A wolf in sheep's clothing: a mixed-methods analysis of the far-right alt-tech social media movement

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Chapter 2

A New Wave of Terrorism? A Comparative Analysis on the Rise of Far-Right Extremism

Abstract

The rise of right-wing terrorism incidents is proliferating throughout the western world. Highlighting this phenomenon is the exponential increase of incidents connected to far-right assailants within the past ten years. To understand these growing occurrences, the article uses David Rapoport's seminal theory on the Modern Waves of Terrorism. Applying Rapoport's measurement criteria, the project focuses on determining whether the increase in far-right violence constitutes a new wave within terrorism. The study provides an extensive analysis using the Global Terrorism Database, interlinking research dedicated to comprehending domestic occurrences of far-right extremism with the encompassing patterns and themes happening across the western world. Based on the mixed-methods empirical analysis, the article contends that the data's common themes and patterns fulfil Rapoport's distinctive wave conditions with regards to the phenomenon's international nature, the amount of activity, its prompting cause, and its predominant energy.

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[5] Minor changes were made to the published article, which includes fixing some phrasing, grammar, and word choices. To further improve the flow and relevance to this thesis the final paragraph of the work was removed. None of the data, results, or conclusions were altered.

Introduction

The rise of far-right extremist (FRE) incidents is proliferating throughout the western world. The Institute for Economics and Peace has highlighted the exponential increase (320%) in incidents connected to far-right assailants within the past ten years (START, 2020). Multiple studies couple these findings to various themes, including the re-emergence of far-right populist parties (Berlet and Sunshine, 2019), the movement's mainstreaming of hateful rhetoric (Ackerman and Peterson, 2020b), the scapegoating of targeted minorities and communities, and the idolization of far-right mass murderers (Am and Weimann, 2020). Additionally, the recent mass casualty incidents in Hanau, El Paso and Christchurch related to far-right ideologies reaffirm the need to improve our understanding of why these attacks are on the rise. One proposed avenue of analysis is in utilizing Rapoport's *Modern Waves of Terrorism* theorem. Rapoport argues that underlying political and ideological forces shape distinct patterns of terrorism (Auger, 2020). These patterns form in cyclical waves, helping researchers to understand and identify the different themes precipitating the respective cycle. Therefore, the article's central aim, using Rapoport's theory, is to determine whether FRE constitutes a new wave within terrorism.

Traditionally, studies involving FRE have predominantly focused on single high-fatality occurrences rather than the general trends. Thus, this study aims to fill this literature gap by providing an extensive analysis, using the "most comprehensive database of terrorist incidents," and interlinking research dedicated to understanding domestic occurrences of FRE with the encompassing patterns and themes happening across the western world (LaFree, Miller and Dugan, 2020). Moreover, it also seeks to challenge the current dichotomy between the importance placed on the religious wave of terrorism, and that placed on the under-research phenomenon of FRE.

Among other developments, popular western political language has presupposed new terrorism 'Jihadism' as the polar opposite to old terrorism 'secular extremism' (Gofas, 2012). Consequently, this western characterisation often depicts religious terrorism as international actors seeking extreme violence that threatens the current world order. Conversely, FRE has taken on the form of the less violent, domestic actor that maintains continued political order. Lost in the categorisation and securitisation of the religious wave, is the neglected research onto FRE. A recent study conducted by The Hague Institute for Security Studies suggests that Muslim perpetrators of terrorist attacks received 357% more press coverage than far-right individuals within the US (Görder and Chavannes, 2020). These findings are not exclusive to public discourse. Out of 4458 academic articles on domestic terrorism, only 0.6% focused on FRE in peer-reviewed publications (Koehler, 2019). These statistics belie the fact that there are twice as many incidents involving right-wing terrorists in western countries than those involving any other extremist base (Görder and Chavannes, 2020).

Therefore, the article aims to contribute two interlinked dimensions in terrorism research. The first is in establishing a new FRE wave of extremism, gradually replacing the longstanding religious wave. Why does establishing the next wave of terrorism as FRE matter? It is not a symbolic representation with little repercussion but a timely call for reorientation in understanding the changing extremist landscape. Most importantly, with the current fixation of Jihadism in the academic sphere, the far-right has mobilized with few impediments while using the discourse surrounding the religious wave as an existential threat in their ideological narratives. Obviously, the article is not attempting to undermine studies dedicated to Jihadi terrorism. Instead, it aims to close the gap, imploring (more) academics to focus on FRE. This reorientation of the field strives

better to represent the ongoing extremism concerns in the western world. Secondly, the typological production of themes and patterns spanning the selected cases should emphasize the underlying mechanisms fuelling the growing wave of FRE. Identifying the varying motivations, targets, weapon types, group belonging, ideologies, and reoccurring patterns will provide future avenues for exploration.

Rapoport's Modern Waves of Terrorism Theory

David Rapoport defines a *wave* as a "cycle of activity in a given period – a cycle characterized by expansion and contraction phases." In his historical analysis, the four modern waves take the form of (Rapoport, 2002):

1) Anarchism (1880s – 1920s) – The first wave started in Russia, with mass calls for rebellion against the Czar regime. The movement utilized violence and terrorism as a stratagem, including suicide bombing as an act of nobility and martyrdom. More intricate plots amounted to the "golden age" of assassinations, culminating in the murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

2) Nationalism & Anti-Colonialism (1920s – 1960s) – The aftermath of WW1 triggered the next wave, with many countries calling for self-determination following the break-up of colonial Empires. Instead of the regional focus in the previous cycle, acts of terrorism took place across the globe, including Pakistan, the Philippines, much of the Africa continent, Cyprus, and Palestine. Moreover, the tactics shifted from high-impact terrorism acts to a more hit-and-run style of guerrilla warfare.

3) New Left Extremism (1960s – 1980s) – The Cold War and the effectiveness of guerrilla tactics demonstrated in Korea and Vietnam fostered the third wave of nationalist fighters. Many

organizations created during this wave, such as the RAF, the Italian Red Brigades, and the IRA, utilized sensationalist acts of extremism. This type of terrorism included dozens of plane hijackings, the assassinations of prominent political figures, international kidnappings, and acts of international terrorism.

4) Religious Extremism (1980s – Current) – Islam rests at the heart of the current religious wave. Rapoport suggests these findings are predominantly due to the significance and deadliness of terrorist attacks linked to Islamic groups. Multiple interconnected events triggered the religious wave, including the Iranian revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the Global Jihad movement. The most profound act of violence cementing the religious wave is the coordinated attack on 9/11.

However, with each wave of terrorism's life cycle averaging around forty years, researchers have presupposed an ensuing novel phenomenon (Honig and Yahel, 2019). This assertion includes Vincent Auger's similar contestation that FRE is the next wave of terrorism, and Rapoport's assumption that by 2025 there will be a novel cycle (Auger, 2020). Moreover, the article provides distinguishable criterion to establish the next cycle of terrorism. The first – the global character – examines the transnational nature of terrorist activities. Secondly, an expanse of activity measures the number of individuals involved and the characteristics of attacks over an identified period. A prompting or inciting cause depicts an "unanticipated international political transformation" that produces extremist and radical reactions (Auger, 2020). Finally, common predominate energy examines the extremists' identification and tools of resolution for existential threats. Subsequently, this article draws inspiration from Auger's study on the same phenomenon. Expounding on the upwards trend of far-right violence, he presupposes that FRE could fulfill Rapoport's criteria for a

wave. However, Auger's arguments are mainly anecdotal and lack the systematic qualitative and quantitative data necessary to back up these intriguing claims. Therefore, this article aims to fill this gap through the operationalization of Rapoport's criteria into explanatory findings.

Research Design: Evaluating the Next Wave

The article interlinks the phenomenon of FRE within a multi-case study comparative framework – allowing for comparisons with both the qualitative and quantitative data available on the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) – to investigate the emergence of a new wave of terrorism for the western world. These cases include the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Scandinavia – excluding Iceland and the Faroe Islands. The cases were selected based on their respective upsurge in FRE, the scholarly literature written on the areas, and their geographic locations spread across the western world. Moreover, using Auger's findings indicating a significant increase of far-right events after 2008 and the availability of data on the GTD, the study is performed within ten years between 2009 and 2018 (Auger 2020). The measuring criteria or operationalized mechanisms for this investigation are the outlined characteristics defined by David Rapoport. These include an international nature, amount of activity, prompting cause, and common predominant energy. The conditions for success in identifying if FRE constitutes a new wave of extremism depends on whether Rapoport's criteria are empirically and statistically provable – using either descriptive statistics for the quantitative data or thematic inductive analysis for the qualitative information. Thus, the guiding research questions for this investigation follows the multi-case study comparative conditions listed above:

RQ1: What is the principal arrangement of characteristics of FRE incidents within Scandinavia, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States?

RQ2: Do these findings suggest a new wave of far-right extremism when comparing the selected cases within the framework of David Rapoport's modern waves of terrorism theory?

Operationalization:

The study operationalizes Rapoport's methods for defining a wave of terrorism. This operationalization process combines the theories' criteria in conjunction with data available on the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). Thus, the article outlines the following four measurement tools:

1. International Nature – The general trends of FRE incidents for the selected cases.

2. Amount of Activity – Number of incidents per selected case study, including the target type, the method of violence, the type of weaponry used and the frequency of events.

3. Prompting Cause – The motives behind each incident. Includes the ideologies or triggers used to justify the assailant's actions and measures the lethality per ideological grouping.

4. "Common Predominant Energy" – The interlinkages of common themes spanning the included case selections.

Methodology & Data

The research methodology used is the comparative cross-national analysis. This practice examines a particular phenomenon to compare its "manifestations in different socio-national settings" (Bryman, 2008). Using the small-N cross-national comparative method allows for the collection of predominant terrorism cases within the international system (Esser and Vliegenthart, 2017). In developing functional equivalents of terrorism incidents and classifying these cases into groupings with identifiable and shared characteristics, the article offers a comprehensive evaluation of the multi-faceted problem. Additionally, this method is beneficial for evaluation since it allows for

both qualitative and quantitative comparisons. Thus, the GTD's extensive catalog of data in combination with the cross-national comparison method provides the essential mixed-method approach between "variable-based logic and case-based interpretation" (Esser & Vliegenthart, 2017).

The primary source for the detailed breakdown of each event of far-right extremism is the open-source database created by START. The usefulness of the GTD for academics pertains to its extensive records of over 190,000 terrorist attacks since the 1970s (LaFree, Miller and Dugan, 2020). START uses an open-source method for collecting media articles which fuels their massive accumulation of data. This process involves using a Metabase Application Programming Interface which isolates close to 400,000 potentially relevant articles per month. Refining the data is done by removing duplicates and irrelevant material. Only articles acquired from trusted primary "high-23 quality" sources without bias are used to ensure validity. The substantiality of the system means the dataset comprises over 100 variables characterizing each attack in detail, from its tactics, targets, weapons, and casualties to more summarized descriptions of the assailants and their motives. Therefore, START provides the most comprehensive worldwide database for incidents of terrorism mandatory for the investigation.

Necessary in the study is the selection of relevant GTD variables. Each categorical variable used in the analysis was deductively selected to best represent the operationalized characteristics detailed by Rapoport. The following section includes a list of this investigation's defining features (LaFree, Miller and Dugan, 2020):

Table 2.1 GTD variables used to measure Rapoport's Indicators

| Variable Type	Summary
Summary	A brief narrative of the essential elements of the terrorist attack.
Attacktype1	The general method of attack which reflects a broad class of different tactics in terrorism.
Facility/Infrastructure Attack	The primary intention is to cause harm to non-human targets (buildings, monuments, vehicles).
Armed Assault	The objective is to cause physical harm or death against a target using firearms, incendiaries, or sharp instruments (lethal).
Bombing/Explosion	A device which, upon activation, creates an intense pressure wave causing physical damage to the surrounding environment.
Targtype1	The general type of target/victim for terrorists. The variable consists of 22 different categories, reflecting the broadness of target types.
Weapontype1	The general type of weaponry used for each incident.
Gname	Lists the name of the group that carried out the attack. Often, this was standardized labelling for the assailant's general ideological grouping.
Gsubname	When available, provides the specific faction to which the assailant belongs.
Motive	When available, provides the specific motive for the assailant's actions. May also include the relevant ideology used to justify the attack (Social, Economic, Political, and / or Religious).
White Supremacy	Assailants are described as white supremacy when the GTD source confirms their involvement in a white supremacist organization.
Anti-Islamic	Includes all attacks on facilities, private property and individuals belonging to the Islamic faith.
Anti-Refugee	Includes all attacks on facilities, private property and individuals defined as refugees or asylum seekers.
Anti-Government	Includes all attacks on government personnel, property, and infrastructure. Also includes attacks on law enforcement.

Analysis

International Nature

Figure 2.1 Summary of RWE incidents for the study's selected countries between 2009-2018
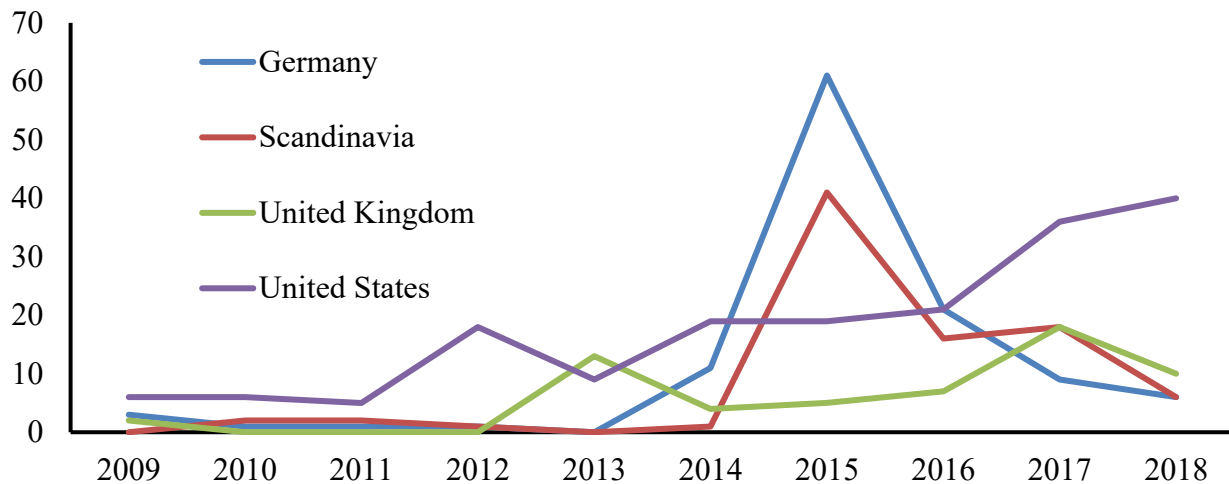
Between 2009 and 2011, FRE activity for the nominated cases is relatively low (See Figure 1). Only the United States exceeds over 5 incidents per year in this time scale, with Germany registering five, Scandinavia two, and the United Kingdom two. From 2011 to 2014, extremist occurrences spike in three out of the four countries. The US jumps from five to seventeen cases and continues to climb after 2014 finishing this period with nineteen. Both Germany and the United Kingdom see similar increases in activity, with incidents jumping from one to eleven and zero to thirteen, respectively. The greatest increase in activity is in 2015. This year witnesses Germany (61) and Scandinavia (41) experiencing an exponential growth in FRE activity. However, this growth is not consistent throughout the countries, with the US and the UK remaining relatively stable for incidents per year. After the massive spike in 2015, extremist incidents in Scandinavia and Germany decline, and both finish at six each. Although case numbers are seeing a general decrease in the last year of the study, they continue to far surpass incidents at the start of the research period.

Figure 2.2 Summary of total RWE incidents for the study's selected countries between 2009-
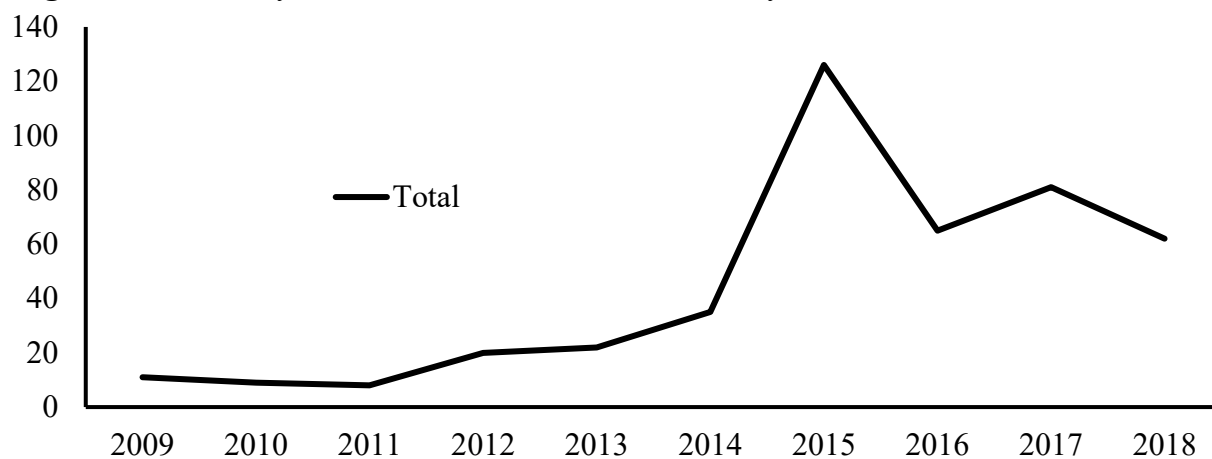
The summary of total FRE incidents within the selected countries is demonstrated in figure 2.2, which provides a complimentary visual representation of the study. The case numbers for the initial study period are generally small, ranging from eight to eleven between 2009 and 2011. Afterwards, there is a gradual increase from 2012 (20), 2013 (22), to 2014 (35). The most significant upsurge in FRE events occurs in 2015, climaxing at a total of 126 unique incidents. These numbers are halved in the following year (65) but remain relatively stable through to 2018 (62).

The inclusion of figure 2.2 provides a different perspective on the current phenomenon. Whereas figure 2.1 shows the general decline in case numbers in the selected countries, figure 2.2 depicts the drastically higher number of cases between the end of the examination period in question. The data points evaluating the overall projections of FRE are consistent with findings detailing the same growth across the western world in the last decade (23).

Amount of Activity

This examines the number of incidents per selected case, including the weapon type, fatality rates and targets for each country in the study. The tables which follow in each section provide an in-

depth evaluation of the characteristics of FRE incidents and a means to cross-compare the individual case's datasets. Presenting the number of cases and percentages per incident category within a data table illustrates the common recurrences of FRE incidents.

Germany:

Table 2.2 provides the breakdown of FRE incidents for Germany. Predominant in the analysis is the composition of attacks targeting physical infrastructure rather than a population group. Standout figures include the 61.3% of total incidents directed towards the facilities of targeted populaces – namely buildings associated with refugees and asylum seekers 37.8%, and places of Islamic worship 7.2%. Moreover, assailants mostly take advantage of incendiary devices (95.7%) to set fire to these amenities and make a quick getaway before potential identification. This tactic of terrorism accounts for 73% of total weapon use within Germany. Additionally, the disproportionate number of attacks on individuals affiliated or belonging to refugee or asylum-seeking status is evident throughout Germany's table 2.2 dataset. In total, 63% of the violent acts are directed towards either refugees or asylum seekers.

Table 2.2 Summary of methods and targets for expected FRE assailants, number of cases, percentage per target, weapon type, and percentage per method in Germany between 2009-2018

Methods of Violence & Specific Targets	# of Cases	%	Weapon type	%
Facility/Infrastructure Attack	**68**	**61.3%**	Incendiary	95.7%
Refugee (Camps/IDP/Asylum Seeker)	42	37.8%	Unknown	4.3%
Place of Worship (Islamic)	9	8.1%		
Private Property	6	5.4%		
Diplomatic	3	2.7%		
Government Building/Facility/Office	3	2.7%		
Political Party Member/Rally	2	1.8%		
Police	3	2.7%		**100%**
Armed Assault	**26**	**23.4%**	Incendiary	61.5%

Refugee (Camps/IDP/Asylum Seeker)	21	18.9%	Firearms	23.1%
Place of Worship (Islamic)	1	0.9%	Melee	11.5%
Political Party Member/Rally	1	0.9%	Explosives	3.8%
Head of State	1	0.9%		
Unnamed Civilian/Unspecified	2	1.8%		**100%**
Bombing/Explosion	**8**	**7.2%**	Explosives	100%
Refugee (Camps/IDP/Asylum Seeker)	3	2.7%		
Place of Worship (Islamic)	1	0.9%		
Other	3	2.7%		
Political Protest	1	0.9%		**100%**
Unarmed Assault	**5**	**4.5%**	Melee	80.0%
Refugee (Camps/IDP/Asylum Seeker)	4	3.6%	Unknown	20.0%
Political Party Member/Rally	1	0.9%		**100%**
Assassination	**4**	**3.6%**	Explosives	50%
Political Party Member/Rally	3	2.7%	Melee	50%
Head of State	1	0.9%		**100%**
Total	**111**	**100%**		

Scandinavia:

Out of the total of eighty-six incidents across Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, sixty-seven unique FRE cases were directed against the refugee population. These figures include 58.1% of attacks targeting refugee infrastructure or religious institutions affiliated with Islamic teachings. A further 7% of directed attacks focused on Jewish businesses and synagogues. Unique to the Scandinavian case is the wide range of targets related to immigration facilities. These include attacks on educational institutions (2.3%), cultural centres (2.3%) and social services offices (3.5%). The findings are in line with attacks against government personnel who promote the pro-refugee institutions of Scandinavia (9.3%). Furthermore, the ease and subsequent continued use of incendiary devices is evident within table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Summary of methods and targets for expected FRE assailants, number of cases, percentage per target, weapon type, and percentage per method in Scandinavia between 2009-2018

Methods of Violence & Specific Targets	# of Cases	%	Weapon Type	%
Facility/Infrastructure Attack	**59**	**68.6%**	Incendiary	96.6%
Refugee (Camps/IDP/Asylum Seeker)	40	46.5%	Unknown	3.4%
Political Party Member/Rally	5	5.8%		
Memorial/Cemetery/Monument	1	1.2%		
Religious Figures/Institutions	10	11.6%		
Educational Institution	1	1.2%		
Government	2	2.3%		**100%**
Armed Assault	**15**	**17.4%**	Incendiary	53.3%
Refugee (Camps/IDP/Asylum Seeker)	10	11.6%	Firearms	26.7%
Procession/Gathering	1	1.2%	Melee	20.0%
Religion Identified	1	1.2%		
Unnamed Civilian/Unspecified	1	1.2%		
Religious Figures/Institutions	1	1.2%		
Educational Institution	1	1.2%		
Terrorists/Non-State Militia	1	1.2%		**100%**
Bombing/Explosion	**9**	**10.5%**	Explosives	100%
Refugee (Camps/IDP/Asylum Seeker)	2	2.3%		
Laborer/Occupation Identified	1	1.2%		
Museum/Cultural Center	2	2.3%		
Religious Figures/Institutions	1	1.2%		
Business	1	1.2%		
Government	2	1.2%		**100%**
Unarmed Assault	**2**	**2.3%**	Vehicle	100%
Political Protest	2	2.3%		**100%**
Total	**86**	**100%**		

United Kingdom:

Whereas the German and Scandinavian cases predominantly targeted the refugee population, the UK's FRE activity is distributed differently against the embedded Muslim community. Incidents involving the targeting of ethnic Muslims or Islamic figures and institutions amounted to thirty-three out of the fifty-nine total cases. Violence against immigrants or visibly non-white minorities (71.2%) is the most apparent standout within the dataset. Besides the clear predominance of assaults against the Muslim population, other ethnic and religious minorities were also targeted. Incidents involving Jewish facilities, individuals and private property accounted for 10.2% of all

cases. Additionally, non-British businesses were a focal point for FRE in the UK, with Indians and Eastern European falling victims a combined 8.5%. A continued commonality in the weapon type is the primary use of incendiaries (41).

Table 2.4 Summary of methods and targets for expected FRE assailants, number of cases, percentage per target, weapon type, and percentage per method in the United Kingdom between 2009-2018

Methods of Violence & Specific Targets	# of Cases	%	Weapon Type	%
Facility/Infrastructure Attack	**37**	**62.7%**	Incendiary	97.3%
Jewish Facilities	4	6.8%	Melee	2.7%
Churches	4	6.8%		
Islamic Facilities and Property	17	28.8%		
Indian Facilities	2	3.4%		
Residence of a Syrian Family	1	1.7%		
Shed of Polish Civilians	1	1.7%		
Business (Immigrant Owned)	6	10.2%		
Government	2	3.4%		**100%**
Armed Assault	**8**	**13.6%**	Incendiary	62.5%
Religious Figures/Institutions	2	3.4%	Melee	37.5%
Indian Civilians	1	1.7%		
Muslim Identity	2	3.4%		
Residence of Refugees	1	1.7%		
Business (Immigrant Owned)	1	1.7%		
Educational Institution	1	1.7%		**100%**
Unarmed Assault	**7**	**11.9%**	Vehicle	42.9%
Islamic Facilities and Property	2	3.4%	Chemical	28.6%
Muslim Identity	5	8.5%	Other	28.6%
Bombing/Explosion	**5**	**8.5%**	Explosives	100%
Islamic Facilities and Property	5	8.5%		**100%**
Hostage Taking	**1**	**1.7%**	Melee	100%
Police	1	1.7%		**100%**
Assassination	**1**	**1.7%**	Firearms	100%
Government Personnel	1	1.7%		**100%**
Total	**59**	**100%**		

United States:

The composition of methods, targets and weapon types for the United States provides the most diverse cataloguing of findings. Whereas attacks on various infrastructures related to immigrants or refugees dominate the results from the previous cases, armed assaults constitute the main attack type in the United States. Moreover, many of these incidents involve the use of firearms (33.3%) compared to the previously noted incendiaries (32.8%). Thus, modes of violence differ greatly amongst cases. Furthermore, FRE specific targets in the US include an array of victims. Target types include Muslims (25.9%), Jews (5.2%), immigrants (4.0%), educational institutions (5.7%), women (5.7%), abortion clinics and staff (8.1%), government personnel (13.8%) and a catalogue of other unmentioned individuals/property.

Table 2.5 Summary of methods and targets for expected FRE assailants, number of cases, percentage per target, weapon type, and percentage per method in America between 2009-2018

Methods of Violence & Specific Targets	# of Cases	%	Weapon Type	%
Armed Assault	**65**	**37.4%**	Firearms	80.0%
Religious Figures/Institutions	14	8.0%	Melee	16.9%
Private Citizens & Property	28	16.1%	Incendiary	3.1%
Government Property and Personnel	5	2.9%		
Educational Institution	3	1.7%		
Police	5	2.9%		
Business	7	4.0%		
Other	3	1.7%		**100%**
Facility/Infrastructure Attack	**60**	**34.5%**	Incendiary	91.7%
Religious Figures/Institutions	26	14.9%	Firearms	5.0%
Private Citizens & Property	9	5.2%	Chemical	1.7%
Government Property and Personnel	2	1.1%	Vehicle	1.7%
Educational Institution	4	2.3%		
Business	6	3.4%		
Other	13	7.5%		**100%**
Bombing/Explosion	**33**	**19.0%**	Explosives	93.9%
Religious Figures/Institutions	2	1.1%	Chemical	6.1%
Private Citizens & Property	7	4.0%		
Government Property and Personnel	14	8.0%		

Educational Institution	2	1.1%		
Journalists & Media	2	1.1%		
Police	1	0.6%		
Business	1	0.6%		
Other	4	2.3%		**100%**
Unarmed Assault	**12**	**6.9%**	Melee	58.3%
Religious Figures/Institutions	1	0.6%	Biological	25.0%
Private Citizens & Property	9	5.2%	Vehicle	16.7%
Government Property and Personnel	2	1.1%		**100%**
Hostage Taking (Barricade Incident)	**3**	**1.7%**	Firearms	100%
Educational Institution	1	0.6%		
Journalists & Media	1	0.6%		
Other	1	0.6%		**100%**
Assassination	**1**	**0.6%**	Other	100%
Journalists & Media	1	0.6%		**100%**
Total	**174**	**100.0%**		

Prompting Cause

The prompting cause for the study examines the different ideological factors, triggers, and motives to each incident. What are the motivations behind each incident; what ideologies or FRE organizations are the assailants linked to; and how dangerous are these motives? To provide the answers for each query, individual cases are highlighted to exhibit the prominent ideologies and their subsequent risk to western society.
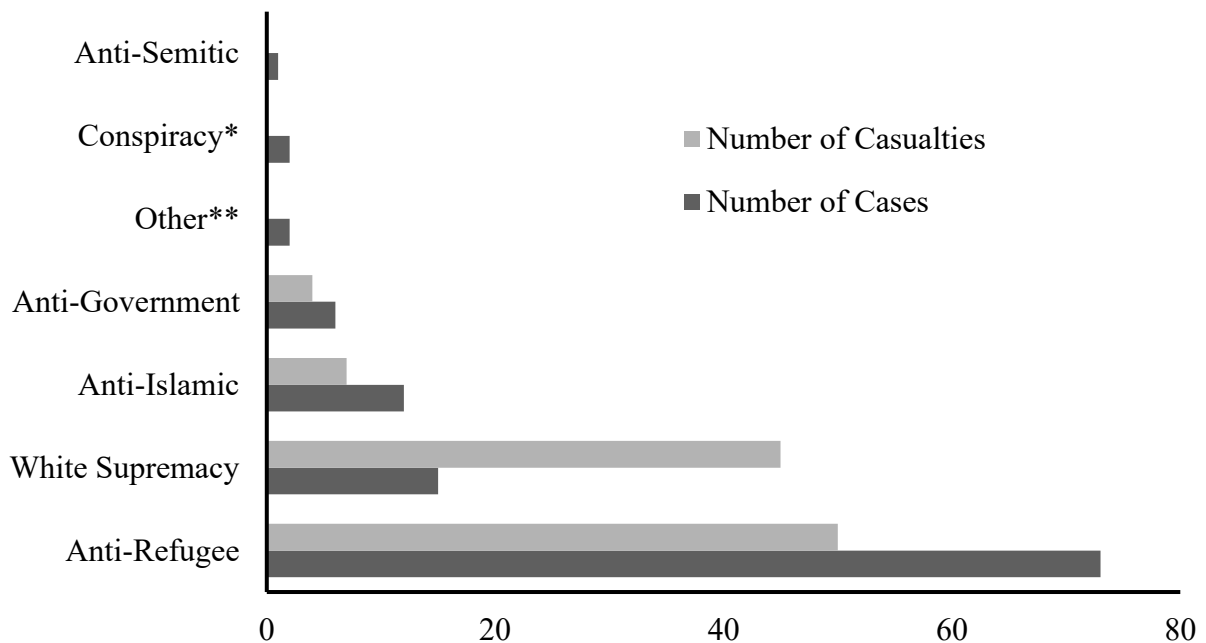
Germany:

A characteristic of FRE cases involving attacks on refugee, asylum seekers and Islamic infrastructure are the linkages with ideologically far-right organizations. A common group listed within the GTD is the Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident (PEGIDA). Playing on society's anxieties towards globalization, the organization uses an ever-increasing catalogue of tools to spread paranoia and fear amongst the population (Druxes, 2016). Common mechanisms include the labelling of Muslims as sexual predators, sending death threats to popular

pro-refugee political figures, and encouraging violent street protests. For example, the threats against politicians culminated when one PEGIDA-linked assailant, Frank S., attacked mayoral candidate Henriette Reker and four others. The database details the extremist's motivations as, "I had to do it. I am protecting you all" (LaFree et al., 2020). He goes on to justify his actions during the attack by saying, "she betrayed our country" concerning Reker's immigration policies (LaFree, Miller and Dugan, 2020). A similar incident occurred on November 27th, 2017, when Werner S. attacked Mayor Hollstein and injured another individual, exclaiming, "you're letting me die of thirst, but you bring 200 refuges to Altena" (LaFree, Miller and Dugan, 2020).

Consequently, the assailants whose acts produce the highest fatality rates within Germany are those connected to white supremacy groups. The exceptional incident in the dataset involves the attack at a Munich shopping mall which killed nine and injured twenty-seven people. During the attacks the assailant, Ali David Sonboly, yelled, "I am German" in reference to his racially driven assault and inner complexities as a second-generation Iranian (LaFree, Miller and Dugan, 2020). Taking inspiration from Anders Behring Breivik, Sonboly carried out the terrorist attack on the fifth anniversary of the 2011 incident perpetrated by Breivik (Abbas, 2017). His manifesto notes his admiration of Adolf Hitler and his belonging to the Aryan race in contrast to his familial upbringing.

Figure 2.3 Summary of motivations, and number of casualties for FRE incidents in Germany between 2009 – 2018

*Groups centralized ideology is based on conspiracy theories.
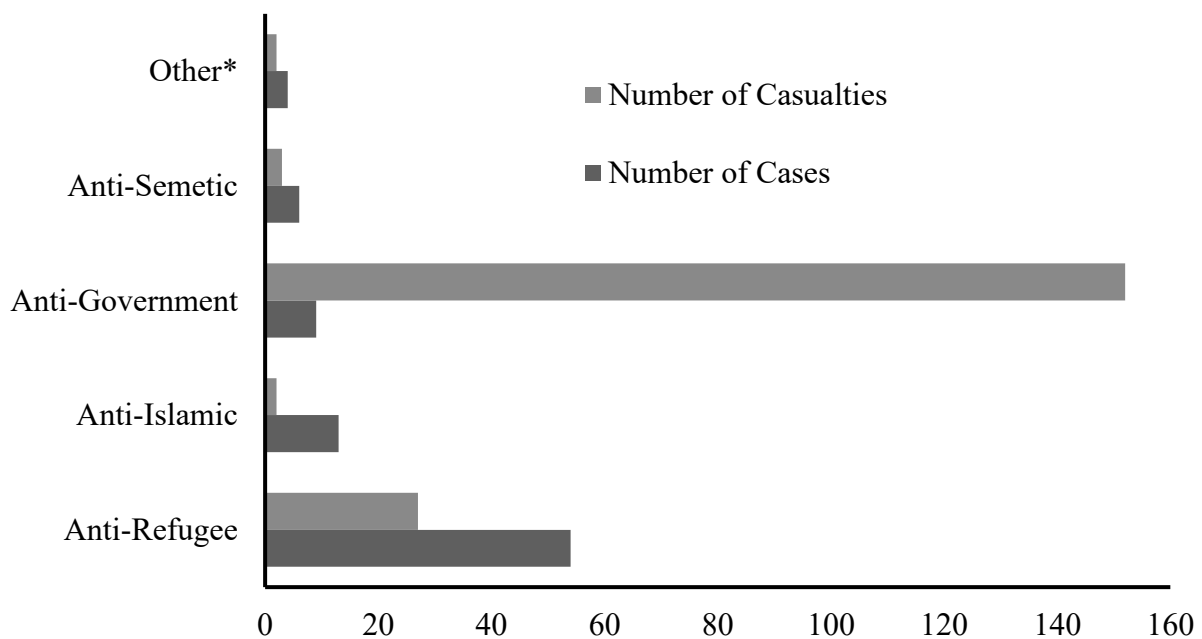**Incidents that do not fall under any of the labelling categories due to difficulty establishing the motive.

According to Germany's dataset, and in line with Koehler's study on hive terrorism – the phenomenon of unaffiliated citizens participating in attacks on refugees and migrants – most incidents (67.5%) occurred without any indication of belonging to a FRE group (Koehler, 2018). Whereas far-right groups tended to claim the attacks on refugees, many of the incidents continue to remain unconnected to such groups. These findings are consistent with Koehler's analysis which proposes an increasing duality between affiliated far-right members and a second group of mobilizing "ordinaries" unknown to security personnel (Koehler, 2018).

Scandinavia:

Scandinavia follows a similar line of findings to Germany. The grouping's dataset charts recurring attacks on refugee and Islamic infrastructure through assailants linked (17.5%) and unlinked (81.4%) to a particular FRE organization. Incidents which are connected are oftentimes linked to

the Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM). The NRM is a far-right organization with branches in Finland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland (Bjørgo and Ravndal, 2020). The group focuses its operations on a future race war, procuring weapons and conducting street fights to train for this foretold event. Moreover, This FRE group has led to the establishment of other interconnected organizations in Scandinavia.

Figure 2.4 Summary of motivations, and the number of casualties for FRE incidents within Scandinavia between 2009 - 2018

*Incidents that do not fall under any of the labelling categories due to difficulty establishing the motive.

The infamous attack committed by Anders Breivik is an important incident for this study. Accounting for 93.9% of the total killed and 72.1% of the total wounded within Scandinavia's cases, his act of terrorism remains the most potent example of the threat posed by FRE to western society, and it has inspired subsequent (copycat) incidents. Multiple investigations into Breivik's motives (Richards, 2014), thought process (Hemmingby and Bjørgo, 2018), and reviews of his manifesto (Ranstorp, 2013) provides the examination with different perspectives on the incident.

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A focal point is the belief that the world was undergoing an Islamification process, and that the Christian west was consequently under threat. Hemmingby and Bjørgo denote his motivations as a *double enemy image* (Hemmingby and Bjørgo, 2018). Their theory contests that Breivik attacked individuals linked to the government instead of Muslims because the *inner enemy* or *Cultural Marxist* political elite accepted and justified refugees coming to Norway. This culmination of cognitive triggers resulted in one of the worst far-right extremist events recorded in the western world.

United Kingdom:

A theme in the United Kingdom relates to single-issue terrorism. Whereas previous incidents were triggered through a catalogue of built-up aggression towards Muslims and foreigners, cases of revenge present a unique manifestation. Lee and Knott studied this phenomenon within the UK FRE movement against the backdrop of IS-inspired terrorist incidents – Westminster 2017, Manchester Arena 2017, and London Bridge 2017 – and discovered that the IS-related incidents incited hate amongst far-right communities against the Muslim community rather than Salafi-Jihadists (Lee and Knott, 2020b). These findings are consistent with the included cases. For instance, reciprocal violence occurred after the murder of British soldier Lee Rigby. Three related events involving attacks on Islamic mosques and businesses involved assailants whose sole motive was to avenge the soldier's death. These include the perpetrators, John Parkin, who asked police after the incident whether "[they] like Muslims" (LaFree et al., 2020).Moreover, following the

London Bridge attacks, assailant Darren Osborne accumulated the highest injury rate (55.0%) after ramming his vehicle into pedestrians.

As is prevalent with the other countries in the study (See figure 2.3, and 2.4), many FRE events within the UK have connections with larger extremist organizations, with the English Defense League being the most common affiliation. The group's motives are to "counter the Jihad" movement in Europe and it exploits the same fears of Islamization as those that deeply concerned Anders Breivik. An example incident for an EDL member in the dataset is Marek Zakrocki.

Figure 2.5 Summary of motivations, and the number of casualties for RWE incidents within the United Kingdom between 2009 - 2018
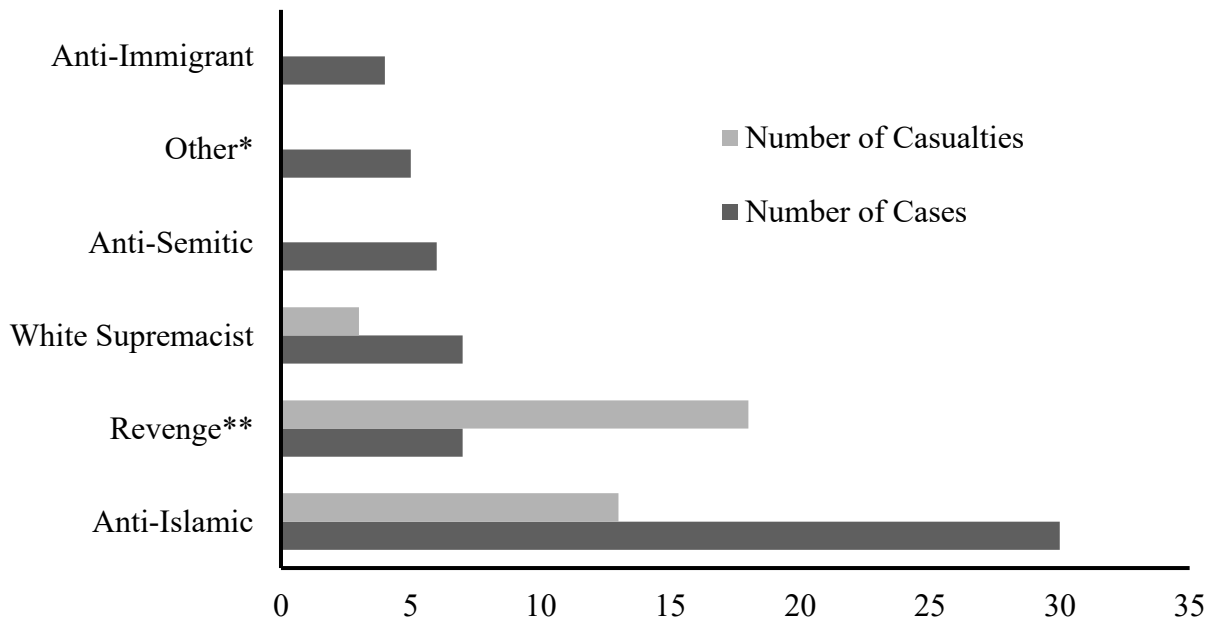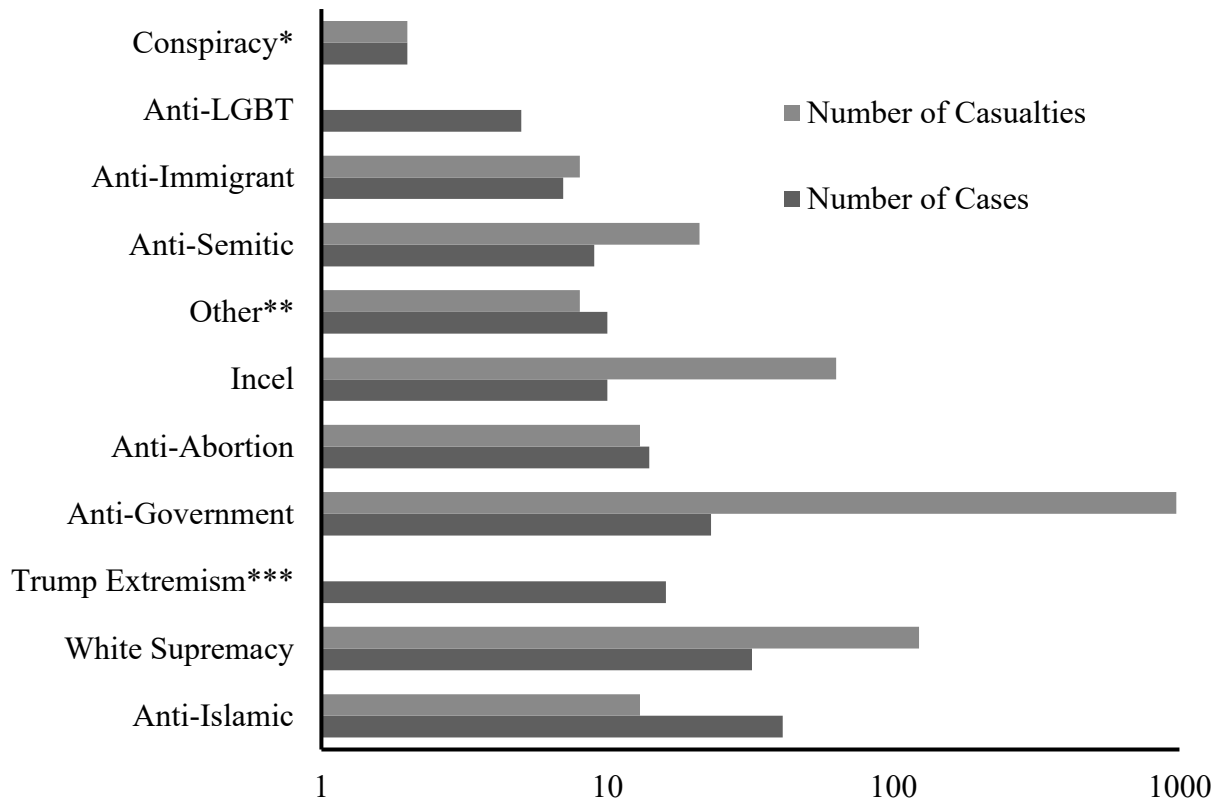

*Incidents that do not fall under any of the labelling categories due to difficulty establishing the motive.

Zakrocki, echoing his compatriot Osborne's words and actions, attempted to run over a curry shop owner in London, England. After the attack, he told police, "I'm going to kill a Muslim. I'm doing this for Britain. I am going to do it my way because that is what I think is right" (Jones, 2018).

United States:

Figure 2.6 Summary of motivations, and number of casualties for RWE incidents in the United States between 2009 – 2018

*Assailants justified attacks based on conspiracy theories.
**Incidents that do not fall under any of the labelling categories due to difficulty establishing the motive.
***Assailants were inspired to attack strong critiques of then President Trump.

Similar to the amount of activity segment, the United States presents the most extraordinary incident diversity, ideological belonging and lethality compared to the study's other cases. For Scandinavia, Germany, and the United Kingdom, most motivations are interlinked with anti-Islamic, or anti-refugee ideologies. In contrast, the US exhibits a wide range of targets for hatred from anti-Islamism, white supremacism, anti-government, anti-abortion, involuntary celibates, and anti-Semitism.

For the United States, the general trends of hatred directed at refugees are replaced by encompassing anti-Islamism. Specific target types vary from infrastructure to private citizens, but most incidents within the dataset mention a variation on Islamophobia as the leading cause of terrorism. These findings include multiple attacks on what assailants called "punish a Muslim day", the murder of three Muslims at their place of residence by Craig Stephen Hicks and Richard Lloyd who wanted to "run Arabs out of the country" (LaFree et al., 2020). A common theme in the anti-Islamic narrative is the association of Muslims with the extremist movements in the Middle East. On several occasions, the assailants justified their actions by claiming the victim was affiliated to Jihadi terrorist groups. This rationale lay behind an attack on an Islamic Centre, a Muslim food vendor in New York, and a Bangladeshi migrant.

Centered around this culture of distrust amongst right-wing extremists in the United States is the adaptation of various conspiracy theories that center on an Islamization of the world, perceptions of a "white genocide", and anti-Semitic discourse. An example of how hateful rhetoric directed towards the Jewish population shapes perpetrator motives is the case of Robert Bowers, who attacked a Pittsburgh Synagogue killing eleven and injuring seven. Portraying Jews as a threat to society on the social media platform Gab, Bowers states, "I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I'm going in" (LaFree, Miller and Dugan, 2020). The findings on his online accounts suggest that Bowers was compelled to violence to defend the perceived threat against whites and subscribed to language involving the othering of out-group, and Jewish conspiracy theories (Jackson, 2019).

Consistent with the other cases in the study is white supremacy groups' activities in spreading hatred and conducting acts of terrorism. Accounting for 26% of the total killed within the US

dataset, the proliferation of these groups in different sub-movements means a more diversified threat for US policymakers and security services to tackle. Significant incidents include Wade Page's attack on a Sikh place of worship, killing six and injuring four. Page, with connection to the transnational neo-Nazi group Volksfront, was radicalised during his time in the army against domestic Iraqi civilians (Ahuja, 2012). However, the targets for white supremacist groups varied greatly. For example, when counter-protestors showed up to a Unite the Right rally, assailant James Fields rammed his vehicle into them, injuring (28) and killing (1). Another case involved the school shooting at Santa Fe High School perpetrated by Dimitrios Pagourtzis, a self-identified admirer of Nazism, who killed (10) and injured (14).
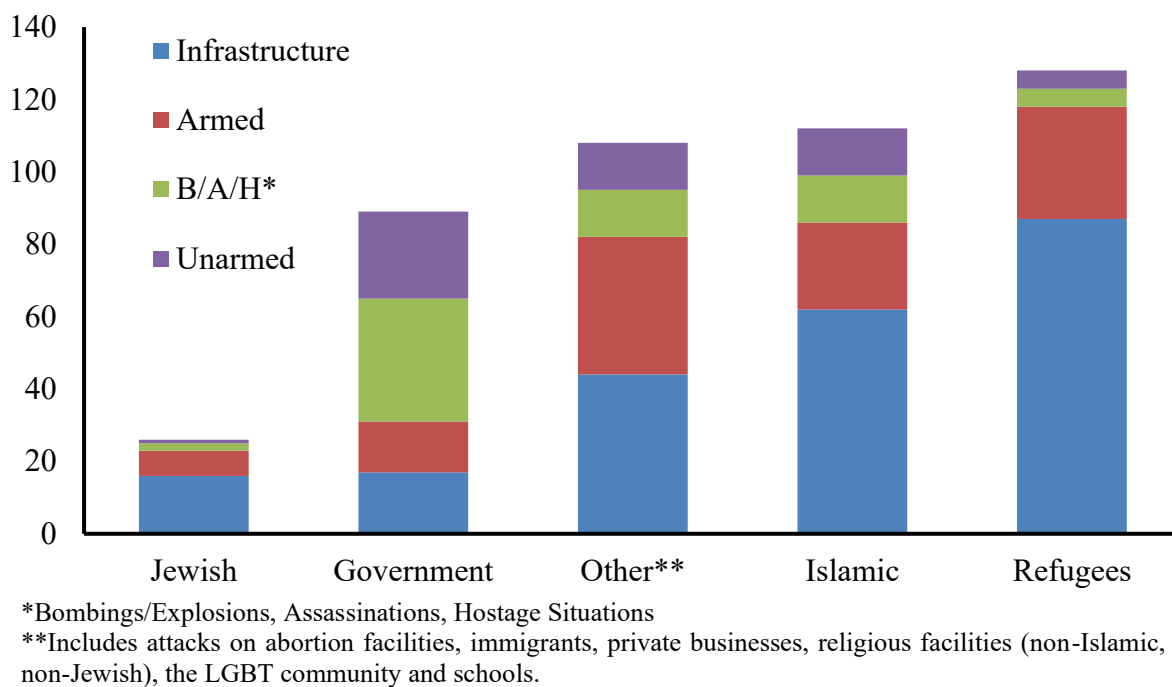
Common Predominant Energy

The purpose of producing a quantitative and qualitative analysis is to examine comparable and appropriate patterns that span the cross-national cases of Germany, Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Therefore, the final measurement tool of common predominant energy compounds the results from the previous three operationalized mechanisms into discernible themes. Moreover, the following thematic findings support the argument that there is a perceptible wave of FRE.

Combining the findings between the international nature of FRE and the amount of activity gives the study an overview of the type of FRE activity occurring over the period 2009-2018. The exponential growth of cases after 2014 (360% increase) correlates with Europe's sudden influx of refugees during the height of the migration crisis. The cross-national comparison supports these findings in Germany (63%), Scandinavia (77.9%), and the United Kingdom (55.9%) relating to attacks against Muslim individuals, Islamic facilities, or refugee centres. To a lesser extent, the

United States (25.9%) targeting of Muslims is a more muted response to the migration crisis and tends more towards Islamic terrorism. Thus, there exists a commonality in target types for FRE. Moreover, many of these incidents targeted infrastructure (48.8%) as opposed to the next most frequent type, namely in armed assaults (24.6%). Similar results concerning the assailant's method of attack is observed, where the average across cases in the use of incendiary devices equals 68.4%.

Figure 2.7 Aggregate of target types, and attack types for the study's selected countries between 2009 - 2018

*Bombings/Explosions, Assassinations, Hostage Situations
**Includes attacks on abortion facilities, immigrants, private businesses, religious facilities (non-Islamic, non-Jewish), the LGBT community and schools.

Comparing these results to the qualitative case study of individual assailants provides a complimentary but complex picture of extremist motives. Bridging the outlined cases is the recurrent narrative that outsiders – according to the dataset, predominantly Muslim individuals – threaten the ideological cores and safety of right-wing extremist communities and the wider ethno-European populaces. Thus, on multiple occasions, assailants either targeted the Islamic populace, asylum complexes, or government officials who promoted pro-refugee policies. These grievances

are showcased in the motives of Anders Breivik, Frank S., Werner S., Ali David Sonboly, Anton Pettersson, Darren Osborne, Marek Zakrocki, Thomas Mair, Hicks and Lloyd, and KC Tard (LaFree, Miller and Dugan, 2020). An observation that stands out is the copycat ideological interpretations that have followed Breivik's mass terrorism incident in 2011. Using Breivik as a martyr, the FRE community continues to justify and inspire others to conduct similar large-scale attacks on society (Am and Weimann, 2020). Moreover, this syndrome of mimicking extremist events also transcends to the ideologically connected school shooting and involuntary celibate movement that occurs mainly within the United States.

Figure 2.8 Aggregate of motives for the study's selected countries between 2009 - 2018
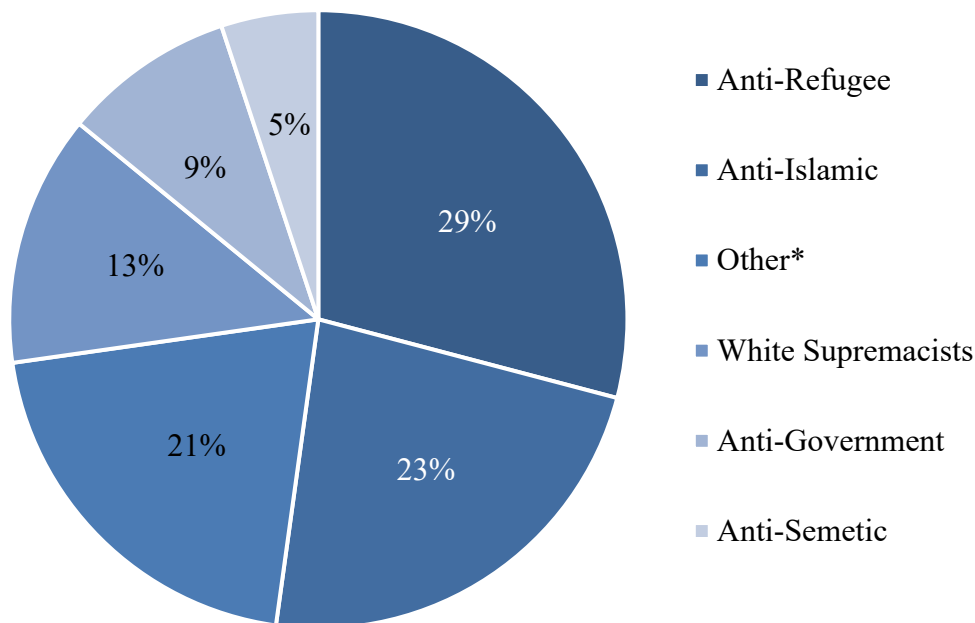
*Includes anti-abortion, anti-immigrant, anti-LGBT, conspiracy inspired, involuntary celibates, revenge, trump inspired and undefined.

The transnational character of their organizations' networks links FRE incidents across the selected cases. The white supremacist associations forming between the countries interlinks similar ideologies against foreign infiltration and Islamization of the western world. Patriotic Europeans

Against the Islamization of the Occident, Britain First, English Defense League, and NRM (and subcommunities) use similar framings of existential threat against refugees and Muslims. Moreover, these organizations share ongoing communications, propaganda, racist content, and violent tactics to prevent Islamization (Burke, 2018).

Conclusion

This article aimed to answer the question as to whether the recent rise of far-right extremists (FRE) constituted a new wave of terrorism. Proposing FRE as the next wave of terrorism in the western world requires the demonstration that all of Rapoport's criteria are present within the evaluation. Through the operationalization of the theory's descriptive mechanisms for evaluating a wave, the study was able to analyze the phenomenon with the defining variables within the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). Therefore, with this examination's depiction of the four operationalized mechanisms and their common characteristics, this article agrees with Auger's assessment which advocates for classifying FRE as the next empirically observable wave of terrorism. The conclusion is justified through a cross-comparative framework emphasizing the transnational themes and patterns occurring throughout the dataset.

The basis for the justification of right-wing extremism and a collective threat exhibited within the dataset are Muslims. This fear of Islamization or the western Christian world experiencing a "white genocide" – the white race losing its privilege through a globalizing world, and an impending race war led by the Islamic population deciding the fate of ethno-European culture – permeates far-right extremist discourse across the cases (Greene, 2019a). The expression "white genocide" has become a tool for imagery, content creation, and hatred directed towards Muslim communities. Moreover, multiple studies demonstrate Islamophobia, hate directed at refugees or asylum seekers, and

paranoia around the Muslim community in the selected countries (Acim, 2019). For example, Acim's research encompasses the surge in Islamophobia stemming from 9/11, the subsequent war on terror, and the more recent European refugee crisis (Acim, 2019). To combat the threat, "othering" – dictating societal belonging and alienating everyone else – is becoming popular rhetoric.

Capitalizing on the society's concerns about refugees, asylum seekers, and Muslims, right-wing extremists create provocative narratives to sway the opinion of the mainstream population (Ackerman and Peterson, 2020b). This process of securitizing Muslims and Islamization means 'ordinary' civilians are more likely to subscribe to far-right beliefs. Subsequently, the phenomenon of attacks on Muslim minority communities by regular civilians without direct links to far-right organizations is generating an entirely new field of study within political extremism called "unaffiliated terrorism" (Perliger & Sweeney, 2018). The concept of unaffiliated terrorism, hive extremism, or spontaneous hate crime is based on individuals committing acts of violence on a psychological impulse (Perliger and Sweeney, 2018). Connecting this impulse for violence is the panic and fear generated against the ostensible other (Koehler, 2018). For example, Germany's Federal Criminal Police Office discloses that only 33% of incidents involving attacks against refugees (individuals or infrastructure) relate to far-right organizations (Koehler, 2018). These findings are comparable to the 64% of cases demonstrated in figure 3 relating to anti-refugee motives without connection to white supremacy groups. Therefore, the cases within the dataset involving attacks on refugees show that most assailants are unlinked to such groups and act out to spread a political message and force Muslim individuals to leave the country.

White supremacist organizations present a clear example of weaponizing insecurities into existential problems of race and culture. A substantial group of individuals (13%) within the multi-case study associated themselves with these organizations, although many of these incidents within GTD do not directly reference a specific group. An inherent concept of their collectiveness is the frequent mention of white genocide. Neo-Nazi groups capture the "white thymos" of rage, resentment and anger associated with losing perceived Caucasian entitlement in the world (Ganesh, 2020). These views have resulted in a catalog of extremist events scattered throughout the dataset, including countless attacks against refugees and asylum seekers in Europe, assassination attempts against pro-immigrant politicians and mass shootings in Germany and the United States (LaFree, Miller and Dugan, 2020).

The recurrent theme of a "white genocide" is also a significant motivator in the many copycat incidents of FRE within the dataset. Assailants that cite previous right-wing inspired terrorist attacks as their motivation include Sonboly, Pettersson, Osborne, Mair, Pagourtzis, Bowers, and Harper-Mercer. Langman defines this mimicking as radicalized individuals looking to the infamous far-right terrorists as role models and for proof of popularity amongst extremist discourse (Langman, 2018). Within the study, multiple follow-up perpetrators revered the "god-like" stature of previous attackers and conducted lengthy research on these assailants. The findings also suggest the need for some to mimic the exact actions and honor dates, as David Sonboly did on the fifth anniversary of Breivik's atrocities (LaFree, Miller and Dugan, 2020). As noted in the analysis, the copying of language is also a common feature of these attacks. Examples include the repeated phrases of protecting the country against "foreign infiltration", the "want to kill Muslims", and putting the native population "first" (LaFree, Miller and Dugan, 2020). However, copycat

dynamics are still unique to the individual and the field requires significantly more research to uncover the complexities behind a terrorist's motives.

Moreover, the findings within the GTD suggest that incidents related to Islamic terrorism have created a reciprocal reaction by right-wing extremists. For cases in the United Kingdom, multiple Islamic-inspired terrorist events triggered extremist responses from right-wing individuals. These results include four interrelated incidents after the killing of the British soldier Lee Rigby. For example, in retaliation, Pavlo Lapshyn detonated a pipe bomb outside a mosque in Tipton. In June 2017, Darren Osborne drove his vehicle into Muslim pedestrians outside a Welfare House, citing it as a retaliatory attack for the London Bridge incident. Furthermore, the United States features a variety of attacks; usually steaming from paranoia against individuals who appear to be Muslims. These occurrences include a group of assailants shouting "ISIS, ISIS" while attacking a victim from Bangladesh, multiple attacks referencing the color of an individual's skin or their Islamic religion as a sign of being a "terrorist," and the "punish a Muslim day" campaign (LaFree, Miller and Dugan, 2020).

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