RESEARCH ARTICLE

From *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* to Violence: Unravelling the Paradoxes of the German Extreme-Right

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This paper seeks to understand the reasons for the German extreme-right's successes and failures, particularly examining the inter-relations between political parties and underground movements. It also places a particular focus on German reunification, especially the wave of East German anti-immigrant and asylum seeker violence that emerged from 1991 to 1993. Furthermore, it argues that economic factors are not enough to understand this and other subsequent German extreme-right violence, and that structural factors, such as police and intelligence inadequacies, as well as psychological factors are vital. The first section explores why xenophobic and anti-Semitic sentiments remained high in Germany despite extensive denazification, and the reasons for extreme-right party failures to exploit this. The second section examines why this sentiment has often been violently expressed. The third section looks at the relations between violent underground groups and political parties, concluding that these connections have ultimately weakened the German far-right.

Introduction

Despite extensive post war denazification, political re-education and multiple party banning attempts, extreme-right politics and associated violence remain a challenging problem in reunified Germany. This paper seeks to understand why neo-Nazism still provides a substantial threat to German democracy, focusing especially on the German reunification's impact on political parties and movements. One of the key issues I will address is the German far-right's relative electoral failure, which, particularly since the reunification, has contrasted strongly with high levels of xenophobia, anti-democratic sentiment and racist violence. I will not address the newly developed *Alternative für Deutschland* party's development, with various academics disagreeing on whether the party can be labelled extreme right or populist (Arzheimer, 2015), but will consider the party's relationship with Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident (Pegida). The development of German underground cells such as the extremely violent National Socialist Underground, who held connections with the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD), makes the study of the German far-right vitally important, especially as relations between German political parties and violent groups remain vastly neglected.

The main questions I seek to answer are why denazification, re-education and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (the German concept of coming to terms with the past) have

failed to prevent extreme-right sentiment. I also wish to understand the psychological explanations of the impact of the German Democratic Republic and reunification on far-right violence, as economic factors are not enough to explain the depravity of post-reunification violence. Furthermore, I will explore why violence rather than electoral support has been so popular, especially in East Germany. Finally, I will consider what impact reunification has had on German neo-Nazis, and what the future holds for the German extreme-right.

Section One: Background and Attitudes to Democracy

Since 1945, the German extreme-right has never enjoyed sustained electoral success, failing to match the achievements of its European counterparts. Whilst parties like *Republikaner* achieved sporadic gains in the initial post-reunification period, the far-right have historically failed to exploit unemployment, public immigration concerns, and tensions that arose in the early 1990s relating to the introduction of liberal asylum laws to achieve widespread votes. Indeed, until the populist *Alternative für Deutschland* party's development in 2014, no German extreme-right party had realized more than limited, localised gains. Under former SS member Frank Schonhuber's leadership, *Republikaner* were able to win 10.9% of the vote in 1992's Baden-Wurttenberg state election (Zillmer et al. 1995). However, despite manipulating post-reunification extreme-right sentiment, the party failed to utilise widespread discontent with systemic change and enter the mainstream of German politics, gaining limited support

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outside of their Southern heartlands in Bavaria and Baden-Wurttenberg. Rather than benefiting from the increased electorate, reunification initially negatively impacted on extreme-right success, and although *Republikaner* gained 7.1% of the vote in 1989's West German European Parliament election, the party only won 2.1% in 1990's unified Bundestag elections, with support falling to 1.9% by 1994 (Backer, 2000).

In this section, I will explore the reasons for the German extreme-right's limited electoral successes and overall failures. To do this, I will compare East and West Germany's contrasting approaches to addressing the Holocaust and denazification, and consider the relationship between attitudes to democracy, economic problems and public anti-Semitism with electoral support for parties including the NPD, *Republikaner* and the historic *Deutsche Reich Partei*.

Following Nazi surrender in 1945, Germany and Berlin were divided into four zones, administered by France, Great Britain, the United States and USSR. In 1947, the British and American zones were combined, with the addition of the French zone in April 1949 forming the 'Trizone'. Developing strains between the Western Allies and USSR intensified during the 'Berlin Blockade', where West Berlin's canal, road and rail access were blocked by the USSR from April 1948 to May 1949. These tensions culminated with the creation of West Germany, the 'Federal Republic of Germany' (FRG) on May 23rd 1949, and East Germany, the 'German Democratic Republic' (GDR) on October 7th 1949 (Bessell, 2009). Pulzer (2004) argues that all four Allies' denazification attempts were insufficient, as pragmatism was prioritised over prosecution. Although American efforts saw one-third of Hesse's public servants suspended, measures aiming to denazify political administration were frequently abandoned, with the vast majority being reinstated to protect Germany's economy and civil service. This leniency ensured that aside from 'a fairly effective purge of schools, the personnel of the bureaucracy, judiciary, universities and private economy differed little in 1949 from 1945' (Pulzer, 2004, p. 53).

Inconsistency also challenged denazification's success; whilst America's exoneration rate was only 33%, French rates were 50% and Britain's 90%, ensuring that 'for an(y) ex-Nazi seeking exoneration it was obviously advisable to move North' (to the British zone) (Fulbrook, 1987, p. 221). Furthermore, Nazis subject to arrest in one zone were often able to move to another area of the country, reducing detection and re-education (Plischke, 1947). The rigid mechanical definitions implemented for denazification and prosecution also challenged its success. Time constraints exacerbated denazification's narrow framework, allowing many individuals who did not fit into predefined categories, but whose roles were important in supporting Nazism, to escape punishment, whilst insignificant Nazis were often prosecuted for holding certain positions (Herz, 1948).

Alongside Allied inconsistency weakening denazification, the number of citizens who held National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) connections or membership made prosecution increasingly complicated. In 1945,

8.5 million Germans, 10% of the population, were former NSDAP members, and the German Labour Front, the NSDAP's trade union, had peak membership of around 25 million (Taylor, 2011). The NSDAP's deep entrenchment of institutions including the civil service, industry and finance made prosecutions challenging, with the Allies fearing that denazification could alienate Germans and mobilise Communism or nationalism. In contrast, the USSR's ideological position enabled more thorough Eastern denazification, without concerns that prosecutions would inspire far-left sentiment. Furthermore, ideological factors ensured extensive Soviet prosecution of industrialists and factory owners as part of broader nationalisation plans. 520,000 former NSDAP members were dismissed by April 1948 (Herf, 1997), with 'denazification of institutions such as education, the economy and arts' (Naimark, 1995, p. 10) consolidating USSR political sympathies. Western approaches contrasted greatly, with lower prosecution rates leaving up to 80% of public administration posts held by former Nazis in 1950 (Griffith, 1950). Although Soviet prosecutions manipulated denazification to attack political opponents (Richards, 2002), whilst pragmatically leaving former Nazis in vital professions like medicine (Vogt, 2000), willingness to prosecute both factory workers and industrialists, alongside the sheer number of trials held, reveals Eastern denazification was more successfully implemented than in the West.

The revival of anti-Semitism and Nazi sympathy after 1945 also reveals the failure of political re-education. Whilst 47% of respondents to a 1945 American zone survey agreed that 'Nazism was a good idea carried out badly', by 1947, this had increased to 55%. Furthermore, the same survey revealed that those who felt 'Nazism was a bad idea' dropped from 41% in 1945 to 30% in 1947, despite two years of re-education. Additionally, anti-Semitism remained dangerously high, with 33% of participants in a March 1947 American zone survey denying Jewish rights to equality (Herf, 1997), and 39% of December 1946 respondents identifying as anti-Semites (OMGUS, 1946, cited in Herf, 1997), with levels remaining consistent at 34% in 1954 (Kolinsky, 1978). Alongside controversial reintegration of leading Nazis like Hans Globke legitimising rising anti-Semitism, tensions around Jewish reparations created 'secondary anti-Semitism' (Markovits, 2006), with a combination of public denial of responsibility and perceptions that Jews were exploiting German guilt for financial gain developing 'guilt defensiveness anti-Semitism' (Adorno, 1996).

The Western Allies' 1947 decision to relax restrictions banning FRG extreme-right party formation and complete overturn of this ban for 1949's Bundestag Elections reveal the post-1945 West German administrations' limited dedication to far-right eradication. This policy change ensured the FRG's first four years 'witnessed a surge in support for… extremist parties' (McGowan, 2014b, p. 150), with over a million voters backing extreme-right parties in 1949 (Stoss, 1988), returning 21 seats. Although the 1949 German constitution banned any NSDAP associated parties, the *Deutsche Reichspartie*, which incorporated many former Nazis and whose 1964 liquidation led to the NPD's

foundation, won 5 seats (Kettenacker, 1997). Kundnani (2009) argues that after 1949's elections, Adenauer's government marginalised historical engagement, ending war crime trials begun by the Allies and reintegrating former Nazis, with Kurt-Georg Kiesinger, a NSDAP member from 1933–1945 and senior official within Goebbels' propaganda ministry, becoming German Chancellor in 1966. Whilst the extreme-right vote dropped through the 1950's, with combined party votes falling to 350,000 in 1953 (Stoss, 1988) and membership declining from 75,000 in 1954 to 55,000 in 1959 (Stoss, 1989), this decrease in electoral support was not related to successful denazification, but resultant of 'extremists… withdrawing from party politics and joining para-political organizations' (Backer, 2000). Although the 1953 introduction of a 5% electoral threshold limited extreme-right success until the NPD's foundation (Virchow, 2004), relaxed denazification led to an explosion of anti-Semitic offences and attacks in 1959. Like post-reunification's mass extreme-violence, these incidents were non-party affiliated and the majority of the 150 arrested offenders were aged under 21, with 'absences of Holocaust education and reflection… leading to repression and inner callousness' (Bergmann and Erb, 1997, p. 26), and a similar discrediting of parental authority and institutions as to that witnessed in 1990s East Germany (Green, 2014).

However, despite high public anti-Semitism, the extreme-right remained unsuccessful aside from brief periods in 1966–1967 and the late 1980s, when the NPD and *Republikaner* successfully exploited economic problems and high immigration levels. The NPD's foundation in 1964 led to a brief period of success in local government, with 15 seats in Bavaria and 10 in Lower Saxony gained between 1966 and 1967. Denazification's failure partly explains this success, ensuring that 'where the NSDAP was once strong, the NPD are strong too' (Klingemann, 1968, p. 7), and the NPD exploiting a vacuum on the political right created by 1966's 'Grand Coalition'. Whilst the NPD enticed 4.3% of 1969's Bundestag Election's voters, with strident anti-communist policy attracting opponents of 1968's left-wing student movement (Klingemann, 1970), the party never surpassed Germany's 5% national electoral hurdle. Despite these electoral failures, the NPD established close connections with the 'network of associations, newspapers, groups and book clubs which emerged… in the 1950's' (Kolinsky, 1992, p. 62), and inspired 1980s extreme-right terrorism. Although factionalism reduced the 1970s NPD vote, 30% of West Germans surveyed in 1976 admitted feeling 'prejudice towards Jews' (Kolinsky, 1978), revealing a large potential extreme-right electorate. NPD membership rapidly declined through the 1970s, falling from 25,000 in 1968 to 9,000 in 1978, and 5,000 by 1985 (Finn, 1991). Whilst alliance with the German People's Union (DVU) saw membership rise through the 1980s and reached a combined 20,000 in the early 1990s (Hainsworth, 2008), far-right parties failed to compete with underground movements for membership until *Republikaner's* late 1980s success. By 1987, extreme-right underground membership had reached 18,000, and following October 1980's Munich Oktoberfest bombing,

which killed 13 civilians, FRG extreme-right violent crimes peaked at 83 in 1984 (Finn, 1991). Furthermore, mainstream right-wing dominance which had restricted the NPD through the 1970s had faltered by 1983. CDU and CSU support for further European integration and increased GDR relations resulted in former CSU representatives Franz Handlos and Ekkehard Voigt leaving the party and forming *Republikaner* with Schonhuber. Although *Republikaner's* opposition to reunification saw initial 1989 success, the party failed to attract Eastern voters after reunification, ensuring that excluding 1989's European Elections and a handful of regional elections 'the so-called 'third wave' of right-wing extremism… largely passed by… Germany' (Backes and Mudde, 2000, p. 455). To understand reunification's impact on the extreme-right in both West and East Germany, I will consider GDR denazification and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, and compare post-war Holocaust education.

Whilst GDR authoritarianism makes comparisons with FRG anti-democratic values and anti-Semitism challenging, evaluations of Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) denazification and Holocaust education are possible. Although initial Russian denazification from 1945–49 was arguably more extensive than the Western Allies, GDR equivalences of fascism with capitalism left the FRG blamed for Nazism and the Holocaust. SED claims that GDR anti-capitalism and anti-fascism successfully challenged Nazi sentiment left the Holocaust inadequately addressed, with economic explanations of Nazism failing to 'engage the racial dimension of anti-Semitism or inoculate youths against xenophobia' (Jarausch, 2012, p. 94). Furthermore, despite the GDR-published 1965 'Brown Book' attacking FRG failure to fully denazify, listing alleged Nazi officials holding prominent FRG positions, the SED's granting of 'equal opportunities to former NSDAP members from September 1952 meant that Nazis took up leading positions in GDR state apparatus' (Kolinsky, 1992, p. 103). Although public GDR separation from the Nazi regime resulted in rigorous crackdowns on any potential semi-public Wehrmacht and SS gatherings (Remy and Salheiser, 2010), the SED's willingness to reintegrate lower ranked Nazis created perceptions that the regime was a 'big friend to the little Nazis' (Danyel, 1999).

State pragmatism left NSDAP-connected engineers, scientists and industrial administrators unprosecuted, with attempts to secure Cold War technological advantages allowing Eastern universities to hire numerous former Nazis. Between 1950 and 1960, 55% of professors appointed by Freiburg's Mining Academy and 59% hired by Dresden's Technical University were former Nazis, with institutional prevalence of ex-Nazis higher than SED members (Augustine, 2006). Additionally, whilst NSDAP reintegration was not as extensive as in the FRG, GDR denazification remained economic, with former Nazis' property confiscated on ideological grounds and prosecution threats manipulated to ensure regime loyalty, revealing shocking denazification failures in both East and West.

GDR Holocaust education matched substandard Western levels, with SED education and foreign policy failing to challenge, and in fact encouraging, pre-existing

anti-Semitism. School education formed a key component of the SED's propaganda system, with Holocaust education centred on capitalist causes of Hitler's rise. History curriculums prioritised the Soviet role in Nazism's defeat, ignoring Western contributions, and held industrial concerns responsible for concentration camps, addressing slave labour and human experimentation without acknowledging Nazi racism and anti-Semitism (Wegner, 1992). Collective labelling of Nazi victims as casualties of capitalism, anti-Zionist foreign policy and 'anti-capitalist attitudes towards the Jewish Claims Conference' (Remy and Salheiser, 2010, p. 11) left Jewish victims marginalised, and Jewish communists within the SED often side-lined. Furthermore, state manipulation of public memories of concentration camps like Buchenwald legitimised the regime, with propaganda claiming the GDR developed from Communist resistance and sacrifices in these (Lemmons, 2013). Similar SED distortions and appropriations manipulated German history to present 'the GDR as true inheritor of all positive Germanic historical traditions' (Kemp, 1999, p. 180), further associating Nazism's crimes with the FRG. This was particularly prevalent during Frankfurt's 1963–5 'Auschwitz Trials', which GDR state radio manipulated, presenting the *IG Farben* conglomerate's culpability as evidence of capitalism's Holocaust responsibility (Wolf, 2006). This denial of Holocaust responsibility continued until the late 1980s, when attempts to create a reparations package led to improved Israeli relations and SED acceptance of Nazi anti-Semitism. However, the SED's response to rising numbers of violent neo-Nazis in the 1980s was to blame for an overspill of extremism from the FRG, rather than addressing underlying causes (Dennis and LaPorte, 2011).

To begin analysing extreme-right party failure in reunified Germany, a comparison of attitudes towards democracy is required, alongside considerations of contrasting economic fortunes. A 1993 study revealed very low Eastern democratic satisfaction, with only 31.6% of participants expressing positive views of democracy. Whilst Eastern democratic satisfaction increased through the 1990s, reaching 40.6% in a 1998 survey, 56.9% of respondents in the same year were dissatisfied with politicians' representation of their interests (Finkel et al. 2001). However, rather than Easterners being strongly anti-democratic, economic concerns following increased unemployment, decreased welfare and immigration tensions shaped these dissatisfactions. The 1997 World Values Survey revealed that 93% of Westerners and 91% of Easterners agreed that 'Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government' (Fuchs, 1999). Despite this high Eastern support, only 23.5% of those surveyed in 1998 felt optimistic about the economic future (Finkel et al. 2001) and concerning economic disparity continued between East and West. Following reunification, Eastern unemployment increased 'from officially zero to over 15 percent' (Burda and Hunt, 2001, p. 1) and remained high through the 1990s, reaching 18.8% by 2000. Although levels fell to 11.5% by 2010 (Spiegel, 2010) and 10.3% in 2014, much of this reduction is due to young Easterners' emigration to the West (Wagstyl, 2014). Challenging

economic circumstances ensure limited system satisfaction, with only 38% of Easterners holding positive feelings towards liberal democracy in 2006, compared to 62% of Westerners. Furthermore, while in 2005 85% of Westerners agreed democracy was Germany's best system of governance, 25% of Easterners felt better alternatives exist, revealing economics' powerful impact on Eastern democratic perceptions (Wittlinger, 2010), with Easterners associating democracy with employment, security and economic success rather than political participation and freedom of speech. Therefore, it is arguable that *Republikaner's* post-reunification Eastern success was more related to anti-immigrant sentiment (with the party's Southern German vote declining as *Republikaner* lost their niche appeal as reunification opponents) than pre-existing anti-democratic values. Furthermore, whilst some of the NPD and DVU's support may stem from previously unchallenged extreme-right sympathies, their success between 2004 and 2006 arguably relates more to party opposition to welfare cuts.

Following reunification, the German extreme-right enjoyed two brief periods of success, with *Republikaner* and DVU achieving local gains in the early 1990s. However, while *Republikaner's* exploitation of anti-immigrant sentiment achieved 15 seats in 1992's Baden-Wurttenberg state parliament election, and the DVU won 6.4% of the vote and 6 seats in the same year's Schleswig-Holstein state election, the two parties' relations with each other were hugely damaging, particularly to *Republikaner*. Despite counting around 20,000 members in 1991, party splits and infiltration from extreme-right underground groups led to *Republikaner's* membership dropping to 12,000 by 1996 (Durham, 2006). The party had initially benefited from opposition to the liberal asylum laws introduced in 1990, which allowed residency for all asylum seekers except those with criminal records and saw 256,112 asylum applications in 1991 and 438,191 in 1992. However, an amendment and compromise reached on these laws by the CDU, CSU and SPD (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2015) was implemented in 1993, reducing applications to 130,000 by 1994 and ending extreme-right dominance of the immigration debate. Although 'asylum seekers/immigration' was the most important electoral issue for 59% of Westerners and 33% of Easterners in June 1993, the issue's prevalence fell rapidly to 19% in the West and 8% in the East by October 1994, overtaken by countrywide employment concern (Gibowski, 1995). Whilst the DVU won 12.9% of the vote and 16 seats in 1998's Saxony-Anhalt state elections, the extreme-right were limited by nationally incohesive manifestos and factionalism, and failed to win national support through the 1990s (Hainsworth, 2008).

Alongside Kitschelt's (2000) argument that connections with extremist groups and party inability to adopt populist ideology have been restrictive, frequent attempts to ban the NPD further limited far-right electoral success. Whilst the NPD and DVU achieved some local success in the mid-2000's, gaining support by opposing 'cutbacks in the German welfare state contained in the proposals of Hartz IV' (Crepaz, 2008, p. 62), financial issues and

dwindling membership led to the two parties merging. Although the DVU merger and *Republikaner's* decline left the NPD as the German extreme-rights' sole representative, banning attempts in 2003, 2011 and 2012 and links to the extremist Zwickau cell dented the party's potential for success (Crossland, 2013).

Arguably, party factionalism and the development of a widespread extremist underground far-right movement have been more debilitating to German extreme-right electoral success than post-war denazification. Although extensive Allied programmes were planned for post-war Germany, pragmatism and fears of Communism ensured that these were never fully implemented. Despite both East and West Germany failing to continue the process of prosecution after 1949, with ex-Nazis holding leading positions in both countries, the extreme-right only achieved limited success in West Germany through the 1950's. The collapse of the *Deutsche Reich Partei*, and subsequent factionalism and financial difficulties of the NPD ensured that the far-right were unable to challenge mainstream parties or exploit high levels of public anti-Semitism. A further challenge has been the 5% Bundestag threshold, which has ensured that since 1945, no far-right party has been able to enter national parliament. Although reunification provided an increased electorate, further factionalism, and failure to provide cohesive, nationally appealing policy has prevented any sustained extreme-right success, with the NPD's potential severely damaged by banning attempts in 2003, 2011 and 2012 and connections to violent underground groups. The extreme nature of the party's ideologies has also been preventative of success, and whilst *Republikaner* came closest to offering the populist policies that Kitschelt (2000) argues are required for widespread extreme-right success, infiltration of the party by violent extremists and increased relations with the more radical DVU in the mid-1990s reduced *Republikaner's* appeal as a protest vote to disillusioned conservatives.

Section Two: Explaining Violence

As the previous section highlighted, the German far-right's extremist nature is arguably the main reason that parties like the NPD have failed to match the success of more populist parties like the French Front National and Austrian Freedom Party. However, connections between parties and violent neo-Nazi cells have helped develop a strong dangerous underground extreme-right movement. Although the NPD gained their first ever European Parliament seat in 2014's elections, winning 301,139 votes (1.03%) (Bundeswahlleiter, 2014), European parties eclipsed this, with the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the Front National winning elections in Britain and France. However, whilst the NPD's 2014 success was relatively unimpressive, only enabled after Germany's European Parliament 3% voting hurdle was ruled unconstitutional (EurActiv, 2014), extreme-right movements have taken confidence from NPD politician Udo Voigt's declaration that the party's position in Brussels will seek to ensure 'that in 50 years time… a German is still recognizable as European and cannot be mistaken for Ghanaian or Chinese' (Voigt, 2014, cited in Huffington Post, 2014).

In this section I will consider non-economic factors that explain extreme-right movements' development in East Germany and will examine the German far-rights' demographics. In addition, I will refer to psychological studies on the attractions of far-right violence and authoritarianism, considering theories on youth rebellion and generational conflict. As part of this analysis, I seek to understand why German far-right sentiment has often been expressed through violence rather than electoral support, and what factors explain the pervasiveness of racial attacks in East Germany. Furthermore, in addition to considering Durkheim's (1968) anomie theory, which states that radical societal changes can lead to feelings of inferiority, negative identity and moral depravity, I will briefly examine the role that extreme-right groups have played in replacing discredited and discontinued social services including youth centres and groups. Finally, I will consider if the prevalence of extreme-right underground violence and membership, especially in the East, is related to widespread youth apathy to organized politics.

Reunification's economic impact, which saw unemployment rise and security reduced, is often used to explain the post-1990 rise in extreme-right sentiment. These issues were especially debilitating in the East, where SED policy of full employment and supportive welfare had protected the population. However, economic arguments about 'globalization losers' inadequately explain why violent underground groups, rather than political parties, have successfully exploited these conditions, particularly among East German youth. Although the NPD's ideology relates closely to underground groups, these associations have not led to electoral success. Alongside economic factors, the psychological effects of reunification and the authoritarian GDR regime need consideration to fully understand the prevalence of underground violent extremism. As previously mentioned, the NPD lost members to extreme-right underground movements in the 1970s, with this trend continuing after reunification. In 2008, the party only had 6,000 members, despite 10,000 violent neo-Nazis being known in the same year (Merkl and Weinberg, 2003). In my psychological analysis, I will refer to Durkheim's (1968) anomie concept, Erikson's (1968 and 1975) identity theory and concepts of paternal relationships, and also Adorno's (1950) authoritarian personality concept and theories of intergenerational conflict.

Whilst theories that radical economic and social change cause violent extremism do not explain the 5,000–10,000 extreme-right skinheads who lived in the GDR in the late 1980s, whose anti-Semitic attacks were unpunished and unpublicised by the SED (Gilman, 1991, 382), they are vital in contextualizing the explosion of attacks following reunification. These theories are also important in understanding why 1991 and 1992 saw a major increase in German racially motivated violent offences, rather than 1990. Although statistics on racist attacks may be skewed by the GDR's culture of denial, clear correlation exists between Eastern ethnic demographic changes, economic frustrations and increasing racial violence. Racial violence levels remained stable across Germany during the late 1980s, rising from

189 offences in 1986 to 255 in 1989. Reunification only led to a minor increase to 309 offences in 1990, potentially explainable by increased police responses in the East, but escalated rapidly in 1991, rising almost 500% to 1,492, and to 2,639 offences in 1992 (Ministry of the Interior, 1994). This acceleration was matched by huge increases in the number of asylum seekers in Germany, rising from 121,318 in 1989 to 256,112 in 1991 and 438,191 in 1992 (Bundeszentrale fur Politische Bildung, 1992). Although only 10% settled in East Germany (Kolinsky, 1995), this still marked a radical demographical change to a population which was only 1.2% foreign before reunification (Backer, 2000), particularly as SED policy ensured foreign citizens, mainly economic migrants known as '*vertragsarbeiter*' from politically aligned countries like Vietnam, were segregated from the public.

Whilst segregation was relatively sustainable in the GDR, regime downfall ensured heightened minority visibility in the subsequently more transparent society, with the controversial issue of immigration and asylum rights creating tensions that peaked in 1992's anti-asylum centre attacks. The newly established post-reunification civic identity, which strongly relied on nationalism to provide unity and bridge Eastern and Western cultural and normative gaps, further ensured societal divide. The transition of East German identity from SED internationalism, Marxist-Leninism, and constitutionalised state anti-Fascism to unified nationalism and liberal capitalism left little space for already marginalised foreign workers. Whilst official GDR ideology had offered an accessible identity to workers from politically aligned countries including Mozambique, Angola and Vietnam, deliberate SED prevention of foreigner cultural integration made later identification with German nationalism problematic. Following Stewart and Hoult's (1959) argument that limited exposure to other identities can prevent empathy for outsiders developing, creating an unsympathetic authoritarian personality, it is perhaps understandable that many East Germans struggled to adapt to a radically altered post-reunification demographic. SED seclusion of foreign workers, who were housed in city outskirts and restricted by five-year work contracts, intensified this effect, with migrants lacking opportunity or reason to assimilate or discover Eastern culture and society. This integrational failure has been vital to post-reunification extreme-right projections of foreign workers as the 'other', with all immigrants amalgamated under a collective identity of difference. Combined with historic tensions and fears about immigrants, where concentrations of foreign workers in the GDR led to local impressions of 'local department stores, restaurants, and public spaces… seem[ing] suddenly overrun… in the Kneipen (pubs), a handful of foreign workers could… appear like an invasion' (Ireland, 1997, pp. 548–9), Eastern failures to integrate foreigners have justified extreme-right violence.

Following reunification, increasingly visible foreigners have replaced the West as targets for feelings of inferiority, with economically disadvantaged youth arguing that no space exists in a unified Germany, struggling to create a renewed national identity, for immigrants with separate cultures. Sentiment about inferiority has justified violent anti-asylum centre attacks, supported by East German feelings that the state favours spending on foreigners rather than deprived Germans, especially in contrast to the GDR's welfare safety net. This attitude's violent expression has been especially prevalent in 'reunification economic loser' cities like Rostock, whose early 1990s population held a concentration of asylum seekers. Welfare and unemployment tensions are especially important in former industrial heartlands, with Rostock disadvantaged through losing its status as the GDR's primary port, and reunification marking a major societal impact on a population whose only previous demographic experience was entirely ethnic white German. Statistics from 2000, a decade after reunification, reveal that whilst East German states include only 20% of Germany's population, over 50% of the 16,000 extreme-right associated offences occurred in these areas (Edelstein, 2005). This clearly reveals that the radical adjustment to economic and normative values following reunification is still having a strong impact on East German society.

Rostock's 1992 violent protests against legally employed Vietnamese workers and asylum seekers were arguably as much about East Germans expressing anger towards societal changes and West Germany as outright racism, with many Easterners feeling that they had had to surrender to Western ideas and institutions following reunification. Rostock's unemployment rose from 25,000 in November 1990 to 51,000 in February 1992 (Panayi, 1994), with young East Germans rioting to counter economic and identity inferiority, and proving their strength by attacking a weak, marginalised group. Furthermore, the rioters' ability to successfully challenge state establishments was vital to the extremity of such attacks. Weak police responses led to an 'immediate… and… stronger willingness to engage in violence… [revealing]… that victories against the police are an important motivation' (Koopmans, 1997, p. 162), providing a psychological boost to rioters, and further damaging the reputation of state institutions.

Interestingly, despite reunification arguably affecting Eastern women worse than men, with the abandonment of crèches and state welfare services that enabled GDR full employment seeing female labour participation drop from 89% in 1989 (Matsyiak and Steinmetz, 2008) to 67% in 1992 (World Bank, 2015), female extreme-right sentiment remains far lower than male levels, suggesting that early 1990s East German violent extremism was more related to system transformation than economic uncertainty. Neubauer and Hurrelmann's (1994) survey of East German youths revealed that males were almost 50% more anti-Semitic and 15% more xenophobic than their female contemporaries, reinforcing arguments that Eastern xenophobia relates to perceptions that foreigners provide a potential threat to resource allocation, including women (Hörschelmann and Schafer, 2005). In 1991, 59% of East to West migrants were female, with this rate particularly high amongst 18–24 year olds, where women accounted for 65%. These levels remain unbalanced, with around 55% of East to West migrants still female (Fuchs-Schundeln and Schundeln, 2009). East Germany now has

the European Union's lowest female to male population ratio (Kroehnert, 2009), with only 89 females to every 100 males in 2005, far below the European average of 96. Levels fall as low as 80 females per 100 males in rural areas (Kroehnert and Vollmer, 2012), locations with traditional extreme-right success, and where many of the 1990s violent protestors lived (Koopmans, 1995). In addition to evidence that men are 61% more likely to vote for the far-right (Arzheimer and Carter, 2003), extreme-right movements 'get their highest levels of support in countries with considerable surpluses of young males in the population' (Kroehnert and Vollmer, 2012, p. 109), with young males attracted by traditional views on gender roles.

Alongside gender issues and masculine insecurities helping develop extreme-right sentiment, the 1990s influx of asylum seekers to the East was conceivably associated with Western dominance. Furthermore, Easterners arguably may still hold psychological associations between the GDR and foreign workers, who may act as a reminder of the SED's authoritarianism, legitimising violent attacks. Surveys of 14 to 19-year-old students in Brandenburg State in 1993, 1996 and 1999 revealed xenophobic sentiment ranging from 30% to 38% (Sturzbecher, 1997 and 2001), exceptionally high levels for a state whose foreign population remains only 128,000 of a total 2.5 million (The Local, 2010). This minority remains fairly unseen, with asylum-seekers hidden in rural hostels and 'face to face evidence of foreigners only…concerning a few isolated Turkish doner traders and elusive Vietnamese cigarette dealers… xenophobia thus appear[ing] independent of the presence of these objects of hate' (Edelstein, 2005, p. 318). Whilst psychological associations between foreigners and the GDR, and impacts of the SED's totalitarian education system do not apply to many of 1999's surveyed students, reunification's psychological impact remains vital, particularly the impact of societal and economic changes on parents and institutions.

Durkheim's (1968) anomie theory states that transitions from traditional societies based on cooperation, patriarchal authority, and rules and values shared inter-generationally to modern competitive and individualistic societies can lead to inferiority and increased moral depravity. Furthermore, the lowered status such transformation causes leads to shame and 'deprivation of perspective which subverts the normative structure of mutual respect… that constitutes the member of society perspective' (Edelstein, 2005, p. 328). Clear evidence of Eastern extreme-right violence as an anomic expression is revealed through 1991–1992's racist offenders' profiles. This group were mainly aged 18–20, with 47% already known to the police for non-politically related offences, and 24% previously criminally convicted (Koopmans, 1995). Erikson's (1975) negative identity theory develops this model, stating that collective humiliation and inferiority can affect youth who witness their parents and authority figures struggle with unemployment and appear weak in periods of societal transformation. Additionally, many violent extremists were arguably not ideological Nazis, but members of cliques including skinheads and punks who used these identities to achieve individualism in the GDR. After reunification, these cliques continued providing identity and created security by separating members from populations perceived as un-German, inferior and undesirable, with violence 'consolidating… the group, and boundaries between it and the surrounding environment' (Allen, 1999, p. 121). However, whilst combining these theories with Eastern economic conditions helps explain increases in morally deprived attacks on the disabled and asylum seekers, it does not address the GDR's history of extremism. Whilst anti-asylum and Turkish immigrant arson attacks reflect populist, anti-immigrant welfare chauvinistic rhetoric manipulated by European extreme-right parties, physical attacks on the disabled suggest violent extremism is not simply explainable by economic frustration, but also psychological factors affecting morality and desperation for superiority.

GDR Holocaust education and segregation which ensured disabled citizens, like foreign migrants, were left as an unseen minority, helps to contextualise anti-disabled attitudes, but does not explain early 1990s violent attacks. Alongside state education leaving East Germans unaware of the Holocaust's disabled victims, political rhetoric justifying immigration on economic rather than moral grounds exacerbated anti-disabled sentiment. Extreme-right actions against the disabled often involved chanting of slogans labelling this group as a financial burden, an especially poignant issue in the East's fragile economy. However, to fully understand extremist violence, like the January 1994 neo-Nazi attack in Halle which left a 17 year-old wheelchair bound girl with a swastika carved on her face after she refused to repeat fascist slogans (LA Times, 1994), the totalitarian GDR's psychological and moral impact needs to be considered. To explain the East's tendency towards violent youth extremism, children's emotional repression and state crèche and educational socialization, alongside post-reunification discrediting of state institutions need addressing. Distant relations caused by state crèches and delegitimisation of parents' authority provide support for the applicability of attachment theory, in which a relationship between detachment, authoritarianism and low morality can lead to violence and crime. This detachment and subsequent limited space for emotional development can cause childhood insecurity, resulting in children not receiving basic trust and support, and struggling to develop empathic concern or trust in others, especially outsiders (Van Ijzendoorn, 1997). Furthermore, research from America's National Institute of Child Health reveals that early-life crèche attendance increases aggressive, authoritarian and disobedient characteristics, with even a weekly 12-hour attendance causing 'lower levels of social development and emotional regulation' (Leach, 2004, cited in Bunting, 2004). Whilst blaming East German violent extremism on crèche use prevalence without considering other important youth development factors is too simplistic, 80% of Eastern children were crèche-enrolled, sometimes before they turned one (Kupferberg, 2002), and contrasts between GDR state educational and socialization and FRG child rearing are important factors that require consideration.

Hopf (1997) extends such theories on state socialization, arguing that Eastern children's insecurity has caused an 'authoritarian dominance' characteristic, which when combined with attachment theory's associated limited empathy causes aggressive superiority towards those traditionally perceived as inferior by the extreme-right. GDR educational tactics included frequent public criticism and shaming, leaving Eastern children with increased feelings of vulnerability and social isolation, but lowered guilt due to frequent shaming experiences, with this environment developing the potential for 'explosive, rebellious and antisocial behaviour' (Magai and McFadden, 1995, p. 276). Alongside extensive crèche use preventing bonding opportunities and causing distant, coercive parental relations, SED authoritarianism ensured 'the repression of emotions was the absolute norm: self-control... hardness, and obedience to authority were the ordained values' (Hockenos, 1993, p. 93). It is perhaps not surprising that the post-reunification years resulted in extreme, far-right violent outbursts, with GDR children frequently exposed to events that inspired shame and anger, but left without an opportunity to express these feelings, or the emotional maturity and intelligence to rationally respond.

Whilst these theories provide useful explanations to violence's prevalence, they fail to address the lack of accompanying extreme-right party electoral support. Although Brothers (2000) argues that SED repression prevented access to Nazi ideology or explanations of fascist concepts, with neo-Nazis in the 1980s merely rebelling against the SED's state anti-fascism, this argument does not consider post-reunification ideological education. However, evidence from 1992's Rostock riots, where young Easterners projected anger at both refugees and police, is suggestive that extreme-right groups provide opportunities for releasing frustrations through non-ideological violence. Instead of simply being anti-state rebellion, Eastern extreme-right sentiment is a protest against previous generations with 'youth... sensitive to any suggestion that it may be hopelessly determined by what went before' (Erikson, 1968, p. 247). Young neo-Nazis secured individual identity through rebelling against their parents' generation's values, drawing strength from identifying with what was previously unspoken in the GDR and using shock tactics to gain attention. Extremist violence creates more noticeable impacts than anonymous ballot voting, especially considering the German far-right's electoral failure. Edelstein (2005) extends this, arguing that European youths are politically disenfranchised, instead increasingly involved with underground groups who can offer more political impact than marginalised parties.

However, evidence from across Europe contradicts these arguments, with high levels of extreme-right political party youth interaction, particularly in Austria and France. In 2011, the Freedom Party of Austria (FPO) was the most popular party amongst Austrian under-30s (DW, 2011), with the party's late 1990s rise matched by increased FPO youth voting, from 25% of 18–25 year olds in 1994 to 35% in 1999 (Merkl and Weinberg, 2003). Additionally, Marine Le Pen's Front National leadership has radically adjusted party support, attracting 25% of 18 to 24-year-old

voters in 2012's Presidential elections (Schofield, 2012). Furthermore, although the NPD and *Republikaner's* failures may ensure limited youth support, UKIP's achievements suggest reduced correlation between youth support and extreme-right success. Whilst UKIP gained two MPs and seats in eleven of the UK's twelve European Parliament constituencies in 2014 (Withnall, 2014), only 12% of under-35s surveyed in January 2015 stated a voting preference for the party (House of Commons Library, 2015). Further evidence of this limited correlation comes through *Republikaner's* electorate, and whilst support has dropped from the early 1990s, *Republikaner* have consistently attracted young or first-time voters, alongside blue-collar workers who have received little education and may be concerned about globalization and job security (Givens, 2005). Furthermore, whilst the first section revealed disproportionate Eastern democratic dissatisfaction, with 'younger people increasingly choosing non-institutionalised ad-hoc forms of political participation' (Wittlinger, 2010, p. 86), German under-25 voter turnout was 61% in 2013's National Elections (Abe et al. 2013). When compared to Britain, with one survey revealing that only 12% of under-25s would definitely vote in the 2015 General Election (Hansard Society, 2014), arguments that the underground German extreme-right's success is due to youth political apathy are unconvincing, with British underground movements like the English Defence League unable to match the longevity and violence of German extreme-right groups.

Furthermore, although Wittlinger (2010) may help explain lower levels of German youth-voting in contrast to other age groups, theories around non-electoral youth political participation do not address why racial violence and group membership is more prevalent in the East than the West. Rather than the early 1990s Eastern youth selecting underground groups over political parties due to electoral apathy, these far-right movements were arguably more appealing due to their separation from party factionalism, and the more fluid ideological position they could hold. In contrast to the NPD and *Republikaner's* broader xenophobia and isolationist nationalism, underground groups' racism can 'be redefined and redirected... unlike ideological targets which tend to be fixed elements in an integrated belief system' (Watts, 1996, p. 99). Evidence from surveys of young Easterners professing far-right views conducted by Shoshan (2008), Watts (1996) and Hörschelmann and Schafer (2005) reveal that extreme-right xenophobia is inconsistent and highly contextual, with respondents in cities like Berlin and Leipzig being strongly anti-Turkish, but supportive of American culture, Japanese investment and perceived high Vietnamese work ethic, in contrast to the rural prevalence of anti-Vietnamese sentiment. Furthermore, Cooke and Grix's 1988 study of young Eastern neo-Nazis reveals surprising tolerance towards hard-working foreigners, who participants viewed as less of a 'threat' to their German identity than rival youth movements including goths and punks (Cooke and Grix, 2000), heavily contrasting with the NPD and *Republikaner's* early 1990s ultra-nationalism. Kupferberg (2002) draws on Bjorgo's (1993) study of Scandinavia's

violent far-right, of whom many members were revealed to be 'hangers-on' and violent criminals rather than committed neo-Nazis, using extreme-right groups to enable their own aggressive tendencies, arguing similarities can be seen with German youth involved in attacks in Rostock and Hoyerswerda.

Moreover, alongside extreme-right party ideology failing to attract neo-Nazis in the early 1990s, reunification's discrediting of GDR political organisations has led to suspicion of political groups. Public sentiment that underground movements, not state affiliated institutions, were the true protectors of local communities from perceived influxes of asylum seekers and refugees resulted in NPD members failing to direct incidents like the Rostock riots, 'or even being accepted as leaders in non-party youth groupings and subcultures' (Krell et al. 1996, p. 156). Alongside party ideology not matching youth sentiment, weak, inefficient party leadership was further restrictive of electoral opportunities in the early 1990s, with the DVU failing to establish an Eastern state group until March 1991, when a branch was created in Berlin-Brandenburg (Roberts, 1997), leaving the party failing to exploit East Germany's pre-existing non-party affiliated neo-Nazis. In addition, *Republikaner's* electoral potential was dented by a ban by the final East German People's Chamber in February 1990, preventing the party from standing in East Germany's first democratic election in March 1990 or developing a support network (Mudde, 2000).

Alongside internal party weaknesses, post-reunification reputational damage of GDR associated institutions, including political parties, has led to political distrust, further exacerbated through discrediting of other important institutions like schooling. Furthermore, the post-reunification destruction of SED-provided youth groups and activities has removed outlets for Eastern youth to express frustrations and insecurities. Reduced post-reunification funding has only provided limited youth facilities, leaving young Easterners vulnerable with 'radical groups taking over the youth club houses' (Edelstein, 2005, p. 321), and has limited opportunities for trained youth workers to challenge and prevent developments of xenophobia, anti-Semitism and homophobia (ESRC, 2004). This is especially dangerous in a context where unemployment has led to youth losing faith or respect in their parents, with seasoned neo-Nazis able to act as authoritative father figures, and extreme-right groups offering a sense of family that distant national parties like the NPD cannot. Furthermore, in addition to East Germany lacking services to challenge youth extreme-right development, feelings of insecurity and negative worth caused by globalisation and reunification's economic challenges have led to poorer, young Easterners disconnecting from multi-ethnic society (Shoshan, 2008). This withdrawal prevents interaction with 'outsider' groups, making extreme-right views on race consensus, with the narrow spaces these groups occupy leading to violent territorial attacks on 'outsiders'. Hörschelmann and Schafer (2005) reveal that in contrast to their wealthier peers, less economically advantaged teenagers from Leipzig view 'immigration… as a threat … responded to with avoidance and withdrawal… rather than as part of a daily use of urban space' (Hörschelmann and Schafer, 2005, p. 231), with Turks in particular viewed as challenging to German identity and personal safety, despite having no involvement in their daily experiences. In combination, these factors explain the paradox of racist sentiment not being reflected through East German far-right electoral success.

Section Three: The Underground

Whilst this paper's first and second sections outlined different reasons for German extreme-right party failure and racist violence's prevalence, they did not focus in depth on underground movements. This section will explore these extreme-right movements and examine connections between groups like the National Socialist Underground (NSU), HoGeSa and Pegida with the NPD, and consider relations between the German police and neo-Nazis, the development of German 'no go areas' and national liberated zones, and women's important roles in providing extreme-right credibility.

As previously ascertained, the extreme-right failed to gain extensive post-reunification electoral success in the 'new Landers'. Despite this, asylum and immigration issues were politically mainstreamed, partly as a response to 1991–1993's rise in Eastern anti-asylum violence. Interestingly, from 1990 until the summer of 1991, when asylum debates became prominent, 29% of far-right attacks were against left-wing groups, Communist statues and Soviet soldiers (Koopmans, 2004). Previously discussed psychological, political and demographic factors help to explain post-reunification's prevalent violence but fail to explain these attacks' limitation to certain locations. Karapin (2002) compares Hoyerswerda with Riesa, which despite similar demographics and economic conditions avoided anti-foreigner attacks. In January 1992, Hoyerswerda's foreign population was 0.8%, and Riesa's was 1%; in September 1991 Hoyerswerda held 230 asylum seekers, and Riesa 260. Unemployment rates remained similar, officially 8.1% and 8.3% and unofficially 23.4% and 23% in Hoyerswerda and Riesa respectively (Bundesforschungsanstalt fur Landeskunde und Raumordnung, 1995, cited in Karapin, 2002). Additionally, Riesa had comparable numbers of right-wing extremists, but a September 1992 attempted attack on an asylum hostel by 30–40 neo-Nazis, inspired by August 1992's Rostock riots, failed to attract public support and was abandoned after a two hour police stand-off. Furthermore, rather than Rostock and Hoyerswerda's violence relating to resource allocation concerns, tensions emerged from cultural clashes and limited openings for residents to express frustrations. Contrasting with Hoyerswerda, where 'asylum-seekers were housed in groups of over 100… concentrating behaviours that many Germans found offensive' (Karapin, 2002, p. 155), and Rostock, where a Roma asylum-centre's overpopulation left refugees living in its garden, developing local tensions, Riesa's asylum accommodation was located away from major residential areas. Civic participation was much higher in Riesa, with 17 public meetings held in 1991, contrasting with four in Hoyerswerda, with Riesa's council publishing informative articles on asylum seekers for residents following refugee arrivals.

Another vital difference between areas where violence did and did not emerge in 1991–1993 is police responses, especially in challenging extremists before tensions escalated. Although Riesa police's professionalism challenges arguments that the GDR's collapse left a weakened post-reunification force, who tended 'to minimize reporting and responses to right-wing violence' (Koopmans and Olzak, 2004, p. 208), this responsiveness was not replicated in Rostock or Hoyerswerda. The week before September 1991's riots saw over a dozen anti-foreigner attacks in Hoyerswerda, enforcing extremists' sense of impunity (Bade and Anderson, 1994). After crime rose through November 1990, 10 Hoyerswerdan neo-Nazis connected to the larger, extremist 'German Alternative' (who had NPD membership crossover) formed the vigilante 'New German Order' (Lewis, 1996). Police responded passively to this group, who undertook tasks like patrolling streets, offering women lifts and stopping burglars and thieves, often handing criminals to police. Combinations of police incompetence and vigilante prominence led to 'local politicians feeling compelled to publicly rule out relying on skinheads' (Karapin, 2007, p. 211) for law and order provision in an August 1991 public meeting. Furthermore, disparity between police crackdowns on foreigners and passivity towards skinheads further legitimised neo-Nazi attacks, with 120 police brought to Hoyerswerda in July 1992 to arrest twenty Vietnamese and Turkish immigrants. Extremists replicated this operation, which challenged illegal cigarette sales, attacking Turkish cigarette salesmen in early September 1991 (Hockenos, 1993).

Police failures intensified during Rostock and Hoyerswerda's riots, with officers 'reluctant to risk their lives for foreigners who were only in the area briefly' (Cartner, 1992, p. 26). In Rostock, forces were under capacity, with 600 of the usual 5300 officers away training in West Germany, and 700 positions empty due to budgetary issues (Cartner, 1992). However, the remaining 4100 police still outnumbered violent protestors that crowded outside the hostel. Potential neo-Nazi sympathies and poor decision making left police holding constant walkie-talkie contact with skinheads throughout the riot (Hockenos, 1993). 70 neo-Nazis were able to set fire to a building containing over 100 Vietnamese, miraculously killing no-one, after police withdrew for two hours. Hoyerswerda's riot saw similar failures, with police levels remaining insufficient until the riot's third day, leaving foreign workers' houses unprotected (Ohlemacher, 1994). However, in contrast to slow reactions to developing anti-foreigner violence in Rostock and Hoyerswerda, Riesa's police targeted neo-Nazis from 1990, averting far-right vigilantism and preventing seven right-wing youth riots in 1991 (Karapin, 2002). However, Hoyerswerda and Rostock's police failures and rioting, rather than Riesa's successful community policing, gained national publicity. Enhanced media attention helped spread tactics, inspiring copycat attacks, with a further 20 Eastern asylum accommodation attacks in 1992. By the end of the year, extreme-right violence resulted in 17 deaths and 598 injuries nationwide (Kielinger and Otte, 1993). Contrary to arguments that this violence emerges in areas with high immigration and unemployment levels (Alber, 1994), Riesa and Hoyerswerda reveal that whilst these factors influence far-right sentiment, other factors including police responses and civic participatory channels are more important to understanding violent extremism.

Relations between intelligence services and violent xenophobia have been contentious since the FRG's judicial inclusion of former Nazis. Although the far-left, rather than extreme-right, dominated FRG political violence, judicial tolerance resulted in 'relative leniency regarding militant right-wing extremism' (Kalinowsky, 1993, p. 518). FRG attempts to depict separation from Nazism left racist violence often played down (Vinke, 1981), with unified Germany's anxiety to present a positive international image after 1991–1993's initial violence replicating this tendency. Inexperience in managing or confronting riots in the authoritarian GDR exacerbated this, with Germany's liberal legal system and perpetrators' juvenility preventing adequate extremist prevention. Following Hoyerswerda's riots, where 32 people were injured and 82 arrested (Kinzer, 1991), police and judicial deficiencies ensured that the few prosecuted rioters 'got away with short suspended sentences or community service, enabling culprits to cause further trouble' (Prützel-Thomas, 2000, p. 214). Limited prosecutions allowed experienced neo-Nazis to join 1992's Rostock riots, escalating the violence through providing extreme tactics and leadership experience. Judicial and intelligence incompetence were also exposed in two early 1990s North Rhine-Westphalia cases, revealing that these issues were not just an Eastern problem. Instead of being tried for attempted murder, two 19 year-old neo-Nazis responsible for an October 1991 arson attack were only prosecuted for GBH and aggravated arson, receiving lenient sentences of five years in youth custody (Prützel-Thomas, 2000). Furthermore, 1993's Solingen case, in which four neo-Nazis' arson attack had killed five and injured 14 Turks, further embarrassed intelligence services. The youths' trial revealed that the group regularly attended an intelligence service informants' martial arts club and frequently delivered anti-foreigner leaflets, with one of the youths a DVU member and another known to wear a jacket with the insignia 'All Power to the Nazis' (Hazlehurst and Hazlehurst, 1998). However, these failures are arguably more indicative of incompetence than collaboration.

Despite a December 1994 criminal justice legislation reform simplifying banning processes, enabling lengthier convictions, and the creation of specialist anti-extremist police units in Brandenburg and Saxony successfully reducing right-wing violence by the late 1990s, accusations of institutionalised racism remained (Prützel-Thomas, 2000). Whilst November 1993's government threat to dismiss civil servants holding Republikaner membership evidence state opposition to institutionalised racism (Freedom House, 1994), revelations about mid-1990s police brutality against foreigners expose institutional neo-Nazi sympathies, differing from early 1990s incompetence that can be explained through inexperience. Despite being warned that large numbers of neo-Nazis were travelling to Magdeburg twenty-four hours before May 1994's

riots, police responded slowly to the 150 extremists who were attacking foreigners, initially sending only 30 officers (Miller, 1994). Furthermore, eyewitnesses claimed that 'instead of stopping attacks, police joined in, holding down victims while their attackers beat them' (Sani, 2013, p. 148), with failures to record the riots leaving 48 arrested neo-Nazis unprosecuted. A similar collaboration occurred in Halle on May 21st 1994, with police refusing to intervene in an attack on an asylum seeker, and releasing the perpetrators without charge (Fullerton, 1995). This enablement of extreme-right violence was also revealed in June 1993's Hattingen arson attack, which destroyed a Turkish family's home. Despite police encountering three of the suspects, who had burn marks on their faces and were known neo-Nazis, on the night of the attack, they avoided prosecution. Police investigations failed to use vital evidence including hair samples, with collaboration extending to police providing false alibis (Phillips, 2000).

Furthermore, numerous cases of police brutality against detained foreigners in Bernau, Halle, Leipzig and Berlin were exposed, with Hamburg Interior Minister Werner Hackmann resigning in September 1994 in protest against police xenophobia. This resignation initially resulted in twenty-seven Hamburg officers' suspension for attacking foreigners, of whom three 'were also accused of having contact with right-wing groups' (Fullerton, 1995, p. 45), with 80 officers investigated by March 1995. These investigations were matched by similar suspensions in Hannover, Berlin and Luneberg, but these police collaborations had already developed the far-right's confidence, encouraging groups like the NSU.

The case of the NSU is possibly the German police and intelligence services' most damning failure. The group emerged from the Eastern town Jena, an underground extremist stronghold in the early 1990s, where various groups developed at the NPD's expense. Movements centred around the 'Thüringer Homeland Security' group and *Winzerclub* youth-centre, with Zschäpe, Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Böhnhardt socialised through participating in unchallenged rallies and concerts before forming the cell. A September 1997 NSU incident involving a suitcase, painted with a swastika and holding a dummy bomb, being left outside a Jena cinema reveals police incompetence when they investigated but released the group (Koehler, 2014). Police suspicion following the discovery of four operational pipe bombs and 1.4kg of TNT in a Jena garage in January 1998 led to the cell going underground, escaping police arrest attempts, and 'after five years of unsuccessful manhunts… investigations closed in 2003' (Koehler, 2014, p. 124). Between 1998 and November 2011, when Böhnhardt and Mundlos committed suicide following an Eisenach bank robbery, the NSU murdered 9 immigrants, a policewoman, bombed Cologne twice in 2001 and 2004, and robbed 14 banks (Dietrich, 2015). The cell's avoidance of detection reveals extensive intelligence incompetence, with revelations that many NSU supporters and contacts were informants, but failed to provide valuable information (Taylor et al. 2013). Moreover, German police relied on 'racial stereotypes to inform… perceptions of guilt and innocence' (Bruce-Jones, 2015, p. 40),

holding the Turkish mafia responsible and implying that victims had connections with organised crime, instead of investigating neo-Nazis. Alongside investigational failure, July 2012's revelation that intelligence services had destroyed documents evidencing neo-Nazi connections to the 10 murders further exposed institutional racism and corruption. Additional police collaborations were exposed through revelations that two Baden-Wurttenberg policemen, of whom one had been NSU victim Michele Kiesewetter's superior officer, had held membership of Germany's KKK offshoot 'the European White Knights' and were alleged to had held NSU connections (Gathman, 2012).

Interestingly, whilst police failures have enabled underground extreme-right groups, judicial forces have endeavoured to crack down on far-right parties, using alleged connections to these violent movements as justification for banning attempts. Relations between extreme-right parties and violent organisations remain complex, with fluid movement between groups. Whilst underground groups' early 1990s dominance prevented NPD success, many extreme-right activists, including the NSU cell, were socialised by the party before joining violent groups (Conradt and Langenbacher, 2013). Although the NPD had casual relations with underground organisations in the 1990s, particularly through the party's youth wing, the 'Young National Democrats' who from 1996 held joint events with violent neo-Nazis (Kamali, 2009), 1998's introduction of the 'Three Pillars' concept marked NPD intentions to incorporate extremists. This strategy promoted three 'fields of agitation', with the NPD seeking to 'fight for heads, the streets and for voters', tacitly supporting 'nationally liberated' no-go areas and making the party 'attractive to members of radical neo-fascist groups, who started to join in significant numbers' (Boyd and Walter, 2012, p. 32). Furthermore, relations between the NPD and neo-Nazi 'Freie Kameradschaften' (free comradeships) significantly increased following 2001–2003's unsuccessful NPD banning attempt, with comradeship leader Thorsten Heise now an NPD representative in Thuringia (Schellenberg, 2015). These improved relations inspired a fourth NPD pillar, an aspiration to unite Germany's far-right through 'struggle for organised will', in 2004 (Solanke, 2009).

Nonetheless, these relations have not resulted in electoral success. Whilst neo-Nazi levels have remained stable, with 9,500 violent extremists in 2010 and 9,600 in 2013, NPD membership fell from 6,600 in 2010 to 5,500 in 2013, and total far-right membership dropped from 9,600 in 2010 to 7,000 in 2013 (McGowan, 2014a). Although the party's 2004 Saxony success coincided with increased *Kameradschaften* relations, the 9.2% of the vote received by the party relates more to traditional party success in Saxony and NPD opposition to welfare reforms. Welfare protectionism gave the NPD traditionally left-wing voters' backing, with 14% of those who cast second votes for the NPD casting their first for the Party of Democratic Socialism (Sommer, 2008), and 60% of 2004's NPD voters stated this protectionism explained their party backing. Despite 2004's campaign distancing the party from extremists,

'presenting itself as a respectable right-wing party' (Backes, 2006, p. 135), skinhead associations have reduced NPD's appeal to protest voters. Mainstream NPD success has been damaged further by NSU connections and links to neo-Nazis, who inspired by NPD demonstrations against a Tröglitz refugee centre, set fire to the building in April 2015 (Paterson, 2015). Furthermore, many neo-Nazis who joined the NPD in 2004 in solidarity against 2001–2003's banning attempt 'have already left, swelling the ranks of the Kameradschaften' (Virchow, 2004, p. 70). Relations between the *Kameradschaften* and NPD split the extreme-right, with the Autonomous Nationalist (AN) movement, formed in 2002, coming to prominence in 2004 due to their opposition of parliamentary involvement, with conflicts escalating in a 2007 Frankfurt demonstration when AN and NPD security guards clashed (Schedler, 2014). The AN's rise increased the numbers of German non-violent non-party aligned neo-Nazis, growing from 2,200 in 2000 to 6,000 by 2011 (Bundesministerium des Innern, 2012). Just as the early 1990s NPD socialisation of young extremists never created a consistent electoral base, the AN's attraction to neo-Nazi youth has been preventing the NPD from gaining a new generation of supporters.

The rise of the anti-Salafist HoGeSa organisation, which comprised of various football hooligan groups and developed connections with the NPD, has further split the German far-right, which now contains numerous and often unconnected groups. Furthermore, whilst it remains too early to tell what the Pegida movement's future impact will be, it is arguable that this movement's mainstreaming of Islamophobia may potentially weaken the extreme-right. Although the NPD has encouraged their supporters to attend Pegida rallies, which have neo-Nazi participation, the movement holds strong connections with the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, whose recent Eastern success has weakened the NPD. A 2014 survey of AfD supporters revealed that 86% supported Pegida, with 50% confirming they would consider joining protests, blocking opportunities for extreme-right Pegida dominance (Hoerner, 2015). Furthermore, alongside Pegida and AfD's connections weakening the NPD, this movement's achievements arguably may limit extreme-right underground movements by providing a more accessible and successful method for protest. Moreover, in contrast to post-reunification's violence and continued Eastern racist attacks on Africans, which were carried out against visible outsiders, Pegida's Islamophobia targets an almost invisible minority, with Muslims only numbering 0.1% of Dresden's population and almost non-existent in the rural East (Dearden, 2014). However, recent rises in anti-asylum arson attacks alongside Pegida's spread presents a troubling trend. Whilst this increase in neo-Nazi violence is more explainable by 2014's rapid increase in asylum than inter-relations with Pegida, this violence is worrying comparable to post-reunification asylum attacks. In addition to the Tröglitz incident, anti-asylum arson occurred in Vorra, Escheburg and various locations across North-Rhine Westphalia (Spiegel, 2015a). The Syrian crisis and Balkan tensions have ensured rapid rises in refugees entering Germany, with asylum levels increasing 60%

from 2013 to 2014, reaching around 250,000, reflected in asylum centre attacks rising from 24 in 2012 to 58 in 2013, and nearly tripling to 150 in 2014 (Spiegel, 2015b). Furthermore, regional CDU politicians have increasingly matched the early 1990s populist anti-refugee rhetoric that gave neo-Nazis confidence to attack foreigners, with Saxony state interior minister Markus Ulbig attempting to develop dialogue with Pegida and creating a specialist police force focusing on delinquent asylum seekers in November 2014 (Johnson, 2015).

One area where the NPD has secured support is through replacing and infiltrating Eastern state institutions, which were delegitimised after reunification, with this being particularly effective in rural and deprived areas. These activities include neo-Nazis protecting 'children on their way to schools and organizing play groups that are ideologically indoctrinated' (Zimmermann, 2003, p. 227) in attempts to attract community support and socialize children. Since reunification, educational infiltration has been a key, but unsuccessful recruitment tactic, with extremists inspired by surveys revealing that 30% of 1998's school-age Easterners held neo-Nazi sympathies, compared to 20% nationwide (Michael and Minkenberg, 2007). 32% of surveyed East Berlin students expressed xenophobic sentiment in 2001, and nationwide neo-Nazi school incidents doubled in the 2004/5 academic year, revealing continued neo-Nazi youth prevalence (Spiegel, 2006). Inspired by previous far-right petitioning of schoolchildren with leaflets demanding immigrant deportation, the NPD's youth wing formed groups for young Easterners entitled 'School Initiatives for the Free Formation of Opinion and Expression' (Braunthal, 2010, p. 44) in 2001, and in 2004 the party began 'Action Schoolyard', distributing CDs containing neo-Nazi music and contact details to thousands of schoolchildren (Tompkin, 2015). However, attempts to attract youth voters have generally failed, and have not provided the NPD with electoral success, despite revelations in 2013 that 31.2% of Easterners born after 1981 are xenophobic (Dillon, 2013). Furthermore, despite extensive NPD efforts to attract schoolchildren, the party's youth division only held 380 members in 2013, far below the AN's membership, with low NPD youth membership, far-right factionalism and high AN member turnover suggesting that a new generation of youth far-right activists remains unlikely (Schedler, 2014). Additionally, although around 40% of Saxony-Anhalt's schoolchildren are xenophobic, only 5% of these are involved in the far-right underground scene (Todt, 2006). The NPD are also increasingly targeting nursery groups, with the Eastern state Mecklenburg Western-Pomerania making all kindergarten managers swear democratic allegiances from August 2010 due to fears of neo-Nazi infiltration (Crossland, 2010), with this state awareness threatening the success of NPD infiltration.

Efforts to infiltrate educational services have also revealed women's increasing neo-Nazi importance. Far-right movements have attempted to use female teachers and nursery assistants to manipulate children, despite the German extreme-right's misogynistic nature generally preventing female electoral support and limiting party

success. *Republikaner's* breakthrough 1989 European Parliament result was secured by male voters, with 9.6% of men and 4.9% of women backing the party. This pattern continued through the 1990s and 2000s where male DVU and NPD voters generally outnumbered females two to one (Durham, 2006). Despite party failures to attract women, numerous female neo-Nazi underground movements including the German's Women's Front, *Skingirl Front Deutschland* and the now-defunct *Deutsche Frauenschaft* have held memberships of around 150. These organisations have created various prospects for far-right participation, with involvement ranging from going 'hiking with the Viking youth… taking part in racial attacks (or)… forming mothers' circles to ensure their children do not to go kindergarten alongside Turkish children' (Durham, 2006, p. 63). Furthermore, female extreme-right involvement has historically been underestimated by intelligence services who have viewed neo-Nazi violence as a male issue. Neo-Nazi manipulations of these perceptions came to prominence with Beate Zschäpe and the NSU but extend back to the 1980s when far-right terrorist group WSG Hoffman's female members avoided prosecution despite evidence of culpability in racist crime (Amadeu Antonio Foundation, 2014). Although revelations of Zschäpe's integral NSU role have alerted German intelligence officials to potential female racial violence, challenging far-right women's impunity, women remain involved in underground groups. Whilst women are outnumbered in the German extreme-right, 11% of German right-wing extremists in 2010 were female, with around 50% holding leadership positions (Eddy, 2012) and women were responsible for around 10% of 2014's 15,000 extreme-right crimes (IB Times, 2014), revealing female willingness to engage in neo-Nazi violence. Furthermore, Pegida's rising Islamophobia may potentially attract female extreme-right support, and although the German far-right does not hold political dominance over Islamophobia and has traditionally focused attacks on asylum seekers rather than Muslims (with attacks on Turks ethnically rather than religiously motivated), other European far-right movements have successfully manipulated female Islamophobia.

To conclude the section, I will briefly examine 'Nationally Liberated Zones' (NLZs) that neo-Nazis have attempted to create in Germany, and the relations between these 'no-go areas' and the NPD. These areas were publicised in 2006 when German politician Uwe-Karsten Heye warned World Cup supporters to avoid certain parts of East Germany, due to potential anti-foreigner extreme-right violence (Liang, 2007). These areas have developed since reunification, with Hefler et al. (1998) arguing that these zones allow neo-Nazis to manipulate GDR family breakdowns, with NLZs providing communities for isolated Eastern youths. The NPD's three pillar policy of 1997 further encouraged these areas' development, where intimidation tactics and racist violence create impressions of neo-Nazi ideological dominance. NLZs seclusion from German society has allowed further neo-Nazi replacement of state functions, providing social and economic support. However, whilst these areas operate on the idea that 'occupying local public places, meeting points for young people, school areas and

other locations could ultimately lead to political power' (Mering and McCarty, 2013, p. 29), this desired success has failed to come to fruition. Although 17 such areas, which the German government refuses to recognise as NLZs or as under neo-Nazi control, but instead labels as 'fear zones', were recognised as existing by Brandenburg state's intelligence services in 2007, these areas' small populations prevent them from providing positive future prospects for the far-right (Novotny, 2009). Whilst 2006 saw the NPD win 38% of the vote in Postlow, which the extreme-right hold as a no-go area, the village's total population is under 500 (Goldsmith, 2007). Furthermore, whilst the Eastern village Jamel has gained publicity following revelations that the village is almost entirely inhabited by neo-Nazi NPD supporters, its total population in 2010 was only 35 (Popp, 2011). Although no-go areas and NLZs offer a risk to East Germany's left-wing and foreign inhabitants, the potential for a mass neo-Nazi movement to develop from Eastern rural villages remains unlikely. Moreover, many of these 'no-go areas' remain in private houses, pubs and youth houses, rather than infringing on public spaces (Mushaben, 2008). Although a lack of intervention in areas like Jamel could potentially enable similar socialisation processes that developed radical groups like the NSU, Saxony's intelligence services 2007 crackdown on the neo-Nazi 'Sturm 34' groups, who were attempting to develop NLZs in Mittweida (Novotny 2009) suggests that declarations after Hoyerswerda's 1991 riots that the town of 60,000 had become a 'foreigner free zone' are unlikely to be repeated.

It must be argued that revelations of the NSU and institutional enablement of the cell have damaged the extreme-right. Although accusations around 1990s police collaboration hold some truth, Beate Zschäpe's ability to avoid detection is more indicative of incompetence than police racist sympathies. Furthermore, alongside these revelations ensuring that similar police mistakes remain unlikely in future, the increased security infiltration of extreme-right groups will make future violence challenging. Additionally, although the NPD initially gained members after banning attempts in the early 2000s, many of these skinheads quickly left the party, returning to the comradeships. Rather than far-right movements such as the AN's, Pegida and HoGeSa offering opportunities for neo-Nazi mobilisation, these groups have merely fractured the German extreme-right and have deprived the NPD of success, especially through Pegida's relations with the AfD. Whilst no-go areas and service provision in the rural East may provide the NPD and the far-right with some support, this has not been reflected electorally, and neo-Nazis are no longer able to gain extensive community support that legitimised asylum attacks in the early 1990s. Connections between the NPD, NSU and other extremist groups have made the party electorally unappealing to protest voters, leading to further calls for banning attempts and police crackdowns. Infiltration attempts of schools and nursery groups have generally been unsuccessful due to increased state vigilance, preventing the extreme-right from recruiting new younger members. Although rising German Islamophobia presents the extreme-right with

one potential source of membership, the far-right does not hold ownership of this issue and security services will be more aware of the potential threat of female violence following the NSU revelations.

Conclusion

This paper drew attention to a series of paradoxes. Whilst various surveys, waves of racist violence and numerous underground far-right groups have revealed that extensive xenophobic and extreme-right sentiment still provides a challenge to German democracy, these attitudes have not been reflected in electoral success. Furthermore, despite extreme-right parties failing to attract female voters due to their misogynistic nature, far-right underground movements have successfully integrated women. Underlying all these is the most important paradox: the persistence of the far-right in a country that has undergone extensive *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and attempted to overcome Nazism's horrors. Additionally, this paper revealed that a combination of explanations, rather than single factors such as economic conditions, are required to explain German extreme-right successes and failures.

Section One explained that post-WW2 denazification and re-education generally failed to challenge pre-existing xenophobia and anti-Semitism, but that factionalism, weak leadership and unappealing party ideology have prevented electoral representation of this sentiment. Section Two stated that whilst economic factors may help explain why anti-immigrant attitudes develop, they cannot explain why this xenophobia has been so violently expressed. Instead, psychological factors are arguably more important. The psychological impact of German reunification especially, which discredited institutions and challenged parental and state authority is vital to explaining the 1991–1993 wave of violent extremism. However, as the second section revealed, a combination of GDR authoritarianism and repressive child rearing techniques, alongside widespread Eastern feelings of inferiority are required to understand this far-right violence. Alongside Eastern anti-immigrant sentiment relating to high unemployment and tension about resource allocations, the second section argued that psychological associations of foreigners also explain violence. The third section extended this theme, revealing that prior to 1991's asylum attacks, actions against communist statues, left-wing groups and Soviet soldiers dominated Eastern violence. These attacks reveal the powerful impact of groups and objects associated with the SED regime. Moreover, the second section outlined how GDR state official anti-fascism was vital in developing neo-Nazi sentiment, which was used to oppose East Germany's authoritarianism. As the first section argued, this neo-Nazi rebellion was exacerbated by inadequate Holocaust education, integration of NSDAP members and anti-Semitic foreign policy.

The second section noted that alongside psychological explanations, local factors are vital in understanding why certain targets were chosen. Neo-Nazis in cities express higher levels of anti-Turkish sentiment whereas rural racism targets obvious outsiders, especially Vietnamese and African migrants brought in by the GDR. This varied

xenophobia relates more to East German fears around identity and territorial challenges than ideological racism. Following the first section, which explained why far-right sentiment has not been sufficiently challenged, and the second section, which explained why these attitudes have been violently expressed, the third section explored factors that have enabled attacks. This section argued that attacks such as Rostock and Hoyerswerda were enabled by insufficient policing and limited civic engagement opportunities. Without woefully inadequate police responses, attacks would have been less extensive. Furthermore, neo-Nazi dominance over the police provided confidence to far-right movements, ensuring violence spread across the East. Section three also argued that whilst these police and intelligence failures, alongside evidence of late 1990s police collaborations, were vital in enabling the NSU's violence, these revelations have led to extensive security infiltrations of extreme-right movements and the NPD, restricting future far-right success.

Furthermore, this section argued that connections between the NPD and 'free comradeships' have actually weakened the party and underground groups. Skinhead connections to the party have limited its potential as a protest vote and fractured the extreme-right as other underground cells oppose democratic engagement. This section concluded that whilst xenophobic and Islamophobic sentiment remain high, particularly through Pegida's development, the far-right have continually been unable to exploit this. These failures have forced the NPD further underground, relying on small villages and nationally liberated zones for regional support with national electoral success unlikely in the foreseeable future. However, the German far-right's sheer endurance, consistent evolution of new parties and underground movements, and continuity of xenophobia and anti-Semitism provide warning that the extreme-right's challenge is unlikely to disappear.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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