion criteria. This method ensures a degree of data familiarity and consistency that is hard to achieve in larger databases counting thousands of incidents.

### *Incident and Perpetrator Types*

The RTV dataset distinguishes between four incident types: (1) premeditated attacks, (2) spontaneous attacks, (3) attack plots, and (4) preparation for armed struggle. Attacks in which perpetrators have actively pursued a pre-defined person or target group have been coded as premeditated. Attacks triggered by random confrontations between perpetrator(s) and victim(s) associated to some pre-defined target group have been coded as spontaneous. Planned but not completed attacks by an identifiable group or individual involving the use of deadly weapons have been coded as plots. Finally, discovery of bomb-making materials or major arms depositories belonging to right-wing activists have been coded as preparation for armed struggle.

In many cases, the level of strategy and organization behind an attack or plot is hard to determine based on the available sources. Distinguishing terrorist incidents from other types of incidents has therefore been intentionally avoided because of the inherently blurred nature of such incidents. Yet a considerable number of the incidents included in the dataset would indeed satisfy most standard definitions of terrorism.

Building on Ravndal's typology of right-wing terrorism and violence,[32] RTV perpetrators are categorized into seven types: (1) perpetrators acting on behalf of *organized groups* (known entities with five or more members whose association primarily relies on a strong commitment to right-wing politics), (2) *affiliated members* of organised groups acting on their own, (3) *autonomous cells* (clandestine entity of two to four members whose association primarily relies on a strong commitment to right-wing politics), (4) *gangs* (informal constellations of three or more acquaintances with a general right-wing commitment, but whose loose association primarily relies on social bonds, e.g. skinhead gangs and racist youth gangs), (5) *unorganized* perpetrators (two or more perpetrators with no known association to any specific right-wing group, cell, or gang), (6) *lone actors* (single perpetrators who prepare and sometimes also carry out attacks without anyone else knowing about it beforehand), and (7) *shadow groups* (unresolved attacks claimed by formerly unknown groups).

Having introduced some key features of the RTV dataset, we can now turn to some key findings.

### Key Findings

Table 1 shows the distribution of incident types across the seven RTV perpetrator types:

Perpetrator type	Type of Violence				Sum
	Premeditated attacks	Spontaneous attacks	Plots	Preparing for armed struggle	
Organized groups	30	4	8	9	51
Affiliated members	37	6	1	5	49
Autonomous cells	19	1	8	4	32
Gangs	117	40	-	-	157
Unorganised	47	34	-	-	81
Lone actors	96	25	11	8	140
Shadow groups	6	-	-	-	6
Unknown	61	-	-	1	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>578</b>

Table 1. RTV Violence and Perpetrator Types

The perhaps most striking pattern from Table 1 is that premeditated attacks have been predominantly carried out by gangs (117 incidents) or lone actors (96 incidents), and less frequently by organized groups (30 incidents) or their affiliated members (37 incidents). Spontaneous attacks are mainly carried out by gangs (40 incidents), unorganized groups (34 incidents), and lone actors (25 incidents).

Next, consider the number of fatalities. Table 2 shows that the majority of killings have been committed by gangs, unorganized groups, and lone actors – and not by organized militants. However, autonomous cells have a much higher kill rate per attack than all other types – almost 1:1. Note that in Table 2 two cells in the lone actor row contain two numbers. The second number represents an outlier incident: the 22/7/2011 attacks committed by a lone actor in Norway in 2011, leaving 77 persons dead and 151 persons severely wounded.



<i>Perpetrator Types</i>	<i>Attacks</i>	<i>Casualties</i>	
		<i>Killed</i>	<i>Wounded</i>
Organized groups	34	5	86
Affiliated members	43	10	76
Autonomous cells	20	18	34
Gangs	157	76	247
Unorganised	81	55	77
Lone actors	121	56 (+77)	218 (+151)
Shadow groups	6	2	9
Unknown	61	4	29
<b>Sum</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>226 (303)</b>	<b>776 (927)</b>

*Table 2. RTV Perpetrator Types, Attack Frequencies and Casualties*

Turning to victims, two groups stand out as these are by far most frequently targeted: immigrants (249 incidents) and leftists (138 incidents). Other significant target groups include Muslims (28 incidents), government representatives (25 incidents), homeless people (25 incidents), and homosexuals (23 incidents). Jews have been less frequently targeted (7 incidents), while Muslims appear to be increasingly targeted. This observation resonates well with a general ideological reorientation by many extreme-right groups, who no longer consider their main enemies to be Communists or Zionists, but rather Islam and Muslims.[33]

Finally, RTV perpetrators most often resort to knives (119 incidents), unarmed beating and kicking (108 incidents), explosives (86 incidents), firearms (85 incidents), and blunt instruments such as iron bars, bats, or wooden sticks (68 incidents). In addition, firebombs (38 attacks) and arson (20 attacks) have also been frequently used. Truly complex terrorist attacks that combine explosives and firearms have so far happened only once (the 22/7/2011 attacks in Norway).

### ***From Description to Explanation***

Existing RTV research typically covers one of three regions: the USA, Russia (sometimes including Eastern Europe), and Europe (sometimes excluding Eastern Europe). Although RTV perpetrators may share some universal ideological traits, scholars generally tend to agree that context matters. These three regions represent different political, institutional, and cultural contexts from which RTV perpetrators emerge.[34]

Scholars studying the American context have produced some of the most advanced studies to date, partly because they have had access to systematic incident data.[35] While some findings from this body of research come across as highly context-specific, other findings may be more universally valid, such as the strong relationship identified between the number of active militants and groups on one hand, and levels of terrorism and violence on the other.[36]

In Russia, systematic incident data have also been available from the SOVA Center from 2004 onwards.[37] These data suggest that Russian RTV levels exceed those of any other country or region in the world, even when controlling for the population. Despite such high RTV levels, however, the Russian case remains largely understudied, with a few notable exceptions.[38] More research is thus needed to explain this outlier case.

Unlike the United States and Russia, systematic incident data has to date not been available for Europe as a whole, as discussed above. Consequently, much European RTV research consists of case studies covering specific groups, countries, or regions.[39] One notable exception is Koopmans' study of right-wing violence in Western Europe.[40] However, to establish cross-national and temporal variation of his dependent

variable (right-wing violence), Koopmans compares incident data from different datasets that are ultimately incomparable.[41] The causal inferences presented in Koopmans' study must therefore be read with caution.

For some West European countries – Germany in particular – systematic incident data have been available, thus enabling a number of more rigorous studies. [42] However, one could argue that Germany represents in several ways (e.g. history, size, federal system) an outlier case, and that one should be careful about generalizing findings from Germany to the rest of Europe.

Either way, it is beyond the scope of this introductory article to truly engage with the existing RTV literature and the myriad of different hypotheses and theories proposed therein.[43] For the purpose of this article, it suffices to say that although the number of RTV publications covering (Western) Europe is considerable and growing, the inferences that can be drawn from this body of research remains somewhat limited, due to the heavy inclination towards case studies and a general lack of comparative perspectives. By introducing the RTV dataset, the present author hopes to prepare the ground for more such comparative studies in future research.

As already explained, killing incidents represent the most definitive and reliable measure of RTV. Analysing RTV killing incidents across time and space reveals several interesting patterns for further explanatory analysis. One of them will be briefly elaborated upon here, namely a considerable decline in deadly RTV incidents across Western Europe since the 1990s (Figure 1). In the following, a suggestion is made how this pattern might be further explored in future studies. The idea is just to illustrate how RTV data can be used in explanatory studies. Actually carrying out such an analysis would require considerably more space and rigorous analysis and is beyond the scope of this article.

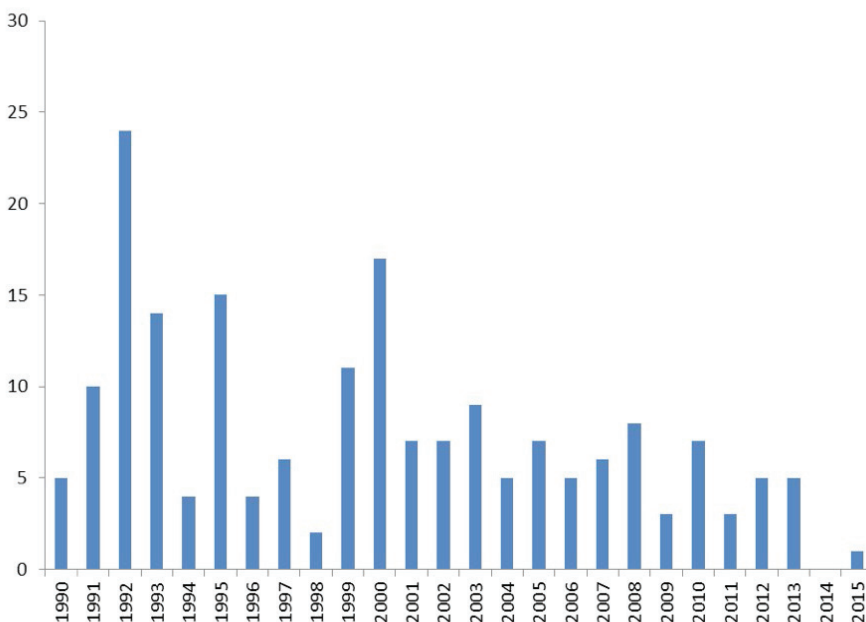


Figure 1. RTV killing incidents, 1990-2015 (N=190)

A decline of deadly right-wing incidents may come as a surprise at a moment in time when experts are warning about rising levels of right-wing militancy and violence across Europe.[44] Yet several annual reports on right-wing violence over the past 10-15 years show low, stable, or decreasing levels of violence. Such reports can be found from around 2000 onwards for Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Austria, and Switzerland (see Appendix 1).[45]

It should be noted, however, that these patterns may change in some countries following the ongoing irregular migrant flow crisis in Europe. It is still too early to say anything certain about the effects of this crisis on RTV, partly because many suspicious attacks remain unsolved. Many reported attacks have targeted empty buildings and other symbolic targets and would therefore not be included in the RTV dataset. Furthermore, few if any deadly incidents directly related to the migrant crisis have been reported thus far, although such incidents may of course have happened without attracting any media attention. With this minor limitation in mind, the reader should be aware that the RTV dataset and the following brief discussion is limited to the period 1990–2015, and that only a handful of incidents related to the ongoing irregular immigration crisis have been included in the dataset, most of which occurred in Germany in 2015.

The stable or declining patterns of right-wing violence that may be inferred from the RTV dataset and other relevant sources (see Appendix 1) challenge widespread assumptions regarding the conditions under which RTV is expected to occur—such as increased immigration,[46] enhanced support to radical right parties,[47] Islamist terrorism,[48] and substantial youth unemployment rates.[49] The fact that these macro variables have generally increased while right-wing killings and violence have decreased or remained stable gives us reason to believe that they may be less important than is often assumed. Clearly, more sophisticated causal analysis is needed before drawing any conclusions with confidence. However, we might benefit from looking at other explanatory variables, in addition to these four “usual suspects.”

What other variables might help explain a general decline in West European RTV since the 1990s? Based on a broad reading of existing research, I propose the following six hypotheses as points of departure for future research:

#### *H 1: Less Activism*

The first hypothesis states that contemporary West European youths may be less politically active than their predecessors were. As mentioned previously, existing research suggests a strong relationship between the number of political activists on the one hand, and political violence and terrorism on the other.[50] Thus, when the total number of political activists drops, we should also expect a drop in the number of political activists who radicalize and eventually turn to violence and terrorism. This trend can be observed through indicators such as youth electoral participation or youth memberships in political parties. While scholars seem to disagree about whether contemporary youths are actually less interested in politics, or whether they only express their political interest differently, there appears to be a broad consensus that they participate less in traditional political activities.[51]

#### *H 2: More Internet Activism*

The second hypothesis is that contemporary youths who do participate politically use different arenas and channels of influence from which direct violence is less likely to emerge. Most notably, street activism has been largely replaced by internet activism. Existing research suggests that “keyboard warriors” operating at the transnational level are less likely to carry out violent attacks than radicalized street gangs operating on the national or local levels.[52] At the same time, the Internet clearly represents a platform for radicalization. However, it remains unclear whether the Internet mainly pacifies and keeps most radicalized youths off the streets, or rather pushes them into the streets (and to conflict zones) to commit violent acts.[53] More systematic research is therefore needed to better understand the effects of internet activism on violent radicalization.

### H 3: Less Crime

A third hypothesis is that RTV may be caused by similar factors as apolitical violent crimes. Such factors as the quality of policing, social cohesion, the existence of illicit markets, and the existence of a legitimate state authority, have been found to significantly influence homicide rates in Europe.[54] Paramedic capabilities have also improved, which may influence death rates. When general homicide rates drop, one would expect a similar drop in RTV killings. Matching homicide rates (Figure 2) with RTV killing rates, one finds that the patterns largely overlap, suggesting that RTV may in part be explained by societal factors beyond mere politics and ideology.

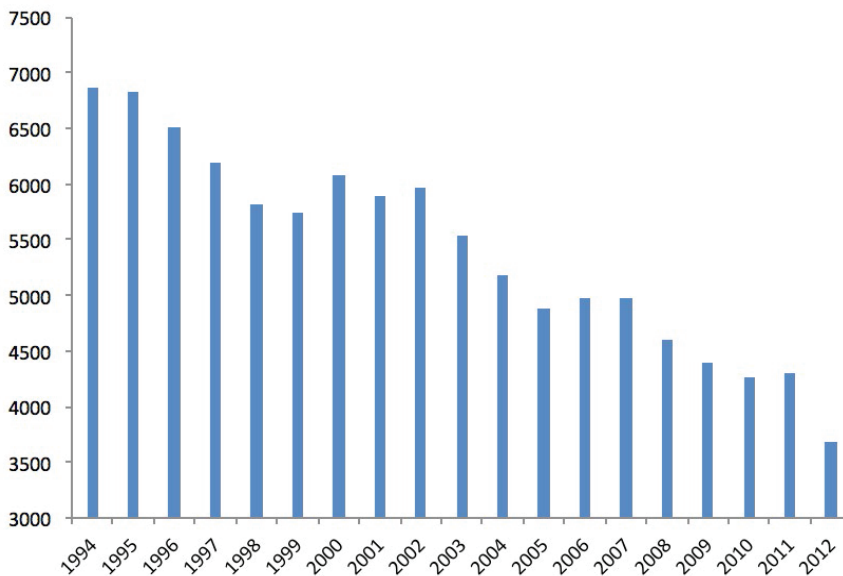


Figure 2. Intentional homicides in Western Europe, 1994-2012

Source: Eurostat: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/crime/database>

### H 4: New Subcultural Trends and Action Repertoires

The fourth hypothesis is that the subcultural trends and preferred action repertoires of contemporary right-wing militants have changed. During the 1980s and 1990s, an inherently violent skinhead subculture emerged throughout Western Europe and beyond. Violence was at the core of the skinhead movement and sometimes became an end in and of itself.[55] Today, the skinhead subculture has been largely replaced by less violent and confrontational subcultural styles in many West European countries. Some scholars refer to the “new right” (*la nouvelle droite*) as a more intellectualized movement that prefers long-term, deliberative, democratic and (social) media-oriented activism over violent street activism and terrorism.[56] We may thus be witnessing the emergence of a new form of right-wing activism that is less focused on violence *per se*, and more focused on a broader repertoire of mostly non-violent forms of action. [57]

### H 5: Political Opportunity Structures

The fifth hypothesis, derived from social movement research, suggests that the use of violence becomes less likely when radical right-wing actors gain access to political decision-making.[58] The underlying mechanism, sometimes referred to as the “pressure cooker theory,” is that when radical right parties obtain substantial electoral support, followed by political influence, this may function as a “safety valve,” releasing pressure from dissatisfied activists who may otherwise have turned to violence. By contrast, when access to

political decision-making is blocked, engaging in violent protest and revolutionary struggle becomes more attractive. Thus, the fact that radical right parties have gained access to political power in a number of West European countries over the past 25 years might have contributed to less violence.

#### *H 6: Multicultural Acceptance*

The final hypothesis is that contemporary Western youths are more accepting to non-Western immigrants than previous generations were. While the youth generations of the 1980s and 1990s experienced large-scale non-Western immigration for the first time and witnessed how this immigration changed the outlook of many cities, towns and neighbourhoods, a larger share of today's youths grow up in multicultural societies. They do not experience the same "cultural shock" that apparently produced so many violent and xenophobic reactions during the 1980s and 1990s.[59] Perhaps it is the case that initial experiences with immigrants in formerly ethnically homogenous societies produce violent responses? This could help explain, for example, why Eastern Germany, which has received far less immigrants than Western Germany, currently experiences much higher levels of anti-foreigner violence.[60]

### **Conclusion**

The dataset introduced in this article offers new and detailed information on RTV perpetrators, their victims, and, more in general, about the evolution of RTV in Western Europe after the end of the Cold War. Drawing on these new data, the article adds two important nuances to existing warnings about rising levels of right-wing militancy and violence in Western Europe:

First, the majority of attacks and killings have not been committed by organized militant groups but rather by unorganized gangs and lone actors. While organized right-wing terrorism in Western Europe has been rare, lone-actor terrorism is more widespread and may be on the rise. This trend is still not very strong, but the number of lone actor incidents per year has increased slightly since the 1990s. More research is therefore needed to better understand why and how some individuals enter such a violent path.

Second, the number of deadly incidents motivated by right-wing beliefs or by anti-minority biases has declined considerably since the 1990s, with zero incidents in 2014 and one incident in 2015. The article proposed six hypotheses aiming to explain this decline: less activism, a shift toward more Internet activism, less crime in general, different subcultural practices and action repertoires, more favourable political opportunities, and acceptance to multicultural societies. To further explore the fruitfulness of these six hypotheses, they might be tested in future comparative research, for example to investigate why some countries have experienced considerably more RTV than others have.

In this article, only bits and pieces from the RTV dataset have been presented. Several aspects have yet to be addressed, most notably cross-national variations in the frequency of (deadly) attacks. Other aspects that may be explored, using the RTV dataset, include the relationships between different perpetrator types and target groups, or between different organizational structures, weapon types, and casualty numbers. The dataset may also be used as a point of departure for more detailed investigations of specific regions, countries, militant groups, and perpetrators types. For example, the dataset includes 140 incidents involving 76 different lone actors whose background and motives could be explored in future research. This author hopes that the RTV dataset will prove useful and stimulate more comparative research, aiming to uncover the conditions under which RTV is most – and least – likely to occur.

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Please note the [RTV Codebook](#) and [RTV Dataset](#) are available as supplementary files from the C-Rex website.

## Notes

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- [14] See URL: <http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2010-09/todesopfer-rechte-gewalt>.
- [15] See URL: <http://www.irr.org.uk/research/deaths/>.
- [16] See URL: <http://www.movimientocontralaintolerancia.com/html/admin/verNoticia.asp?cod=1260&esBusq=True>.
- [17] See URL: <http://expo.se/www/download/faktablad-mordade.pdf>.
- [18] See URL: <http://www.movimientocontralaintolerancia.com/html/raxen/raxen.asp>.
- [19] See URL: <http://www.ecn.org/antifa/article/357/AZIONI%20FASCISTE>.
- [20] See: URL <http://map.crisis-scape.net/reports>.
- [21] See: URL: <http://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/publikationen/verfassungsschutzberichte>.
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- [34] This point is recognized by Heitmeyer's in his comprehensive review chapter on right-wing violence. See Wilhelm Heitmeyer, "Right-Wing Extremist Violence," in *The International Handbook on Violence Research*, edited by John Hagan and Wilhelm Heitmeyer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003), 399–436.
- [35] Christopher Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America: From the Klan to Al Qaeda* (London: Routledge, 2003); Arie Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines*, CTC Report (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2012); Steven M. Chermak et al., "American Terrorism and Extremist Crime Data Sources and Selectivity Bias: An Investigation Focusing on Homicide Events Committed by Far-Right Extremists," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 28, no. 1 (March 2012): 191–218; Steven Chermak, Joshua Freilich, and Michael Suttmoeller, "The Organizational Dynamics of Far-Right Hate Groups in the United States: Comparing Violent to Nonviolent Organizations," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 36, no. 3 (2013): 193–218; Joshua D. Freilich et al., "Introducing the United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB)," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 2 (April 2014): 372–84; Amy Adamczyk et al., "The Relationship between Hate Groups and Far-Right Ideological Violence," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 30, no.3 (2014): 310–332; James A. Piazza, "The Determinants of Domestic Right-Wing Terrorism in the USA: Economic Grievance, Societal Change and Political Resentment," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, advance online publication, 13 March 2015; URL: <http://cmp.sagepub.com/content/early/2015/03/06/0738894215570429.abstract>.
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- [42] See, for example, Lauren M. McLaren, "Explaining Right-Wing Violence in Germany: A Time Series Analysis," *Social Science Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (1999): 166–80; Ruud Koopmans and Susan Olzak, "Discursive Opportunities and the Evolution of Right-Wing Violence in Germany," *American Journal of Sociology* 110, no. 1 (2004): 198–230; Marc Coester, "Commentary: Right-Wing Extremism and Bias Crime in Germany," *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice* 8, no. 1 (2010): 49–69; Daniel Köhler, "German Right-Wing Terrorism in Historical Perspective."
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- [44] Bartlett and Birdwell, "Rise of the Radical Right"; Fekete, "The Shifting Shape of the European Far Right"; Ramalingam, "The European Far Right Is on the Rise, Again. Here's How to Tackle It."
- [45] Please note that the numbers displayed in Appendix 1 should not be compared between countries as each country operates with different units of analysis and registration methods.
- [46] Garcia, "International Migration and Extreme-Right Terrorism."
- [47] Wilkinson, "Violence and Terror and the Extreme Right."
- [48] Eatwell, "Community Cohesion and Cumulative Extremism in Contemporary Britain."
- [49] Falk and Zweimüller, "Unemployment and Right-Wing Extremist Crime."
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## Appendix 1. Right-Wing and Racist Violence in Seven West European Countries

Year	Sweden 1 <sup>1</sup>	Sweden 2 <sup>2</sup>	Denmark 1 <sup>3</sup>	Denmark 2 <sup>4</sup>	Netherlands 1 <sup>5</sup>	Netherlands 2 <sup>6</sup>	Germany <sup>7</sup>	France <sup>8</sup>	Austria 1 <sup>9</sup>	Switzerland <sup>10</sup>
2000	29				83		998	10		
2001	15				46		709	9		
2002	13				75		772	25		
2003	28		7		60		759	13		
2004	8	41	5				776	39		53
2005		27	6		70		958	23		52
2006		27	9		60		1047	26		64
2007		26	5		57		980	26	37	58
2008		50	13		64		1042	18	8	24
2009		31	9	9	25		891	25	14	32
2010		25	7	6		9	762	5	32	13
2011		14	5	4		3	755	4	41	18
2012		19	14	2		2	802	7	39	25
2013		22	17	2			801	7	11	13
2014		*					990	*	14	10

<sup>1</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Severe abuse motivated by white power ideology. **Source:** Annual reports by the Swedish Security Service (SÄPO); URL: <http://www.sakerhetspolisen.se/publikationer.html>.

<sup>2</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Violent crimes motivated by white power ideology. **Source:** Annual reports by The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå); URL: <http://www.brå.se/brå/brå-in-english/home/crime-and-statistics/hate-crime.html>. \* From 2014 onwards, Brå no longer provides information about violent crimes committed by the extreme right specifically.

<sup>3</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Racially motivated violent incidents – may also include racial violence between minority groups (2003-2006 manually counted by this author). **Source:** Annual reports by the Danish Secret Service (PET); URL: <https://www.pet.dk/publikationer/RACI-indberetning.aspx>.

<sup>4</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Politically (right and left) motivated violent incidents. **Source:** Annual reports by the Danish Secret Service (PET); URL: <https://www.pet.dk/publikationer/RACI-indberetning.aspx>.

<sup>5</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Violent assaults motivated racism and/or the extreme right. **Source:** Annual report (Racism and Extremism Monitor) by the Anne Frank House; URL: <http://www.annefrank.org/en/Education/Monitor-Homepage/Racism-monitor/>.

<sup>6</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Violent assaults motivated racism and/or the extreme right. **Source:** Report by the Anne Frank House, "Second report on racism, anti-Semitism, and right-wing extremist violence in the Netherlands"; URL: <http://www.verwey-jonker.nl/doc/vitaliteit/7352%20Anne%20Frank%20English%20Monitor%20Web.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Violent assaults (*Gewalttaten*) committed by right-wing activists. **Source:** Annual reports by German Security Service; URL: <http://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/publikationen/verfassungsschutzberichte>.

<sup>8</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Violent attacks (*actiões violentes*) committed by right-wing activists. **Source:** Annual reports by La Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme (CNCDH); URL: [http://www.cncdh.fr/fr/publications/?ff0=im\\_field\\_theme%3A139&ff1=im\\_field\\_type\\_de\\_document%3A147](http://www.cncdh.fr/fr/publications/?ff0=im_field_theme%3A139&ff1=im_field_type_de_document%3A147). \* From 2014 onwards, CNCDH no longer specifies violent acts.

<sup>9</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Bodily injury (*Körperverletzung*) perpetrated by right-wing activists. **Source:** Austrian Security Service; URL: [http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/bmi\\_verfassungsschutz/](http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/bmi_verfassungsschutz/).

<sup>10</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Violence-related incidents motivated by right-wing extremism. **Source:** Swiss Federal Intelligence Service; URL: [http://www.vbs.admin.ch/internet/vbs/en/home/documentation/publication/snd\\_public.html](http://www.vbs.admin.ch/internet/vbs/en/home/documentation/publication/snd_public.html).



## **Explaining right-wing terrorism and violence in Western Europe: Grievances, opportunities, and polarization**

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Unpublished manuscript

### **Abstract**

Why have some Western democracies experienced more right-wing terrorism and violence (RTV) than others? This question remains largely unanswered in existing research on the extreme right because (1) events data suitable for cross-national comparisons have been lacking, and (2) existing analyses fail to capture RTV's causal complexity, which involve multiple causal paths (equifinality) comprising causal conditions that become sufficient for the outcome only in combination (conjunctural causation). To help fill these gaps, this paper uses new events data from the RTV dataset in a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) research design, aiming to explain variation in the extent of RTV in 18 West European countries between 1990 and 2015. In doing so, the paper identifies two "causal recipes" that consistently distinguish countries with extensive RTV experience from those with low or moderate RTV experience. The first (North European) recipe involves the combination of high immigration, low electoral support for anti-immigration (radical right) parties, and extensive public repression of radical right actors and opinions. The second (South European) recipe involves the combination of socio-economic hardship, authoritarian legacies, and extensive left-wing terrorism and militancy. Notably, both recipes contain elements of "grievances" and "opportunities", suggesting that these two theories, which are conventionally seen as contrasting, may be more fruitfully seen as complementary. Furthermore, a highly polarized conflict between far right activists and their enemies represents a third necessary condition for extensive RTV to occur. A key to combating violent extremism on the far right therefore lies in disrupting rather than accelerating such polarization mechanisms, suggesting that openness and dialogue might work better than public repression, stigmatization, or aggressive confrontation.

### **Introduction**

Since the end of WWII, the threat posed by right-wing terrorism and violence (RTV) has varied considerably over time and across countries in Western Europe. Existing research shows that RTV comes in waves, and scholars seem to agree that the most recent wave began around the late 1980s and ended during the early 2000s in most countries (Bjørger, 1997, pp. 74–75;

Koopmans, 1996; Merkl, 1995). Thus, following a relatively peaceful period, several experts are now warning that a new outbreak of RTV might be brewing in Western Europe (Bartlett & Birdwell, 2011; Fekete, 2016; Ramalingam, 2014). These concerns have in turn been intensified by the ongoing migration crisis, by a prolonged financial crisis, by rising Islamist terrorism, and by growing support for radical right parties. However, because our knowledge about RTV's underlying causes remains limited, and because we lack updated events data, it is difficult to assess the credibility of such warnings, and to identify the most relevant countermeasures for dealing with this allegedly emergent threat.

To help fill these gaps, this paper uses new events data from the RTV dataset (Ravndal, 2016) to investigate why some West European countries have experienced more RTV than others between 1990 and 2015.<sup>1</sup> This question remains largely unanswered in existing research on the extreme right (Mudde, 2004, pp. 205–208). Although several scholars have looked into RTV's underlying causes (e.g. Bjørge, 1997; Hoffman, 1982; Koopmans, 1996; Sprinzak, 1995), their diverse propositions have yet to be investigated systematically across more than a handful of cases. In other words, we have been presented with a number of plausible hypotheses, but little systematic evidence has been offered to disprove or support them.

Furthermore, in those few instances where scholars have been able to generate systematic events data, they tend to investigate the isolated effects of only one or two independent variables, such as unemployment (Falk et al., 2011), immigration (Garcia, 2015), or at best the interaction between the economy and immigration (McLaren, 1999). Yet there are reasons to believe that more complex explanatory models are required to explain consistently why RTV has been more extensive in some countries than in others. For example, grievances caused by high immigration may be relevant for explaining why countries such as Sweden and Germany have experienced extensive RTV. At the same time, immigration has (until the recent migration crisis) been limited in countries such as Italy and Spain where RTV has nevertheless been extensive, indicating equifinality (multiple causal paths to the same outcome). Furthermore, high immigration alone does not necessarily lead to extensive RTV, as illustrated by cases such as Switzerland and France, unless it is combined with other conditions, indicating conjunctural causation (conditions that only in combination become necessary or sufficient for an outcome).

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<sup>1</sup> By Western Europe, I mean all European countries that did not form part of the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War.

To resolve some of these problems, this paper applies qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) – a method designed precisely to capture causal complexity such as equifinality and conjunctural causation (Ragin, 2014, pp. 19–33; Schneider & Wagemann, 2013, pp. 78–79). More specifically, I use QCA to investigate how six causal conditions proposed as being conducive to RTV in existing research (immigration, socio-economic hardship, authoritarian legacies, radical right support, radical right repression, and left-wing terrorism and militancy) relate to the extent of RTV in 18 West European countries between 1990 and 2015. This analysis results in two “causal recipes”, each containing three causal conditions, the combination of which appears to fuel hostility, polarization, and violence.<sup>2</sup> The first (North European) recipe involves the combination of high immigration, low electoral support for anti-immigration (radical right) parties, and extensive public repression of radical right actors and opinions. The second (South European) recipe involves the combination of socio-economic hardship, authoritarian legacies, and extensive left-wing terrorism and militancy. Notably, both recipes contain elements of grievances and opportunities, suggesting that these two theoretical approaches, which are conventionally seen as contrasting (Koopmans, 1996), may be more fruitfully seen as complementary (Bara, 2014). In addition, a highly polarized conflict between far right activists and their enemies represents a third necessary condition for extensive RTV to occur.

Conceptually, I follow Bobbio’s (1996) classic distinction between those on the left who support egalitarian policies designed to reduce social inequality, and those on the right who regard social inequality – or hierarchical order – as inevitable, natural, or even desirable. Furthermore, unlike their moderate counterparts, members of the *far* right share an authoritarian inclination (Bobbio, 1996, pp. 72–80), that is, an inherent need for sameness, oneness, and submission to group authority, resulting in intolerance towards diversity and individual autonomy (Stenner, 2005), and some form of nativism or ethnic nationalism (Mudde, 2007, pp. 15–23). I also distinguish between on the one hand radical right actors who use conventional democratic means to gain political power, and on the other hand militants or extremists, who openly reject democracy and favour violent or other non-conventional means to generate

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<sup>2</sup> I have also experimented with statistical analysis using the number of deadly RTV events per country-year (N=450) as my dependent variable. Although several statistically significant relationships were discovered, different statistical models (the most relevant being a negative binominal count model) yielded different findings, most likely reflecting the causal complexity underlying the phenomenon under investigation (RTV), but also limited variation in the variables included in the analysis, making conventional statistical analysis less appropriate.

revolutionary change. Finally, I use the far right as a collective term comprising both radical and extreme actors when appropriate.

The paper proceeds as follows. Part one combines RTV events data with other sources to illustrate cross-national differences in the extent of RTV in 18 West European countries between 1990 and 2015. Part two draws on existing theory and literature to identify the most relevant causal conditions for explaining this cross-national variation. Part three outlines how each condition included in my analysis has been measured and scored. Part four presents the results from my QCA analysis. In conclusion, the paper draws on these results to reflect on the paradox that countermeasures intended to constrain radical right politics appear to fuel extreme right violence, while countermeasures that may constrain extreme right violence would imply an advancement of radical right politics.

### **RTV in post-1990 Western Europe**

A critical weakness in existing research on RTV in Western Europe has been a lack of systematic events data suitable for analysing cross-national variation. By comparison, research on RTV in the United States has progressed because systematic events data have been developed (Adamczyk et al., 2014; Chermak et al., 2013; Freilich et al., 2014; Kerodal et al., 2015). To overcome this challenge, this study uses new events data from the RTV dataset.<sup>3</sup> Including only the most severe types of events, this dataset offers a modest but fairly consistent account of RTV in Western Europe between 1990 and 2015. More specifically, the dataset includes: (1) attacks with a deadly or near deadly outcome; (2) attacks involving active use of deadly weapons such as knives, firearms, and bombs; (3) major attack plots involving use of deadly weapons; (4) discoveries of bomb-making materials or major arms depositaries belonging to right-wing activists; and (5) other violent events that undoubtedly qualify as acts of terrorism. In particular, the dataset includes (nearly) all deadly RTV events. Considering that political and racist murders rarely occur in complete isolation from less severe forms of violence, such deadly events arguably also constitute a reasonably good indicator of right-wing violence more generally. The RTV dataset can therefore be used to compare frequencies of deadly events across time and space, and to make causal inferences about RTV more generally from these patterns with reasonable confidence.

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<sup>3</sup> The RTV dataset can be downloaded at: <http://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/rtv>

Table 1 shows that deadly RTV events cluster around four countries in particular: Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Spain.

*Table 1. RTV attack frequencies and casualties*

Country	RTV events	Deadly RTV events (number killed)	Deadly events per average million inhabitants 1990–2015
Austria	*23	1 (4)	0.1
Belgium	6	3 (5)	0.3
Denmark	19	1 (1)	0.2
Finland	8	-	-
France	16	9 (11)	0.1
Germany	122	82 (104)	1,0
Greece	55	6 (7)	0.6
Iceland	-	-	-
Ireland	4	3 (4)	0.8
Italy	99	5 (6)	0.1
Luxemburg	-	-	-
Netherlands	10	3 (3)	0.2
Norway	25	3 (79)	0.7
Portugal	3	3 (3)	0.3
Spain	39	22 (22)	0.5
Sweden	89	17 (20)	1.9
Switzerland	1	1 (1)	0.1
UK	59	31 (33)	0.5
Sum	578	190 (303)	

\* All 23 events were carried out by one person: Franz Fuchs.

Besides these four countries, Table 1 also shows that Italy and Greece appear to have experienced extensive amounts of mostly non-lethal RTV. Furthermore, a closer look at Italy and Greece's records in the RTV dataset shows that regular events reports have only been available for limited periods, and that nearly all registered events cluster within these periods. A high number of events registered during limited periods indicates that Italy and Greece have likely experienced considerably more RTV between 1990 and 2015 than those events included in the RTV dataset, and thus considerably more RTV than most other West European countries.

The RTV dataset clearly has its limitations, and inferences about cross-national variation must be drawn with caution, particularly when including non-lethal events. With that caveat in mind, it seems reasonable to argue that Sweden, Germany, the UK, and Spain have experienced considerably more RTV per capita than other West European countries (being mindful that

small countries with only a few deadly events, such as Norway and Ireland, score disproportionately high on the number of deadly events per capita). Furthermore, the high amounts of (mostly non-lethal) RTV events attributed to Italy and Greece during limited periods suggest that these two cases may also be considered as countries with extensive RTV experience.

Evidence from alternative sources corroborates these claims. For example, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and the European Network Against Racism produce regular reports on racist violence in Europe.<sup>4</sup> Although these reports lack systematic and comparable events data, they offer a qualitative assessment of racist violence in most West European countries. A systematic review of these reports shows that Sweden, Germany, the UK, Spain, Greece, and Italy are all portrayed as countries with extensive racist violence, and more so than any other West European country.

Another relevant source is the Domestic Terrorism Victims (DTV) dataset (De la Calle & Sanchez-Cuenca, 2011). DTV documents victims of deadly terrorism in Western Europe 1966–2005, including events motivated by the extreme right. Isolating post-1990 events and taking population size into account, Germany, the UK, Spain, and Sweden stand out, with far more RTV victims per capita than any other West European country. In addition, Greece has a higher number of victims per capita than any of the other remaining countries, while Italy does not stand out in this particular statistic.

Finally, the internationally recognized non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch (HRW) has documented racist violence in Italy and Greece (Sunderland et al., 2012; Sunderland & Ward, 2011). Although lacking comparative perspectives, these reports suggest that both Italy and Greece have been marred by unregistered racist violence over the past decades. Ideally, similar reports would be available for all West European countries. However, it is reasonable to assume that the HRW's case selection relies on the fact that Italy and Greece have experienced extensive amounts of mostly unreported violence, while most other West European countries either have better reporting mechanisms or have experienced less violence.

In sum, the evidence presented here suggests that RTV in Western Europe clusters around six countries in particular: Sweden, Germany, the UK, Spain, Italy, and Greece. In the

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<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/> and <http://enar-eu.org>.

following, I discuss how this clustering might be explained using the existing RTV literature as a point of departure.

### **Theoretical framework**

The existing RTV literature may be characterised as diverse, disorganized, and discontinuous, which is also reflected in existing reviews of it (Heitmeyer, 2003, 2005). A number of different and at times conflicting explanations of RTV have been proposed, including but not limited to immigration (Garcia, 2015), social isolation and disintegration (Heitmeyer, 1993), a search for meaning and purpose in life (Griffin, 2003), threat perceptions (Sprinzak, 1995), elite behaviour and public discourse (Koopmans, 1996), and apolitical factors such as low socio-economic status, identity formation, or criminal dispositions (Bjørger, 1997). However, few of these explanations have been tested systematically using comparative designs.

The first (and as far as I know only) attempt so far to explain cross-national variation in right-wing violence in Western Europe was published by Ruud Koopmans in 1996. In this study, Koopmans aims to test what he portrays as two contrasting theoretical models: the grievance model, which sees protest and mobilization as a result of grievances caused by increased immigration and feelings of anomie among the socially marginalized; and the opportunity model, which emphasizes the role of political institutions, elites, and parties in shaping mobilization opportunities for social movements (Koopmans, 1996). Koopmans merits recognition for having offered the first comparative cross-national study of this kind. However, his analysis leans on a rather cursory depiction of right-wing violence in only 8 of Western Europe's 18 countries. In particular, he excludes highly relevant countries such as Italy, Spain, and Greece. He also compares events data from different datasets that cannot be compared because they rely on different definitions of right-wing violence, different data collection methods, and different types of sources (Bjørger, 2003, pp. 793–794).

Furthermore, by approaching these two competing models as mutually exclusive, Koopmans creates a potentially false dichotomy between grievances and opportunities – two aspects of reality that may well co-exist and influence the level of right-wing violence, not only as different causal paths to the same outcome (equifinality), but also as causal conditions that become sufficient for the outcome only in combination (conjunctural causation). Koopmans is forthright about the inherent ambiguity of his findings (Koopmans, 1996, pp. 199, 208). It is

therefore surprising that no one has attempted to conduct a similar study, only with more reliable data, or with a more appropriate research design.

Aiming to do just that, this paper investigates how six causal conditions proposed as being conducive to RTV (immigration, socio-economic hardship, authoritarian legacies, radical right support, radical right repression, and left-wing terrorism and militancy) relate to the extent of RTV in 18 West European countries. My selection of causal conditions rests on three theoretical premises derived from existing research: (1) sufficient militant mobilization; (2) combining rather than contrasting grievances and opportunities; and (3) polarization.

### **First premise: sufficient militant mobilization**

Based on a chronology of more than 3000 terrorist attacks in the United States between 1954 and 2004, the majority of which were right-wing, Hewitt found a strong relationship between the numbers of active militants, or what he labels “mobilized activists”, on the one hand, and levels of terrorism and violence on the other hand. At the same time, the number of unorganized sympathisers did not seem to influence terrorism and violence in the same way (Hewitt, 2003, p. 46). Assuming that these causal relationships apply also to the European context, a key condition to explain varying levels of terrorism and violence would be the number of active militants at any given time.

Both grievances and opportunities come across as relevant in this regard. From the grievance side, factors such as immigration, modernization, and socio-economic hardship have been proposed as being conducive to extreme right mobilization and violence (Garcia, 2015; Heitmeyer, 1993; Lipset & Raab, 1970). However, this approach has been criticized by social movement scholars for failing to “explain the causal mechanisms that intervene between macro-causes and micro-behaviours” and for emphasizing conditions that in isolation are “neither necessary nor sufficient” for the outcome of interest (Caiani et al., 2012, p. 9). For example, one can easily find countries in Western Europe, such as Switzerland and France, where immigration has been extensive but where RTV has been low or moderate.

From the opportunity side, social movement scholars have proposed looking at how political and discursive opportunities might shape militant mobilization. More specifically, extreme right mobilization has been proposed as more likely in countries where support for radical right parties is limited or blocked, thereby channelling people with far right sympathies into more extreme forms of activism (Koopmans, 1996), and in countries where former



authoritarian (fascist) experiences create favourable opportunities for militant mobilization (Gattinara & Froio, 2014).

Some social movement scholars also argue that racist violence is more likely to occur when the political elites and the media create favourable discursive opportunities for the extreme right, most notably by framing immigrants as a societal threat (Koopmans, 1996; Koopmans & Olzak, 2004). The idea is that such discursive opportunities legitimize, and thus facilitate, extreme right mobilization and violence. However, while elites' negative framing of immigrants may have contributed to racist violence in some countries, particularly during the early and mid-1990s, it does not explain why countries with a more restrictive public debate on immigration, such as Sweden, have nevertheless experienced extensive RTV (Jørgensen & Meret, 2012). Furthermore, although immigrants constitute the largest target group in the RTV dataset, they represent less than half of the registered victims. The second largest target group are left-wing activists. Other significant target groups include homosexuals and homeless people. Western political elites and the media have hardly framed these target groups as societal threats, and elite framing therefore offers a less helpful explanation of these types of violent attacks.

### **Second premise: combining rather than contrasting grievances and opportunities**

Grievances and opportunities were originally introduced as useful ordering concepts for the study of war (Starr, 1978), and have since become recurrent themes in the civil war literature (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). While conventionally approached as two competing theories, civil war scholars have more recently found that they may be more fruitfully approached as complementary because their implied causal mechanisms do not logically exclude one another (Ballentine & Sherman, 2003; Korf, 2005). By contrast, one may argue that opportunity-oriented explanations follow logically from grievances, and that grievances are necessary for explaining why some actors choose to exploit existing opportunities, while others remain inactive.

The potential complementarity between grievances and opportunities (or incentives) has also been convincingly demonstrated empirically to explain civil war onset using QCA analysis (Bara, 2014). This method may therefore also provide a useful tool for investigating how elements from grievances and opportunities might combine to explain cross-national variation in RTV in Western Europe. However, unlike countries experiencing civil wars, a belligerent conflict is not necessarily present in all West European countries. To explain why some West

European countries have experienced considerably more RTV than others, a third component might therefore be fruitfully added to the grievance and opportunity models: polarization.

### **Third premise: polarization**

My third and last premise concerns the nature and dynamics of ongoing conflicts between the far right and its enemies. This premise, too, builds on research derived from the civil war literature, but this time on the violent consequences of highly polarized conflicts (Montalvo & Reynal-Querol, 2005; Østby, 2008). Applying this concept to the West European context, I assume that extensive RTV is more likely to occur in countries with a highly polarized left–right conflict than in countries where the left–right divide is less pronounced. Polarization may in turn be accentuated via different mechanisms, such as violent confrontations between left- and right-wing militants, or through public repression and stigmatization of radical right actors and opinion, pushing some of the most ardent activists onto more extreme and clandestine paths.

Such mechanisms are well documented in existing RTV research, although rarely analysed comparatively or systematically across cases. Notably, Sprinzak (1995, p. 21) argues that extreme right “violence, and gradually terrorism, will only emerge when the group involved feels increasingly insecure or threatened [by their enemies]”. A number of other studies have also documented these types of confrontational mechanisms, which appear to be of a universal nature (Bjørngo, 1997, pp. 211–235; Fangen, 2001, p. 54; Löow, 1993; Merkl, 1995, p. 111; Weinberg, 1995). The most systematic exposition to date is provided by della Porta in her recent book *Clandestine Political Violence* (2013), tracing causal mechanisms such as “escalating policing” and “competitive escalation” (within and between extremist groups) across different contexts and ideological spaces, including the extreme right.

Finally, several scholars have noted that repressive measures meant to curb radical right actors and opinions have a tendency to fuel more extreme forms of activism (Art, 2011, pp. 44–49; Klandermans & Mayer, 2006, pp. 272–273; Minkenberg, 2006). These observations tie into a larger debate on the relationship between violence and repression (della Porta, 2014). They also tie into an ongoing debate on how to approach radical right parties, and whether repression and stigmatization of such parties and their sympathisers have the desired effects, or if such measures only contribute to further polarization (Van Spanje & Van Der Brug, 2007). On this note, existing research finds that, while high stigmatization might constrain recruitment, it also increases the inner spirit of extreme right groups (Simi & Futrell, 2009). Furthermore, different forms and degrees of stigmatization appear to have opposite effects on different types of

extreme right activists (Linden & Klandermans, 2006). While extensive repression and stigmatization might fuel violence and militancy, a complete absence of repression and stigmatization might also lead to the same outcome (given that a sizeable militant movement exists), as seems to have been the case in Russia (Enstad, 2015). High or low repression and stigmatization should in other words not be seen as mutually exclusive conditions, but rather as two alternative paths that may lead to a similar outcome (equifinality).

Not all conditions proposed as being conducive to RTV come across as equally relevant for explaining cross-national variation. Furthermore, the number of causal conditions to be included in a QCA analysis should be kept at a moderate level (Schneider & Wagemann, 2013, pp. 276–277). Consequently, using the three premises discussed above to inform my selection, I have opted for the six conditions listed in Table 2.

*Table 2. Causal conditions included in the analysis*

Conditions	Theoretical foundation
Ethnic diversity or immigration	Grievances
Socio-economic hardship	Grievances
Radical right support	Opportunities
Authoritarian legacies	Opportunities
Left-wing terrorism and militancy	Polarization
Radical right repression	Polarization

### **Method - a short introduction to fuzzy set QCA**

QCA is a comparative method for the social sciences invented and developed by the American sociologist Charles Ragin (1987, 2000, 2008). To investigate causal complexity such as equifinality and conjunctural causation, correlation-based methods require extensive interaction modelling whose results may be difficult to interpret meaningfully once the number of interacting variables exceeds two or three. By contrast, QCA is specifically designed to capture such causal complexity (Ragin, 2014, pp. 19–33; Schneider & Wagemann, 2013, pp. 78–79).

In QCA, both the outcome variable and the independent variables – or causal conditions in QCA terminology – are treated as partially overlapping “sets” in which cases may be members or not. For example, one may look at how the set of Western liberal democracies with extensive RTV experience (outcome variable) overlaps with the set of countries with high immigration

and the set of countries with authoritarian legacies, as illustrated by the Venn diagrams in Figure 1. By quantifying and then cross-analysing such set memberships in a truth table, QCA helps identify (combinations of) causal conditions that may be regarded as *necessary* or *sufficient* for the outcome. In the (imagined) example from Figure 1, we see that all countries with extensive RTV experience have experienced either an authoritarian regime, or high immigration, or both. However, we also see that none of these conditions are necessary for the outcome because they only cover a portion of the outcome set. Furthermore, because they also include cases outside the outcome set, they are not sufficient, and must be combined with additional conditions to become part of a consistent explanation.

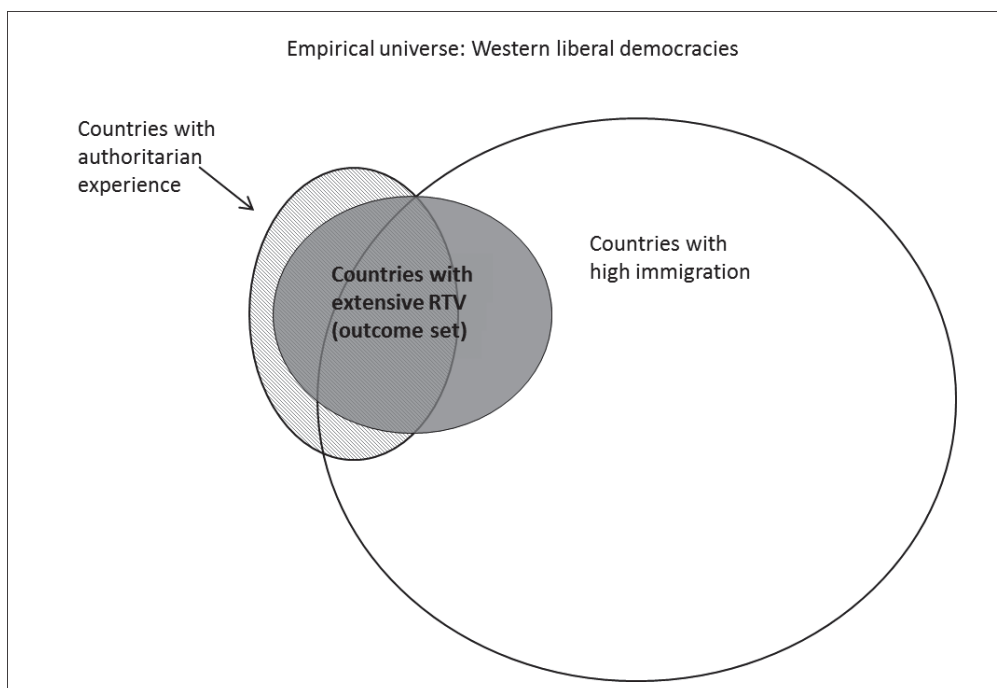


Figure 1. Venn diagrams illustrating set-theoretic reasoning

*Fuzzy-set* QCA also allows cases to have partial set memberships, reflecting the often fuzzy boundaries of many social science concepts (Goertz, 2006), such as “democracy”. In doing so, the researcher assigns scores of between 0 and 1, where 1 means full membership, and 0 means no membership, while 0.5 represents the critical cut-off point separating those cases that are considered to be more in than out of the set, based on the researcher’s substantive and theoretical knowledge (Ragin, 2008, pp. 82–83). Because of the asymmetric nature of set relations, crossing the cut-off point has much greater inferential implications than moving up or down on either side of this point. To critically assess any given fuzzy scores, one should therefore primarily consider which cases are above or below the cut-off point, before examining the relative position of cases to each other on either side of the fuzzy scale.

Finally, in terms of causal explanation, it should be noted that uncovering necessary or sufficient relationships between sets does not automatically imply that they are causally related. In fact, from a pure mathematical perspective, such set relationships say nothing about causality (Thiem & Baumgartner, 2016). However, given that the selection of causal conditions is theoretically informed, QCA represents a systematic method for identifying empirically consistent (combinations of) conditions whose implied causal mechanisms may then be further investigated using process-tracing or similar case study methods (Schneider & Rohlfing, 2013). As such, QCA may be complemented by case studies in the same way as large-N statistical analyses may be (Sambanis, 2004). However, as opposed to large-N statistical analysis, QCA may also be used for medium- and even low-N studies.

### **Measurements**

The following paragraphs outline how my outcome variable and causal conditions have been measured and scored according to standard QCA procedures. Each condition has been calibrated as a four-level fuzzy variable with the following thresholds: 1.0 / 0.75 / 0.25 / 0.0. A more detailed description, including tables with raw scores and case distributions for all measurements, the negated set analysis, and robustness test scores, are found in Appendix I.

### ***Outcome variable***

My outcome variable is the extent of RTV in each West European country between 1990 and 2015. To obtain a reliable measurement of this variable, I combine a quantitative measure with a qualitative assessment. My quantitative measure is the number of deadly RTV events per million inhabitants in each country between 1990 and 2015. Deadly RTV events arguably represent the most definitive and reliable measure of RTV. However, as explained previously, some countries have experienced extensive non-lethal violence, but relatively few deaths, and it would be misleading to place such cases below the cut-off point. In addition, small countries with only a handful of deadly events would get disproportionately high scores if only the number of deadly events per capita counted. I therefore use a second qualitative assessment to inform and adjust the ranking resulting from my quantitative measure. This qualitative assessment is based on a variety of sources documenting RTV across Western Europe, most notably events data from the RTV dataset, but also national hate crime statistics on right-wing violence (see Appendix II), as well as existing reports and literature on racist violence in different West European countries (see Appendix III). The cut-off point is set at 0.5 deadly events per million inhabitants, at which point a gap appears in the distribution of cases, effectively separating

Spain and the UK (both 0.5) from Belgium and Portugal (both 0.3). Appendix I gives a more detailed explanation of how each case has been scored.

### ***Causal conditions***

*Ethnic diversity or immigration (diversity)* has been operationalized as a macro condition (one that combines two measures) using the logical OR operator to combine measures of ethnic diversity with asylum seeker frequencies. I use the OR operator because low scores on one of these measures become less meaningful if the score on the other measure is high (violent far right activists do not seem to care about foreigners' citizenship status). My measure of ethnic diversity relies on Eurostat's (2014) figures for the relative share of a country's population born outside the EU – a type of measure used in previous research on ethnic diversity (Lolle & Torpe, 2011). Asylum seeker frequencies are based on Eurostat data documenting the number of asylum seekers registered annually between 1990 and 2014 in each country. Note that I have intentionally left out figures for 2015, when the migration crisis hit Europe with full force. The reason is that one may expect a temporal lag between increased immigration and militant mobilization and violence. Therefore, including these latest figures might give a misleading impression about the effects of immigration on RTV. Cut-off points and interval levels are in both measures based on case distributions, as well as a few cases whose raw scores indicate a middle position, but which are generally considered as having experienced either high ethnic diversity (the UK) or high immigration (Germany and Denmark).

*Socio-economic hardship (hardship)* was measured using Eurostat's so-called "at risk of poverty or social exclusion" variable, reflecting a population's share of people either at risk of poverty, or severely materially deprived, or living in a household with a very low work intensity.<sup>5</sup> *Hardship's* fuzzy scores are based on each country's average AROPE scores in the period 2004-2014 (data on previous years are not available), and high and low thresholds are set according to the case distribution and the positions of cases known for their good (e.g. Norway) or bad (e.g. Greece) socio-economic performance. The cut-off point was set at 25 per cent, at which point a gap appears in the distribution of cases, effectively separating Spain (26) from the UK (24).

*Radical right support (support)* was measured using data compiled by Minkenberg (2015, p. 8). Data have been added for seven cases not included in Minkenberg's study: Iceland,

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<sup>5</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/People\\_at\\_risk\\_of\\_poverty\\_or\\_social\\_exclusion](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/People_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion)

Ireland, Luxemburg, Portugal, Spain, Finland and Greece – countries where radical right parties have been electorally irrelevant, except for more recently in Finland (Finns Party) and Greece (Golden Dawn). I use 5-percent intervals based on the average percentage of votes given to radical right parties in parliamentary elections between 1990 and 2014. The cut-off point is set at 10 percent, at which point a gap appears in the distribution of cases, effectively separating Belgium (10.2) from the Netherlands (6.7). This cut-off point is also based on the theoretical expectation that support for radical right parties should exceed 10 percent to discourage alternative and more extreme forms of mobilization.

*Authoritarian legacies (legacies)* was measured using a mini-survey sent to a group of experts on former authoritarian regimes, asking them to rank West European countries according to their authoritarian experiences and legacies.<sup>6</sup> More specifically, I asked them to rank countries on a 4-value scale where the full membership score (1.0) is given to countries still heavily influenced by extensive authoritarian experiences. The more in than out score (0.75) is given to countries with significant authoritarian experience still influencing parts of the population. The more out than in score (0.25) is given to countries that have some authoritarian experience, but are being influenced to a lesser extent by that experience today. Finally, the fully out score (0) is given to countries with insignificant or no authoritarian experience. Interim Nazi governments during WWII have not been considered as a relevant experience here because they arguably fuelled more resistance than support.

*Radical right repression (repression)* was measured using relevant academic accounts, most notably Art's (2011, pp. 44–49) discussion of repressive versus permissive environments for radical right parties in Europe, van Spanje and van der Brug's (2007) research on ostracism of anti-immigration parties; and Bleich's (2007; Bleich & Lambert, 2013) research on government responses to hate crimes and racist associations in West European countries. Some countries included in my analysis are not referred to in these studies, primarily because they never had any prominent radical right parties. Such cases (e.g. Spain and Iceland) have been assigned the 0 score, while being mindful that extensive repression might have existed if radical right parties were more prominent, and that the non-existence of such parties could be interpreted as a result of extensive repression. The full membership score (1.0) is given to countries where existing academic accounts leave little doubt about a repressive environment. The more in than out score (0.75) is given to countries where existing academic accounts

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<sup>6</sup> This ranking exercise was given to relevant researchers at the Norwegian Center for Studies of Holocaust and Religious Minorities: <http://www.hlsenteret.no/english/>

portray somewhat milder forms of repression, or to countries that have evolved from a repressive towards a more permissive environment, or the other way around. The more out than in score (0.25) is given to countries for which existing academic accounts testify to some but no consistent repression. Finally, the fully out score (0) is given to countries described as mostly permissive or not mentioned in existing academic accounts.

*Left-wing terrorism and militancy (aggression)* has been operationalized using three different measures: (1) left-wing terrorism 1990–2004 as indicated by the TWEED and DTV datasets; (2) left-wing terrorism and militancy 2006–2015 as portrayed by Europol’s annual Terrorism Trend and Situation (TE-SAT) reports; and (3) a mini-survey conducted among contemporary left-wing militants ranking their own movement’s size and visibility in different West European countries.<sup>7</sup> The full membership score (1) is given to countries that score high on all three measures. The more in than out score (0,75) is given to countries that score high on two of three measures. The more out than in score (0,25) is given to countries that score high on one of three measures. Finally, the fully out score (0) is given to countries with low scores on all three measures.

All fuzzy scores are presented in Table 3:

*Table 3. Fuzzy score matrix*

Country	RTV	Diversity	Hardship	Support	Legacies	Repression	Aggression
AUT	0.25	1	0	1	1	0	0
BEL	0.25	1	0.25	0.75	0.25	0.75	0
DEN	0.25	0.75	0	0.75	0	0	0.25
FIN	0.25	0	0	0.25	0	0	0
FRA	0.25	0.75	0	0.75	0.25	0.75	0.25
GER	1	0.75	0.25	0	1	1	0.75
GRE	0.75	0.75	1	0	1	0	1
ICE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IRE	0.25	0.75	0.75	0	0	0	0
ITA	0.75	0.25	0.75	0.75	1	0	0.75
LUX	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
NED	0.25	0.75	0	0.25	0	0.75	0
NOR	0.25	1	0	0.75	0	0	0
POR	0	0.25	0.75	0	1	0	0
SPA	0.75	0.75	0.75	0	1	0	0.75
SWE	1	1	0	0	0	1	0.25
SWI	0.25	1	0	1	0	0.25	0
UK	0.75	0.75	0.25	0	0	0.75	0

<sup>7</sup> This survey was given over e-mail via an intermediary person. All respondents were informed about who and what the survey was for.



## Analysis and results

Any QCA analysis should begin by searching for necessary (non-trivial) conditions. The fsQCA software has a specific function for the necessity analysis which should be conducted independently from the truth table analysis (Schneider & Wagemann, 2013, pp. 69–75). Table 4 shows the scores produced by this necessity analysis.

*Table 4.* Analysis of necessary conditions

Condition	Consistency	Coverage
diversity	0.86	0.50
hardship	0.45	0.68
~support*	0.86	0.53
legacies	0.55	0.62
repression	0.52	0.71
aggression	0.52	0.94

\* ~ symbolizes set negation, in this case the set of countries with no or low radical right support

These results suggest that none of the conditions included in my analysis are necessary for RTV (which would require consistency and coverage scores at least above 0.9). In fact, these results illustrate RTV's causal complexity. Conditions with fairly high consistency scores (*diversity* and *~support*) have low coverage scores, meaning that the outcome set constitutes a relatively small subset of these two conditions. In other words, while *diversity* (grievances) and *~support* (opportunities) may constitute important preconditions for right-wing violence in some cases, they must be combined with other conditions to become part of a consistent explanation, indicating conjunctural causation. Conversely, the only condition with a high coverage score (*aggression*), scores low on consistency, suggesting that left-wing terrorism and militancy may be relevant for some but not all cases in the outcome set, indicating equifinality. This brings us to the test for sufficiency, designed precisely to capture these types of causal complexity.

The most critical measure of the sufficiency analysis – solution consistency – expresses the combined consistency of the proposed causal recipes derived from a truth table analysis. In other words, do the proposed combinations of conditions consistently explain the outcomes across the cases involved in the analysis? The second measure – solution coverage – expresses how much of the outcome set is being covered by these proposed causal recipes. The consistency cut-off level decided by the researcher also influences solution consistency and coverage scores. In my case, the truth table generated by the fsQCA software leaves two possible cut-off options: 1.0, including four of the six cases that are more in than out of my outcome set; or 0.82, including all six cases plus one case (the Netherlands) that is more out

than in (0.25) of my outcome set. Setting the cut-off level at 1.0 logically yields higher solution consistency (0.93 for the intermediate solution) but lower solution coverage (0.45 for the intermediate solution).<sup>8</sup> Conversely, setting the cut-off level at 0.82 yields a somewhat lower but still acceptable solution consistency score (0.88 for the intermediate solution) and a higher solution coverage score (0.76 for the intermediate solution), as illustrated by Table 5.

*Table 5.* Solution terms from the intermediate solution

Causal recipes	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency
Frequency cut-off: 1.00			
Consistency cut-off: 0.82			
Assumptions: diversity*hardship*~support*legacies*repression*aggression → rtv			
repression*~support*diversity	0.45	0.41	0.87
aggression*hardship*legacies	0.34	0.31	0.91
Solution coverage: 0.76			
Solution consistency: 0.88			

Opting for the 0.82 cut-off level, two causal recipes (intermediate solution) are derived from the logical minimization performed by the fsQCA software (\* symbolizes the AND operator, → symbolizes sufficiency):<sup>9</sup>

diversity\*~support\*repression → RTV

hardship\*legacies\*aggression → RTV

If we look at the different cases covered by these two recipes, an interesting geographical pattern emerges: the first recipe covers North European countries with extensive RTV (Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Germany) while the second recipe covers South European countries with extensive RTV (Italy, Spain and Greece). In the first recipe, grievances caused by problems related to high immigration or diversity appear to have become particularly pronounced in a handful of North European countries that also lacked influential anti-immigration (radical right) parties during the period under investigation (1990–2015), thereby creating mobilization opportunities for the extreme right. Such militant mobilization has in turn been fuelled by extensive public repression and stigmatization of radical right actors and

<sup>8</sup> The fsQCA software offers three solutions: complex, parsimonious, and intermediate, reflecting different degrees of simplifying and theoretical assumptions. I prefer the intermediate solution, where the researcher's theoretical assumptions are used to calculate logical remainders, that is, logically possible rows that are consistent with the empirical data fed into the analysis, but lacking empirical cases.

<sup>9</sup> I have changed the order of the conditions according to the logical direction of the assumed causal path.

opinions in countries such as Sweden, Germany and the UK (Art, 2011, p. 48; E. Bleich, 2007; Van Spanje & Van Der Brug, 2007). While such repression and stigmatization may discourage some people from joining radical and extreme right groups, it may also push some of the most ardent activists onto more clandestine and revolutionary paths, ultimately leading to violence and terrorism.

In the second recipe, grievances caused by socio-economic hardship combined with the legacies of former authoritarian regimes create opportunities for militant mobilization on both sides of the political spectrum, intensifying an already polarized left–right divide. Once a sufficient number of militants have been mobilized on both sides, a reciprocal spiral of violence and terrorism is then likely to follow (Weinberg, 1995; Weinberg & Eubank, 1987). These dynamics are also echoed by the RTV dataset, most notably by the Italian and Spanish cases, where a majority of registered attacks have targeted left-wing militants as opposed to most other countries where immigrants constitute the largest target group. While attacks against left-wing militants in Greece are less covered by the RTV dataset (most likely because of limited data), several reports describe an ongoing street war between the militant left and the militant right in Greece (Faiola, 2014; Spillius, 2012) – a conflict that according to local experts is best understood in light of Greece’s former authoritarian regime (Sotiris, 2012). The continuity of these “old” left–right political cleavages is also indicated by the fact that Italy, Spain and Greece still have active communist parties (sometimes with parliamentary representation), a rare phenomenon in the rest of Western Europe (March & Mudde, 2005).

### **Uncertainty and robustness**

What might we infer from these findings and are they robust? Importantly, the explorative character of QCA analysis implies provisional results that should always be followed by additional case studies and/or statistical analysis (Schneider & Wagemann, 2010, p. 400). Considering the causal distance between many of the conditions included in my analysis and actual terrorism and violence, more in-depth case studies tracing the causal mechanisms implied by each recipe are therefore needed before drawing any conclusions with confidence. It is beyond the scope of this macro-comparative analysis to provide such detailed case studies, which would require different types of data and methods, including inside information generated by ethnographic studies and in-depth interviews.

With regards to robustness, Schneider and Wagemann (2013, pp. 284–295) propose three types of robustness tests for QCA analysis: (1) changing calibration thresholds; (2) changing

consistency levels for truth table rows; and (3) adding or dropping cases. The general rule is that the analysis can be regarded as reasonably robust if slightly adjusting any of these three elements does not result in substantive changes in the solution formulas' parameters of fit (consistency and coverage scores) or in the composition of the solution formulas. Thus, to experiment with different calibration thresholds, I ran a robustness test where the cut-off points for *diversity*, *hardship* and *support* (my frequency-based conditions) were determined by the median score rather than by the case distribution and the position of a few key cases, and where the intervals were set to be equally large. This test gave fairly similar results as in my original analysis, except that *hardship* was added to the North European recipe, because the UK was included in the set of countries with socio-economic hardship with these alternative calibration thresholds. In addition, a third causal recipe mainly reflecting the German case was derived from this alternative analysis, combining all the elements from the other two recipes except for *hardship*, but with a unique coverage of only 0.07. The solution consistency score of these three recipes was 0.95, while the solution coverage score was 0.59. This robustness test thus suggests that socio-economic hardship may be more important than suggested by my original analysis, but only if we accept that the UK experienced considerable socio-economic hardship between 1990 and 2015, which is debatable. I therefore consider my original findings as reasonably robust after having performed this test.

Regarding consistency cut-off levels, I have already described how different consistency cut-off levels (1.0 versus 0.82) yielded different parameters of fit, especially on solution coverage, because the 1.0 cut-off level included only four of six cases from the outcome set. By setting the consistency cut-off point at 1.0, and thereby defining the 0.82 row (containing Sweden, the UK, and the Netherlands) as insufficient for the outcome, the "North European" causal recipe is replaced by a new recipe that is substantially reconcilable with the original recipe (because *diversity* \* *~support* \* *repression* are still included) but more restrictive because two conditions are added to the recipe (*legacies* and *aggression*). Conversely, by including the 0.82 row, all six cases from my outcome set are included plus the Netherlands, which is the only fully inconsistent case, being a full member of the North European recipe, but with an RTV score of only 0.25. As such, the Netherlands represents an interesting case for further investigation (perhaps the Dutch liberal mindset is a barrier against RTV?). The QCA convention is not to include rows with a consistency of lower than 0.75. Excluding a 0.82 row therefore makes little sense, and, considering that in doing so, one of the proposed recipes

remains identical and the second substantially reconcilable, I consider my original findings to be reasonably robust after having performed this test.

The final robustness test (dropping or adding cases) entails certain practical barriers in terms of finding relevant cases. To be sure, by dropping some of the most contradictory cases, such as Portugal (*legacies + hardship* but *aggression* = 0) or the Netherlands, my consistency and coverage scores would indeed improve. Adding East European cases is not an option for the time being, because comparable RTV data are lacking, perhaps with the exception of Russia where RTV has definitely been extensive since 1990 (Arnold, 2010; Laryš & Mareš, 2011). However, considering Russia's current semi-autocratic regime and recent political history, this case may not fit well into the theoretical framework used here to explain RTV in the context of Western liberal democracy. Finally, the United States represents a relevant case with available RTV data (Freilich et al., 2014). However, in the United States, RTV appears to occur under somewhat different conditions (more emphasis on religion, survivalism, and anti-federalism) than in Western Europe.

Summing up, despite being fairly robust, the findings presented here should be seen as provisional rather than definite, and the analysis would benefit from being completed by case studies or statistical analysis documenting variation over time (inherently difficult with QCA). As such, the analysis may serve as a useful point of departure for future more fine-grained RTV research.

## **Conclusion**

Existing research on the extreme right offers few consistent explanations of why RTV has been more extensive in some countries than in others. To help fill this gap, this paper used new RTV events data in a QCA research design. This analysis arrived at two causal recipes, each containing three causal conditions, the combination of which appears to fuel hostility, polarization, and violence. First, there is a North European recipe that involves the combination of high immigration, low electoral support for anti-immigration (radical right) parties, and extensive public repression of radical right actors and opinions. Second, there is a South European recipe that involves the combination of socio-economic hardship, authoritarian legacies, and extensive left-wing terrorism and militancy. Notably, both recipes contain elements of “grievances” and “opportunities”, suggesting that these two theories portrayed as

contrasting by Koopmans (1996) in his pioneering study of extreme right violence, may be more fruitfully seen as complementary.

The North European recipe does provide some support to Koopmans's study, in particular that the relationship between radical right support and RTV may (under certain conditions) be negative. However, unlike Koopmans theory, in which such limited support must combine with elites' negative framing of immigrants to trigger racist violence, my findings suggest that it is rather elites' negative framing of radical right actors and opinions that distinguishes countries with extensive RTV (e.g. Sweden and Germany) from those with moderate or low RTV experience (e.g. Denmark and Switzerland). As such, this finding challenges the dominant view on how the public discourse on immigration might influence extreme right mobilization and violence. It suggests that a predominantly pro-immigration elite perceived as hostile towards people with anti-immigration concerns might be exploited by the extreme right to mobilize new followers and to motivate terrorism and violence.

This argument ties into a more general finding emerging from this analysis, suggesting that a highly polarized conflict between far-right activists and their enemies, including leftists, political elites, and the public at large, represents a necessary condition for extensive RTV to occur. This finding supports previous research that highlight polarization and threat perceptions as important for explaining RTV (Sprinzak, 1995), political violence more generally (della Porta, 2013), and intolerant attitudes and behaviours across a wide range of countries and contexts (Stenner, 2005). By implication, a potentially effective cure for RTV could be to limit immigration and be more accepting towards radical right actors and opinions. However, considering the inherently intolerant policies that these actors seek to implement, this cure comes with a bitter aftertaste from a liberal democratic perspective. This liberal's dilemma has no easy solution, as is also demonstrated in previous studies (Kirshner, 2014; Pedahzur, 2001). It warrants a demanding balancing act between upholding core liberal democratic principles such as the freedom of expression and political freedoms for all people, including those on the far right, on the one hand, and trying to prevent any form of antidemocratic or violent behaviour on the other.

The ongoing migration crisis is currently fuelling fear, uncertainty, and polarization in a number of West European countries. A main ambition must be to stop such fears from translating into intolerant and violent behaviour, and thereby risking a new outbreak of RTV in this region. Recognition, open-mindedness, and dialogue might then work better than exclusion,

public repression, or aggressive confrontation. At the same time, we should be mindful that too much lenience towards people and parties with authoritarian inclinations – just like too much repression or aggression – may have adverse effects, and could result in limited freedom for all, especially those who think and act differently.

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Grievances, opportunities, and polarization**

Appendices I–III

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## Appendix I

### Outcome variable – measurements and fuzzy scores

*Table 1. RTV scores*

Country	Quantitative measure		Qualitative assessment	Fuzzy score
	Deadly events/deaths	Deadly events per capita		
Sweden	17/20	1.9	Besides having Western Europe's highest score on the number of deadly RTV events per capita, Sweden also scores high on non-lethal RTV events. In addition, extensive RTV is documented by hate crimes statistics from SÄPO and BRÅ (see Appendix II) as well as in a number of reports and academic studies (see Appendix III).	1.0
Germany	82/104	1.0	Besides having Western Europe's second highest score on the number of deadly events per capita, extensive RTV in Germany is well documented in official hate crime statistics (see Appendix II) and in existing reports and literature (see Appendix III).	1.0
Greece	6/7	0.6	Besides scoring relatively high on the number of deadly RTV events per capita, extensive RTV in Greece is indicated by its high number of non-lethal RTV events, and documented in several reports and studies, in particular from Human Rights Watch and the online crowd-surfing site "The City At Times of Crisis" (see Appendix III).	0.75
UK	31/33	0.5	Besides scoring relatively high on the number of deadly RTV events per capita, extensive RTV in the UK is indicated by many non-lethal RTV events, and documented in several reports and studies, in particular from the Institute of Race Relations and Human Rights Watch (see Appendix III).	0.75
Spain	22/22	0.5	Besides scoring relatively high on the number of deadly RTV events per capita, extensive RTV in Spain is documented in a number of reports and studies, in particular from	0.75

*Movimiento Contra la Intolerancia* (see Appendix III).

Italy	5/6	0.1	Although Italy has experienced relatively few deadly RTV events per capita, extensive RTV is indicated by its high number of non-lethal RTV events, and documented in several reports and studies, in particular from Human Rights Watch (see Appendix III). In addition, Italian anti-fascists provide detailed reports on RTV on their national website (see Appendix III).	0.75
Ireland	3/4	0.8	Ireland's high score on the number of deadly RTV events per capita must be balanced against its low (absolute) number of deadly events (three). Literature on RTV in Ireland is limited, but existing reports indicate moderate to low amounts (see Appendix III).	0.25
Norway	3/79	0.7	Norway's high score on the number of deadly RTV events per capita must be balanced against its low (absolute) number of deadly events (three). Furthermore, existing reports and datasets suggest that RTV has been modest or even low in Norway since the more violent 1990s (see Appendix III).	0.25
Belgium	3/5	0.3	Apart from Belgium's moderate score on number of deadly events per capita, few non-lethal RTV events have been registered. Reports on RTV in Belgium are limited, but testify to moderate to low amounts (see Appendix III). This is confirmed in private correspondence between the author and representatives from the "Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities".	0.25
Netherlands	3/3	0.2	The Netherlands scores low on the number of deadly events per capita, and few non-lethal RTV events have been registered. However, several existing reports and studies, in particular from the Anne Frank House, indicate moderate amounts of RTV (see Appendices II and III).	0.25
Denmark	1/1	0.2	Notwithstanding Denmark's low score on the number of deadly events per capita, several non-lethal RTV events have been registered. In addition, official hate crime reports and	0.25

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			existing literature testify to moderate amounts of RTV (see Appendices II and III).	
Austria	1/4	0.1	Notwithstanding Austria's low number of deadly events per capita, several RTV events have been registered. However, all events were committed by the same lone actor. Apart from RTV events data, annual hate crime statistics and existing reports indicate moderate amounts of RTV (see Appendices II and III).	0.25
France	9/11	0.1	France scores low on the number of deadly events per capita, and few non-lethal RTV events have been registered. However, annual hate crime statistics and existing reports indicate moderate to low amounts of RTV (see Appendices II and III).	0.25
Switzerland	1/1	0.1	Switzerland scores low on the number of deadly events per capita, and few non-lethal RTV events have been registered. However, annual hate crime statistics and existing literature indicate moderate to low amounts of RTV (see Appendices II and III).	0.25
Finland	-	-	Although no deadly RTV events have been registered in Finland between 1990 and 2015, existing hate crime statistics and literature indicate moderate amounts of RTV, particularly during the 1990s (see Appendix III).	0.25
Portugal	3/3	0.3	Apart from the three deadly RTV events registered in Portugal, no other RTV events have been registered. Furthermore, the few existing reports on RTV in Portugal testify to low amounts (see Appendix III).	0,0
Iceland	-	-	No deadly or non-lethal RTV events have been registered in Iceland. Existing literature on RTV in Iceland is limited, but indicates low amounts of RTV (see Appendix III).	0,0
Luxemburg	-	-	No deadly or non-lethal RTV events have been registered in Iceland. Existing literature on RTV in Luxemburg is limited, but indicates low amounts of RTV (see Appendix III).	0,0

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### Causal conditions – measurements and fuzzy scores

*Table 2. Ethnic diversity*

Fuzzy score	Share of population born outside the EU	Case distribution
1.0	> 10 %	Luxemburg (11), Sweden (10.6), Switzerland (10.6)
0.75	7–9.9 %	Austria (9.1), Netherlands (8.6), Spain (8.5), Belgium (8.4), Greece (8.4), France (8.3), UK (8.1), Norway (7.6), Germany (7.4)
0.25	5–6.9 %	Denmark (6.7), Italy (6.5), Portugal (6.1), Ireland (5.9)
0.0	< 5 %	Iceland (3.9), Finland (3.5)

Source: Eurostat, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/7/79/Foreign-born\\_population\\_by\\_country\\_of\\_birth%2C\\_1\\_January\\_2014\\_%28%C2%B9%29\\_YB15.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/7/79/Foreign-born_population_by_country_of_birth%2C_1_January_2014_%28%C2%B9%29_YB15.png)

*Table 3. Immigration*

Fuzzy score	Average number of annual asylum seekers per million inhabitants 1991–2014	Case distribution
1.0	> 1500	Sweden (3044), Switzerland (2913), Luxemburg (2247), Austria (2084), Norway (1977), Belgium (1890)
0.75	900–1500	Netherlands (1487), Germany (1294), Denmark (1119), Ireland (947)
0.25	500–900	UK (741), France (676), Greece (665)
0.0	< 500	Finland (490), Italy (234), Iceland (188), Spain (151), Portugal (34)

Source : Eurostat, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics)

*Table 4. Ethnic diversity and immigration combined score (logical or)*

Fuzzy score	Case distribution
1.0	Sweden, Switzerland, Luxemburg, Austria, Norway, Belgium
0.75	Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Greece, France, UK, Ireland,
0.25	Italy, Portugal
0.0	Iceland, Finland

*Table 5. Socio-economic hardship*

Fuzzy score	Risk of poverty or social exclusion average scores 2004–2012	Case distribution
1.0	< 30	Greece (31)
0.75	25–29	Italy (27), Portugal (26), Ireland (26), Spain (26)
0.25	20–24	UK (24), Belgium (21) Germany (20)
0.0	> 20	France (19), Austria (18), Denmark (17), Switzerland (17), Luxemburg (17), Finland (17), Sweden (15), Netherlands (15), Norway (15), Iceland (13)

Source: Eurostat, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/People at risk of poverty or social exclusion](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/People_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion)

*Table 6. Radical right support*

Fuzzy score	Average percentage of parliamentary votes for radical right parties 1990–2014	Case distribution
1.0	> 20 %	Switzerland (22.8), Austria (21.3)
0.75	10–19.9 %	Norway (15.0), Italy (12.1), France (11.7), Denmark (11.0) Belgium (10.2)
0.25	5–9.9 %	Netherlands (6.7), Finland (5.1)
0.0	< 5 %	Greece (3.6), Sweden (3.5), UK (2.1), Germany (2.0), Portugal (0.1), Iceland (0), Ireland (0), Luxemburg (0), Spain (0)

Sources: Minkenberg, M. (2015). “Pattern, Process, Policies: Conceptualizing Radical Right Impact”. Paper presented at the 2015 ECPR General Conference, Montreal. Retrieved from <http://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/37f31939-2ecb-4a71-9026-928ef890c1ed.pdf>; The European Election and Referendum Database, available at [http://www.nsd.uib.no/european\\_election\\_database/about/about\\_data.html](http://www.nsd.uib.no/european_election_database/about/about_data.html).



*Table 7. Authoritarian legacies*

Fuzzy score	Threshold	Case distribution
1.0	Countries still heavily influenced by extensive authoritarian experiences	Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain
0.75	Countries with significant authoritarian experience still influencing parts of the population	No cases
0.25	Countries that have some authoritarian experience, but are being influenced by that experience to a lesser extent today	Belgium, France
0	Countries with insignificant or no authoritarian experience	Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UK

*Source:* Survey sent to scholars working at the Norwegian Center for Studies of Holocaust and Religious Minorities, asking them to rank West European countries according to their Authoritarian experiences and legacies.

*Table 8. Radical right repression*

Fuzzy score	Threshold	Case distribution
1.0	Existing academic accounts leave little doubt about a repressive environment	Germany, Sweden
0.75	Existing academic accounts portray somewhat milder forms of repression, or a country that has evolved from a repressive towards a more permissive environment, or the other way around	Belgium, France, the Netherlands, UK
0.25	Existing academic accounts testify to some but no consistent repression	Switzerland
0.0	Described as mostly permissive or not mentioned in existing academic accounts	Austria, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Luxemburg, Norway, Portugal, Spain

*Sources:* Art, D. (2011). *Inside the Radical Right: the Development of Anti-Immigrant Parties in Western Europe*, pp. 44–49. New York: Cambridge University Press; Van Spanje, J., & Van Der Brug, W. (2007). “The Party as Pariah: The Exclusion of Anti-Immigration Parties and its Effect on their Ideological Positions”, *West European Politics*, 30(5), 1022–1040; Bleich, E. (2007). “Hate Crime Policy in Western Europe: Responding to Racist Violence in Britain, Germany, and France”, *American Behavioral Scientist*, 51(2), 149–165; Bleich, E., & Lambert, F. (2013). “Why Are Racist Associations Free in Some States and Banned in Others? Evidence from 10 Liberal Democracies”, *West European Politics*, 36(1), 122–149.

*Table 9. Left-wing terrorism and militancy*

Fuzzy score	Threshold	Case distribution (TWEED and DTV events combined score / number of years mentioned in Europol reports 2006–2015 / number of times ranked as high by leftist militants)
1.0	High score on all three measures	Greece (49/9/4)
0.75	High score on two of three measures	Italy (15/10/1), Spain (14/10/0) Germany (7/5/4)
0.25	High score on one of three measures	Denmark (1/1/3), Sweden (0/0/4), France (0/0/2)
0	Only low scores	Netherlands (2/0/1), UK (1/0/1), Austria (0/0/0), Belgium (0/0/0), Norway (0/0/0), Switzerland (0/0/0), Finland (0/0/0), Iceland (0/0/0), Ireland (0/0/0), Luxemburg (0/0/0), Portugal (0/0/0)

*Sources:* TWEED dataset, available at <http://folk.uib.no/sspje/tweed.htm>; DTV dataset, available at <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=hdl:1902.1/14717>; Europol's annual Terrorism Trend and Situation (TE-SAT) reports, available at <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/eu-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report>; survey sent to five left-wing militants, asking them to rank their own movement's size and visibility in different West European countries (one activist refused to answer).

### Analysis of the negated set

A common and potentially interesting exercise in QCA analysis is to use the conditions from the analysis of the outcome set to analyse its negated version, in this case the set of West European countries that did not experience extensive RTV between 1990 and 2015. Due to the asymmetrical nature of set relations, the negated set should ideally be analysed using its own set of casual conditions deemed as most relevant for explaining the non-occurrence of the outcome of interest. However, conditions deemed as relevant for explaining its occurrence may also be relevant for explaining its non-occurrence. The necessity analysis of my negated set resulted in the following scores:

*Table 10. Analysis of the negated set*

<i>Condition</i>	<i>Consistency</i>	<i>Coverage</i>
<i>~aggression</i>	0.98	0.75
<i>~repression</i>	0.86	0.73
<i>~hardship</i>	0.86	0.70
<i>~legacies</i>	0.77	0.72
<i>support</i>	0.49	0.84
<i>~diversity</i>	0.42	0.82

Notably, both *~diversity* and *support* receive low consistency scores, suggesting that these two conditions derived from the grievance and opportunity models offer inconsistent explanations of the non-occurrence of RTV. At the same time, *~hardship* (grievances), *~legacies* (opportunities), *~aggression* (polarization) and *~repression* (polarization) receive far better consistency scores. However, their relatively poor coverage scores show that they only explain subsets of the negated outcome set. These findings thus call for a more complexity-oriented analysis investigating different combinations of conditions to arrive at an explanation that covers more cases. This brings us to the sufficiency analysis.

The intermediate solution of a sufficiency analysis of my negated set includes four causal recipes, as illustrated by Table 11.

*Table 11. Solution terms from negated set analysis*

<i>Causal recipes</i>	<i>Raw coverage</i>	<i>Unique coverage</i>	<i>Consistency</i>
Frequency cut-off: 1.00			
Consistency cut-off: 0.86			
Assumptions: $\sim$ diversity* $\sim$ hardship*support* $\sim$ legacies* $\sim$ repression* $\sim$ aggression $\rightarrow$ $\sim$ rtv			
$\sim$ aggression* $\sim$ repression* $\sim$ diversity	0.40	0.93	0.94
$\sim$ aggression* $\sim$ repression* $\sim$ legacies	0.63	0.14	0.90
$\sim$ aggression* $\sim$ legacies*support* $\sim$ hardship	0.40	0.93	0.94
$\sim$ aggression* $\sim$ repression*support* $\sim$ hardship	0.40	0.07	0.94
Solution coverage: 0.91			
Solution consistency: 0.89			

As indicated by the necessity analysis, all four recipes include  $\sim$ aggression, while three of the four include  $\sim$ repression. Furthermore, combined with the other conditions derived from the grievances and opportunity models (*diversity*, *hardship*, *support*, and *legacies*) these four recipes offer a fairly consistent explanation of why most West European countries did not experience extensive RTV between 1990 and 2015, covering as many as 11 of 12 cases (once again, the Netherlands is the most inconsistent case). Interestingly, they do not represent a negated mirror image of the causal recipes derived from my analysis of the outcome set, but rather new and unique combinations of conditions, thereby illustrating the asymmetric nature of set relations – that is, the fact that the occurrence and non-occurrence of a phenomenon require qualitatively different explanations. However, considering that the conditions included in this negated set analysis were originally intended to explain the occurrence of RTV rather than its non-occurrence, one should be careful in drawing final conclusions from these results.

### Robustness test scores

To experiment with different calibration thresholds, a robustness test was carried out in which the cut-off points for *diversity*, *hardship* and *support* (conditions based on frequency distributions) were determined by the median score rather than by the case distribution and the position of a few key cases, and the intervals were set to be equally large, again irrespective of how the cases clustered. These robustness test scores are presented in Tables 12–16, and the solution terms derived from these new scores in Table 17. My interpretation of this test is found in the last section of the original manuscript.

*Table 12. Ethnic diversity (median)*

Fuzzy score	Share of population born outside the EU	Case distribution
1.0	9.2–11 %	Luxemburg (11), Sweden (10.6), Switzerland (10.6)
0.75	7.3–9.1 %	Austria (9.1), Netherlands (8.6), Spain (8.5), Belgium (8.4), Greece (8.4), France (8.3), UK (8.1), Norway (7.6), Germany (7.4)
0.25	5.4–7.2 %	Denmark (6.7), Italy (6.5), Portugal (6.1), Ireland (5.9)
0.0	3.5–5.3 %	Iceland (3.9), Finland (3.5)

Source: Eurostat, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/7/79/Foreign-born\\_population\\_by\\_country\\_of\\_birth%2C\\_1\\_January\\_2014\\_%28%C2%B9%29\\_YB15.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/7/79/Foreign-born_population_by_country_of_birth%2C_1_January_2014_%28%C2%B9%29_YB15.png)

*Table 13. Immigration (median)*

Fuzzy score	Average number of annual asylum seekers per million inhabitants 1991–2014	Case distribution
1.0	2293–3044	Sweden (3044), Switzerland (2913),
0.75	1540–2292	Luxemburg (2247), Austria (2084), Norway (1977), Belgium (1890),
0.25	787–1539	Netherlands (1487), Germany (1294), Denmark (1119), Ireland (947)
0.0	34–786	UK (741), France (676), Greece (665), Finland (490), Italy (234), Iceland (188), Spain (151), Portugal (34)

Source: Eurostat, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics)

*Table 14. Ethnic diversity and immigration combined score (median)*

Fuzzy score	Case distribution
1.0	Sweden, Switzerland, Luxemburg,
0.75	Austria, Norway, Belgium Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Greece, France, UK
0.25	Italy, Portugal, Ireland
0.0	Iceland, Finland

*Table 15. Socio-economic hardship (median)*

Fuzzy score	Risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) Eurostat average score 2004–2012	Case distribution
1.0	28–31	Greece (31)
0.75	23–27	Italy (27), Portugal (26), Ireland (26), Spain (26), UK (24)
0.25	18–22	Belgium (21), Germany (20), France (19), Austria (18)
0.0	13–17	Denmark (17), Switzerland (17), Luxemburg (17), Finland (17), Sweden (15), Netherlands (15), Norway (15), Iceland (13)

Source: Eurostat, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/People\\_at\\_risk\\_of\\_poverty\\_or\\_social\\_exclusion](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/People_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion)

*Table 16. Radical right support (median)*

Fuzzy score	Average percentage of parliamentary votes for radical right parties 1990–2014	Case distribution
1.0	17.2–22.8 %	Switzerland (22.8), Austria (21.3)
0.75	11.4–17.19 %	Norway (15.0), Italy (12.1), France (11.7)
0.25	5.7–11.39 %	Denmark (11.0) Belgium (10.2), Netherlands (6.7)
0.0	0–5.69 %	Finland (5.1), Greece (3.6), Sweden (3.5), UK (2.1), Germany (2.0), Portugal (0.1), Iceland (0), Ireland (0), Luxemburg (0), Spain (0)

Sources: Minkenberg, M. (2015). “Pattern, Process, Policies: Conceptualizing Radical Right Impact”. Paper presented at the 2015 ECPR General Conference, Montreal. Retrieved from <http://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/37f31939-2ecb-4a71-9026-928ef890c1ed.pdf>; The European Election and Referendum Database, available at [http://www.nsd.uib.no/european\\_election\\_database/about/about\\_data.html](http://www.nsd.uib.no/european_election_database/about/about_data.html).

*Table 17. Solution terms from robustness test*

<i>Causal recipes</i>	<i>Raw coverage</i>	<i>Unique coverage</i>	<i>Consistency</i>
Frequency cut-off: 1.00			
Consistency cut-off: 1.00			
Assumptions: diversity*hardship*~support*legacies*repression*aggression → rtv			
aggression*hardship*legacies	0.38	0.31	0.92
repression*~support*hardship*diversity	0.21	0.14	1.00
aggression*repression* legacies*diversity	0.14	0.07	1.00
Solution coverage: 0.59			
Solution consistency: 0.94			

## Appendix II – national hate crime statistics

Table 1. Right-wing and racist violence in seven West European countries

Year	Sweden 1 <sup>1</sup>	Sweden 2 <sup>2</sup>	Denmark 1 <sup>3</sup>	Denmark 2 <sup>4</sup>	Netherlands 1 <sup>5</sup>	Netherlands 2 <sup>6</sup>	Germany <sup>7</sup>	France <sup>8</sup>	Austria 1 <sup>9</sup>	Switzerland <sup>10</sup>
2000	29				83		998	10		
2001	15				46		709	9		
2002	13				75		772	25		
2003	28		7		60		759	13		
2004	8	41	5				776	39		53
2005		27	6		70		958	23		52
2006		27	9		60		1047	26		64
2007		26	5		57		980	26	37	58
2008		50	13		64		1042	18	8	24
2009		31	9	9	25		891	25	14	32
2010		25	7	6		9	762	5	32	13
2011		14	5	4		3	755	4	41	18
2012		19	14	2		2	802	7	39	25
2013		22	17	2			801	7	11	13
2014		*	*				990	*	14	10

<sup>1</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Severe abuse motivated by white power ideology. **Source:** Annual reports by the Swedish Security Service (SÄPO), <http://www.sakerhetspolisen.se/publikationer.html>.

<sup>2</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Violent crimes motivated by white power ideology. **Source:** Annual reports by The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), <http://www.bra.se/bra/bra-in-english/home/crime-and-statistics/hate-crime.html>. \* From 2014 onwards, Brå no longer provides information about violent crimes committed by the extreme right specifically.

<sup>3</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Racially motivated violent incidents – may also include racial violence between minority groups (2003–2006 manually counted by this author). **Source:** Annual reports by the Danish Secret Service (PET), <https://www.pet.dk/Publikationer/RACI-indberetning.aspx>. \* In 2014, PET did not publish their annual hate crime report.

<sup>4</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Politically (right and left) motivated violent incidents. **Source:** Annual reports by the Danish Secret Service (PET) <https://www.pet.dk/Publikationer/RACI-indberetning.aspx>.

<sup>5</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Violent assaults motivated racism and/or the extreme right. **Source:** Annual report (Racism and Extremism Monitor) by the Anne Frank House, <http://www.annefrank.org/en/Education/Monitor-Homepage/Racism-monitor/>.

<sup>6</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Violent assaults motivated racism and/or the extreme right. **Source:** Report by the Anne Frank House, “Second report on racism, anti-Semitism, and right-wing extremist violence in the Netherlands”, <http://www.verwey-ijonker.nl/doc/vitaliteit/7352%20Anne%20Frank%20Englisch%20Monitor%20Web.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Violent assaults (*gewalttaten*) committed by right-wing activists. **Source:** Annual reports by German Security Service, <http://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/publikationen/verfassungsschutzberichte>.

<sup>8</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Violent attacks (*actiões violentas*) committed by right-wing activists. **Source:** Annual reports by *La Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme* (CNCDH), [http://www.cncdh.fr/fr/publications/?f0\[\]=im\\_field\\_theme%3A139&f1\[\]=im\\_field\\_type\\_de\\_document%3A147](http://www.cncdh.fr/fr/publications/?f0[]=im_field_theme%3A139&f1[]=im_field_type_de_document%3A147). \* From 2014 onwards, CNCDH no longer specifies violent acts.

<sup>9</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Bodily injury (*Körperverletzung*) perpetrated by right-wing activists. **Source:** Austrian Security Service, [http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/bmi\\_verfassungsschutz/](http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/bmi_verfassungsschutz/).

<sup>10</sup> **Unit of analysis:** Violence-related incidents motivated by right-wing extremism. **Source:** Swiss Federal Intelligence Service, <http://www.vbs.admin.ch/en/documents/search.html>.



## Appendix III – A selection of country-specific sources on RTV in Western Europe

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