A Loner, But Not Alone: Analyzing the Hanau Terror Attack in German News Media

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes how the German news media depicted the terrorist attack in Hanau, which killed 10 people on 19th February 2020. This is done by conducting a thematic analysis in two major German newspapers, Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine. The coverage of the attack and the perpetrator is found to be focused on the perpetrator as an individual and centering his alleged mental illness. The depiction portrayed the attack as conducted by a lone-actor, and the racist and far-right ideology as a form of the perpetrator's mental illness. This functioned as a way of depoliticizing the terror attack. I challenge the non-visibility of the categories of whiteness and masculinity and show how they influence the popular 'lone-wolf' narrative surrounding far-right perpetrators. Moreover, I argue that the intersection of these categories can result in viewing far-right perpetrators as individuals and thus influences the perception of these kinds of attacks as conducted by lone-actors.

Keywords:

far-right terrorism, critical whiteness, masculinity studies, news media, racism, extremism

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#SayTheirNames

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Rassismus tötet! Racism kills! کنیدنژادپرستی می کشد!
العنصرية تقتل! Rasismul ucide! Irkçılık öldürür! Rasizam ubija!
Rasizm zabija! Nîjadparêzî dikûje! نژاد پرستی می کشد!

Spendenaufruf für die Hinterbliebenen und Überlebenden des rassistischen Attentats am 19. Februar 2020 in Hanau: www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/hanau/

The image contains the names of the victims of the terror attack on 19th February 2020 in Hanau. (Source: welcome-united.org)

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1. Introduction

In recent years, far-right terrorism has increased[1] – between 2016 and 2017 there was a fourfold increase in far-right attacks globally[2]. Latest attacks include Christchurch, New Zealand in March 2019, where a white man livestreamed his attack on two mosques, during which he killed 50 people[3]. In August 2019, another white man with a far-right motivation killed 22 people in a Walmart in El Paso, Texas[4]. This paper will focus on the German context, where similar attacks with anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim and racist motives have been conducted in the last years.

Between the years 2000 and 2007 the terror cell "National Socialist Underground" murdered in total ten people, of which eight of the victims were of Turkish and one of Greek origin. The group was uncovered only in 2011. In July 2016, a man killed nine people in the Olympia shopping center in Munich. It took three years for the attack being labeled as "politically motivated"[5] in 2019. In October 2019 in Halle, a white man livestreamed his attempt to attack a synagogue and kill the people who had gathered there during the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur. After being unable to gain entrance to the place of worship he killed two people outside. In June 2019 the politician Walter Lübcke, who was known for his pro-migrant -and asylum views was assassinated by a white man in Kassel (ibid.).

In 2015 and 2016 attacks on refugee centers increased and in the last years, far-right terror cells have been identified within the military and police[6]. These are just some concrete examples of an ever-growing problem in the German society. This year, the German justice

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[1]For clarification purposes, I will use the term 'far-right terrorism' in this paper. In much of the literature the terms 'right-wing terrorism' and 'far-right terrorism' seem to be used synonymously, and therefore quotes might contain the previously mentioned term.

[2]Wilson, T., *Terrorism in the West: An Age of Extremes* (London: Henry Jackson Society, 2018), available at: https://henryjacksonsociety.org/publications/terrorism-in-the-west-an-age-of-extremes/

[3]The attacker was "inspired" by a Norwegian neo-Nazi who killed 77 people in 2011 (Auger, 2020)

[4]Auger, V. (2020). Right-Wing Terror: A Fifth Global Wave?. *Perspectives On Terrorism*, *14*(3), 87-97. Retrieved from https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/customsites/perspectives-on-terrorism/2020/issue-3/auger.pdf

[5]Hille, P. (2020, February 20). Right-wing terror in Germany: A timeline. *Deutsche Welle.* Retrieved from https://www.dw.com/en/right-wing-terror-in-germany-a-timeline/a-52451976

[6]Bebenburg, P. von. (2020, May 27). Rechtsextremisten bei Polizei und Armee - Regierung listet Fälle auf. *Frankfurter Rundschau*. Retrieved from https://www.fr.de/politik/rechtsextremismus-rechtsextreme-polizei-bundeswehr-behoerden-zr-13777394.html

minister declared far-right terrorism as the biggest threat democracy in Germany[7]. The most recent case of far-right terrorism was on 19th February 2020 in Hanau, where a white man killed ten people in several locations before committing suicide.

The present thesis will examine how the latest terror attack is portrayed in the news media, focusing on the portrayal of the perpetrator. The function of news media is to provide the public with information when such attacks occur, but news media also constructs narratives and realities and shapes existing discourses in society. The investigated case is an example of continuous far-right attacks happening in Germany, but at the same time it cannot be unseen that most of the far-right terror attacks have been conducted by white men. The perpetrators have largely been labeled as lone-actors or lone-wolves by the public[8].

The aim of this thesis is to understand the roles and privileges of whiteness and masculinity in the representation of far-right perpetrators in news media, specifically focusing on the perpetrator behind the attack in Hanau. I will conduct a thematic analysis based on news articles selected from two major German nationwide newspapers, Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. Considering the tendency of labeling far-right extremists- and terrorists as lone-actors, the following two interconnected research questions will be explored and answered throughout this thesis:

How are the perpetrator and the attack in Hanau depicted in the news articles?

In what way can the social categories whiteness and masculinity provide tools to detect possible biases in the news coverage on the perpetrator and the attack in Hanau?

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[7]Eddy, M. (2020, Febuary 21). Far-Right Terrorism Is No. 1 Threat, Germany Is Told After Attack. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/21/world/europe/germany-shooting-terrorism.html

[8] Thomey, E. (2020, March 4). "Die Legende vom Einzeltäter" Doku beleuchtet rechten Terror in Europa. *WDR.* Retrieved from https://www1.wdr.de/radio/cosmo/magazin/netzwelt/die-legende-vom-einzeltaeter-100.html

1.1. Outline

In the chapter **2. Theoretical perspectives**, the theories and concepts which guide this study and work as an epistemological foundation, will be introduced. This will be followed by a literature review in chapter **3. Literature review: Terrorism and its media coverage** in which I introduce definitions and place the news coverage in a broader, political context of (far-right) terrorism. In chapter **4. Methodological framework**, the research design, data collection, delimitations and method for data analysis are presented. After providing examples of how the media has reacted to the attack, **Chapter 5. Media Coverage of the Terror Attack in Hanau** proceeds with the analysis of articles from the newspapers Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, which is followed by a final conclusion (**6. Concluding Discussion**).

1.2. Context

In this subchapter I will briefly introduce the terror attack in Hanau and proceed with an overview of the discursive context of right-wing terrorism in Germany.

In the evening of the 19th February 2020, the 43-year-old Tobias R.[9] shot and killed nine persons, his mother and himself and injured six. The killings took place in a shisha bar, a kiosk, a bar and a parking lot. The nine victims are all Persons of Color[10]. Prior to the attack he had uploaded a script and a YouTube-video online in which he had introduced himself and his motives for the terror attack, including calling for an extermination of several countries in North Africa, Middle East and Central Asia. This he justifies in a eugenicist way, saying that some races are superior (Hume, 2020). As for Germany, he writes that he could think of "halving the population" since not everyone in Germany is "pure bred" (Köpke & Sternberg, 2020). The perpetrator also wrote and spoke about being surveilled by a secret organization which is able to read his thoughts, and that ideas for certain Hollywood-movies or slogans for

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[9] In order to avoid personification, I will mainly refer to Tobias R. as the 'perpetrator'. I mention the name here for clarification, because some quotes that will be presented in the analysis contain the name.

[10] 'People of Color' is a political term to describe people who are not white and I use capitalization as a "way of challenging dominant narratives and as a mechanism for challenging typical stylistic guides" (Bell, 2019).

Donald Trump's presidential campaign to have been "stolen" from his mind by said organization ("Entsetzen, Schock und Trauer", 2020). The 24-page script of the perpetrator contained a whole chapter on women, named "topic women", in which he explains that he has never had a girlfriend and justifies this by saying that due to being surveilled by a secret organization, he could not "take" a woman (Haaf, 2020).

Being treated as a relatively new phenomenon among the general public, researchers and policymakers, far-right violence and terrorism have been largely underestimated although posing a serious threat in post-Second World War Germany (Köhler, 2017). If we concentrate on the more contemporary Germany, the criminal statistic for far-right, antisemitic, anti-Muslim violence has been increasing for several years. According to the German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency's annual report for 2019, consultation requests made by people who have experienced racist discrimination have more than doubled since 2015. The increase in racist violence, prejudice and hate towards racialized communities is a phenomenon which migrant organizations, Black people, People of Color, Jewish and Muslim people, Sinti*ze and Rom*nja have warned about for a long time (Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, 2020). Advisory centers for victims of right-wing and far-right violence have reported an increase of antisemitism and racism during the Covid19-crisis, especially among so called Corona deniers, and these advisory centers fear further "radicalization boosts" (Meisner, 2020).

In the beginning of 2020, the German Federal Criminal Police office published its criminal statistic for the year 2019. The Minister of Interior of the state of Hesse, Peter Beuth, celebrated the statistics of the state of Hesse being at an all-time-low of reported crimes (Buschschlüter, 2020) and declared Hesse a safe state (Majic, 2020). However, when looking at the numbers of right-wing and far-right criminal offences, there is a 50% increase from the previous year. Nationwide this number has increased by 14% (Boberg et al., 2020). The city of Kassel, in which the politician Walter Lübcke was assassinated by a Neo-Nazi in June 2019, as well as Hanau, in which the attack discussed in this thesis was conducted, are both located in the state of Hesse.

German terrorism research has mainly focused on "Islamist terrorism" and therefore lacks a "concise theoretical concept about right-wing terrorism compared to other phenomena" (Köhler, 2017: 22). The threat of the far-right has been existing for a long time and attacks

have continuously happened, but the public interest and awareness was focused on other forms of terrorism. Before the 1990s, left-wing terrorism and the Red Army Fraction in Western Germany dominated the field of research and public interest. After the reunification of Western and Eastern Germany an increase in right-wing and far-right violence was mainly "attributed to the disintegration and societal change processes after the German Democratic Republic's (GDR) collapse and the end of the Cold War" (ibid.). The growing public and academic interest in far-right terrorism was – however – interrupted by 9/11, after which the focus shifted to Islamist terrorism. The attention and concern about right-wing terrorism was picked up again in 2011, with the uncovering of the "National Socialist Underground" (ibid.).

2. Theoretical Perspective

"Racial imagery is central to the organisation of the modern world. At what cost regions and countries exploit their goods, whose voices are listened to at international gatherings, who bombs and who is bombed, who gets what jobs, access to health care and education, what cultural activities are subsidized and sold, in what terms they are validated – these are all inextricable from racial imagery" (Dyer, 2005: 9).

This thesis aims to analyze possible bias in the news coverage of the Hanau terror attack from the lense of Critical Race Studies, specifically focusing on Critical Whiteness Studies. In the following I will briefly introduce Critical Whiteness Studies and the conceptualizations of race and racism in contemporary Germany.

2.1. Critical Whiteness Studies

"[I]t has become commonplace for whiteness to be represented as invisible, as the unseen or the unmarked, as a non-colour, the absent presence or hidden referent, against which all other colours are measured as forms of deviance" (Ahmed, 2004: 1).

As early as the 1950s, African American writers such as James Baldwin and W.E.B. DuBois appealed to the need for a critical approach to the category of whiteness, but it took 30 years to be included in the general discourse (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2013). The research along the category "race" has for a long time focused on cultural identities of black people. Toni Morrison, the later Nobel laureate, published her study of whiteness in American literature *Playing in the Dark* in 1992 which is one of the first literary works to discuss and critically examine the category of whiteness. Morrison pointed out that a lot of time and intelligence has been invested in uncovering racism and its effects on its 'objects', but any analysis of patterns of domination are incomplete if the focuses solely on their objects. Therefore, it is necessary to turn the critical gaze from the racialized object to the racialized subject – Thus, whiteness must be released from its unmarked normality (Arndt, 2017). Toni Morrison calls this "the impact of racism on those who perpetuate it" (Morrison, 1992: 11).

Whiteness, according to Critical Whiteness Studies, is not just conceptualized as a skin color, but a socially constructed category. The concept of 'race' has created social, economic,

political and psychological structures and conditions which continue to shape our perception of the world (El Tayeb, 2017). The sociologist Ruth Frankenberg's definition of whiteness is: "First, whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a "standpoint", a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, at society. Third, "whiteness" refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed" (Frankenberg, 1993: 1).

Racial ascriptions affect daily life on countless levels, influence interpersonal interactions, construct invisible but insurmountable boundaries, and appear as privileges that are taken for granted and not even perceived as such (El Tayeb, 2017). Hence, race is not about skin color, but about the ideological (and social) construction of "skin colors" (Arndt, 2017). Owen (2007) understands whiteness as "a structuring property" (Owen, 2007: 205) and talks about a "hegemonic systematicity of whiteness and its colonization of every dimension of the social world" (ibid.). Critical Whiteness Studies aim to uncover structures that reproduce and produce privilege and white supremacy. Within the Critical Whiteness Studies framework, racism is conceptualized in a way that whiteness and white supremacism stand in its center (Applebaum, 2016).

The Critical Whiteness Studies epistemologically and theoretically turn around traditional approaches to the study of race. The object of study are mechanisms and structures which construct whiteness as privileged and normative (Tißberger, 2016) and as a cultural mainstream (Doane & Bonilla Silva, 2013), as this is seen as a starting point and condition for racism to emerge. This shift has facilitated research on various topics, including white racial identity, white supremacy, and whiteness as a site of privilege and power across the disciplinary spectrum (Bell, 2017). "White norms permeate white dominated society, yet these norms appear to be common and value-neutral to the social groups that benefit from them. These norms create the standards by which "difference" is constructed" (Applebaum, 2016: 2). Whiteness is generally not seen as problematic, even if it preserves privileges. The necessity of deconstructing and problematizing the social construction of whiteness is largely not perceived, since it represents neutrality and normality. "Privilege has the semblance of naturalness that in itself defends it from scrutiny" (Hurtado & Stewart, 2004). Hurtado and Stewart compare being white to normal, flawless items, such as clean crockery or a ironed dress: "It also seems like useless "work", like pressing the already ironed dress or putting

clean dishes in the dishwasher - because it isn't a problem and everybody knows what it is, why indulge in introspective angst that leads nowhere?" (Hurtado & Stewart, 2004: 318).

2.1.1. Contextualizing (Critical) Whiteness: Germany

When using Critical Whiteness as a concept, it is important to contextualize it, as the tradition of Critical Whiteness comes from the United States. In order to analyze whiteness, one must understand how racialization functions and what the contextual specificities are. In the beginning of the 2000s, studies about whiteness were published in the German speaking context. Therefore, the debate is young and has to yet establish itself in the discourse and field of racism critique [Rassismuskritik] (Tißberger, 2016: 25). A central work in the field of Critical Whiteness Studies in Germany is the volume "Mythen Masken und Subjekte – kritische Weißseinsforschung in Deutschland" [Myths, Masks and Subjects – Critical Whiteness Studies in Germany] (2005), edited by Susan Arndt, Maureen Maisha Eggers, Grada Kilomba and Peggy Piesche. It offers for the first time in Germany a framework through which race can be negotiated with a postcolonial focus on whiteness, in dialogue with black and critical white perspectives.

The professor in cultural studies Gabriele Dietze describes that whiteness is structured differently in Germany than in the United States[11]. Due to the different past, the construction of whiteness has been shaped by other things. In the United States, skin color is crucial, and

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[11] According to Dietze, there is an emphasis on national and/or ascribed national affiliation in the German anti-racist discourse and she sees the Whiteness paradigm as insufficient. Therefore, she poses the question if the term Critical Whiteness is enough to describe the critical racism discourse in Germany. She gives an example of Anti-Muslim racism needing a wider critical examination of hegemony. Whiteness in the German context, according to Dietze, is related to strategies of discrimination against Black and Jewish people, lacking a critical examination of forms of culturalist racisms. The German and European notion of racism is strongly related to colonialism and the ideologies and constructions of the "other" are rooted in this era. Therefore, Dietze proposes the usage and establishment of *Critical Occidentalism* along with the paradigm of Critical Whiteness. This expansion would enable a focus on both white supremacy as well as (post-)colonialism and colonial hegemony. A central aspect of her suggestion is the question, if "whiteness" (the conceptualization as well as whiteness as a category of analysis) can be transferred from the US-American context to the German context (Dietze 2009).

the belief in white supremacy shapes the discourse on racism. However, due to the colonial past of European countries, nationality is a decisive factor, since colonization did not take place on their own territory and post-colonial migration can be seen as a result of this (Dietze, 2009). Thus, the construction of Germanness as white and Christian in the recent history has been influenced by formations of new diasporas after the fall of European colonial regimes, advanced by work migration in the 1960s and reinforced by 9/11 (Arndt, 2017).

After 1955, so called 'guest workers' arrived from different countries such as Italy, Greece, Portugal and former Yugoslavia, but the majority of the workers coming to Germany were people from Turkey (Luft, 2014). The discourse around (mostly Turkish) 'guest workers' was characterized by racist ascriptions and resentments from the end of the 1960s. When unemployment rose and all migrant workers did not return to their home countries as expected by the dominant society, resentment towards them increased (Herbert, 1986).

2.2. The Concept of 'Racism' in Post-National Socialist Germany

In the German context, it has long been particularly difficult to acknowledge that racism exists in the society, because the concept of racism has been fixed on the Nazi persecution of Jews. The dominant idea that the democratization process after the Nazi-era made the German society overcome racist worldviews has prevented a societal confrontation and preoccupation with colonial racism (Messerschmidt, 2008). In other words, due to the term 'racism' being burdened and charged with the country's painful past (which officially ended in 1945), it is not seen as a part of the contemporary society (ibid.)

Instead of 'racism', terms like Fremdenfeindlichkeit [hostility towards strangers] and Ausländerfeindlichkeit [hostility towards foreigners] are used, which signal an imagined homogenous society. Germanness is tightly connected to whiteness. Although the categories 'white' and 'foreigner' do not contradict themselves, those defined or marked as 'strangers' or 'foreigners' are generally racialized people and communities (Dietze, 2009). The educational scientists Mecheril and Rigelsky call the division between inländisch [national] and

ausländisch [foreign], or 'us' and 'them' one of the strategically most meaningful and central moments of structuration in the German (migration-)society (2010).

Nowadays, instead of using the label 'foreigner', the label 'people with a migration background' is used. This expression seems to be more neutral than the former. However, the authors proceed with discussing that through changing the label there has not been a significant change in the status of the people who are described with the term. Still, this distinction continues to construct natio-ethnic-cultural others (Mecheril & Rigelsky 2010) and contributes to othering-processes of socially constructed categories. This means that the label 'people with migration background' depicts only a rhetorical adjustment and has the same function as dividing people into a German 'us' and a foreign 'them' but manages to obscure this (ibid.). In this context, the usage of the terms 'hostility towards strangers' and 'hostility towards foreigners' not only replace the historically burdened term 'racism', but construct the group addressed by these replacement-terms as 'others'. These tendencies are convenient for avoiding a direct and explicit confrontation with racism (ibid.).

The term race [Rasse] is marked as inappropriate and avoided due to falsely implying the existence of human races and reminds of Germany's national socialist past. Therefore, the usage of the category 'culture', replaces the category of 'race'. The category of 'culture' offers a toolbox for distancing oneself from 'others', who are considered not to be part of the society. The reference to a culturally-induced foreignness makes this distancing take place in a 'decent' way, since it no longer needs the defamatory concept of race (Messerschmidt, 2010). Since the end of the 1990s, this form of cultural racism has experienced a particular aggravation in the form of an ever-increasing anti-Muslim racism. In connection with the history of the so-called 'guest work', the practice of culturalization is of particular importance (ibid.).

The professor of educational sciences Astrid Messerschmidt examines distancing practices towards the usage of the word racism and toward acknowledging racist structures as part of what constitutes the German society. Messerschmidt (2010) identifies four patterns for understanding how racism is dealt with within the post-national socialist society: Scandalization, relocation of racism to far-right extremism, culturalization and shifting it into the past.

The patterns of scandalization of racism and relocation of racism to far-right extremism make racism appear as something that does not belong to the 'decent' society and represent racism as an exceptional and marginal phenomenon. Rather than viewing racism as an issue located in the center of the society and as an organizing principle of daily life, racism is seen as the problem of extremist groups. Hereby people declared as racists appear as marginalized deviants who are outside of the consensus of society, in contrast to the "regular", civilized people (Messerschmidt, 2014). The patterns of culturalization and shifting racism into the past protect the self-image of those who practice racism, by providing a justification through the 'other' culture and emphasizing the demarcation of contemporary society from a racist history (Messerschmidt, 2010).

The popular way of thematizing racism is by locating racism in the abysses of far-right structures and by shifting it into the (supposedly consistently overcome) Nazi past. A public, (self-)critical thematicization of racist thought patterns hardly takes place, since it would invoke the topic of 'guilt', which is associated with the atrocities of Nazi-Germany. In this context, Messerschmidt introduces what she describes as an 'introversion of guilt', an imagined improper accusation, which results in a defense. The defense of the imagined accusation has an impact on the handling of racism on a societal level, since it helps to uphold a positive self-image (ibid.).

2.3. Studying Masculinities

In addition to whiteness having the function of a 'silent norm' and remaining underthematized, the category and construction of masculinity is perceived similarly. "Invisibility is a privilege in a double sense, describing both the power relations that are kept in place by the very dynamics of invisibility, and the sense of privilege as a luxury" (Kimmel, 1997: 186). Ignoring the "centrality of gender in men's lives" (Kimmel, 1997: 186) helps to uphold systems of gendered and racialized inequalities. "This ignorance keeps in place the power of men over women, and the power of some men over other men, both of which are among the central mechanisms of power in our society" (Kimmel, 1997: 186). The masculine ideal as defined by professor of law Athena D. Mutua,

"is informed by binary and dichotomous thinking that is endemic to Western thought. It is evidenced by common dualities such as white—black, good—evil, male—female, heterosexual—homosexual, and mind—matter. These dualities are not equal but are hierarchical, with the first category representing the positive and preferred positionality and the second the undesirable and corrupted position" (Mutua, 2006: 12).

Culturally privileged men (often heterosexual and white) are being seen as somewhat "genderless" (Kimmel, 1997). Due to the category of masculinity together with whiteness being unmarked, it is also not talked about. "Military, political, scientific, or literary figures are treated as if their gender, their masculinity, had nothing to do with their military exploits, policy decisions, scientific experiments, or writing styles or subjects" (Kimmel, 1997: 186). In many cases, masculinity portrays a 'norm' and is not perceived as a relevant category of analysis of, for example, social practices[12] (ibid.). The particularity of those who appear to be socially privileged and dominant is precisely to be able to not position themselves as a group alongside other groups (Di Blasi, 2013). This can be seen in the tendency of labeling far-right terrorists as lone-wolves: "Because these attacks are categorized as one-offs, other white Christian men are spared the profiling that brown Muslim men are subjected to. Moderate white Christians are also spared the expectation of having to condemn every act of violence by extremist white Christians" (Corbin, 2017: 469).

Racialized men benefit from unearned privileges in a patriarchal society but are in some contexts oppressed by gender and race, which act together in the form of gendered racism[13] (Mutua, 2006). Gendered racism makes the otherwise unmarked or invisible category of masculinity become visible (Huxel, 2008). In contemporary German masculinity research, it was common to view masculinity constructions of the majority/dominant society as distinct from masculinity constructions of racialized men. This tendency is now mostly seen in the media, for example the debates about allegedly sexually dangerous refugee men, especially

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[12] Connell gives an example about the urban middle class, where "there is a version of masculinity organized around dominance (e.g. emphasising "leadership" in management), and another version organized around expertise (e.g. emphasising "professionalism" and technical knowledge)" (Connell, 2002: 17).

[13] In the context of the United States Mutua gives an example of gendered racism towards black men: "[B]lack men are disproportionately and increasingly incarcerated, leaving them warehoused in the nation's prisons and thereafter deprived of opportunities to provide for themselves and their families. […] [B]lack men have been culturally stigmatized that justifies their surveillance, subjects them to the microaggressions of clutched purses and profiling that psychologically injure and constrain them, and dismisses and lowers expectations of their humanity" (Mutua, 2006: 19).

after the so-called "refugee crisis 2015" and the media coverage of multiple cases of sexual harassment and abuse on New Year's Eve 2015 in Cologne have shaped the masculinity constructions of racialized Muslim-perceived men in German media (Dietze, 2016).

Thus, men with a so-called migration background deviate from the local norm and are constructed as having a different masculinity, which is characterized by tradition, oppression of women and problematic behavior (Huxel, 2008; Riegel & Geisen, 2010). Behavioral patterns or phenomena, such as violence or patriarchal structures are presented as cultural phenomena and clearly separated from the majority/dominant society. Thus, a kind of 'other' and 'foreign' masculinity is constructed, which forms a clear opposite to white German masculinity (Scheibelhofer, 2008). Moreover, the construction of 'foreign' and orientalized masculinity has been used to establish a security- and danger perspective on migration and legitimize legal tightening as necessary defensive measures[14] (Scheibelhofer, 2018).

This process is called othering[15] and in the construction of the 'other', the 'self' is always constructed as its demarcation. Often, the deviant from the norm is judged, problematized and made as the 'other'. The division into 'us' and 'the others' based on socially constructed differences is a central aspect of racism. The logic of othering can be found in processes of racialization, ethnicization and culturalization. In this paper, these are understood as hegemonic discourses and mechanisms in order to maintain and produce relations of dominance and oppression. Hereby, differences are created discursively and constitute and maintain power interests as well as power relations (Riegel, 2016).

The concept of intersectionality was introduced in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw and refers to the intertwining of different categories of difference and the interaction of these. In order to be able to look at masculinity and ethnicity from an intersectional perspective, entanglements of different forms of discrimination and experiences must be taken into account. With Raewyn Connell's concept (1987) of hegemonic masculinities, an intersectional perspective has been established in critical masculinity research. At the basis of the concept of hegemonic

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[14] The heated media reaction to the sexual assaults committed on New Year's Eve 2015 in Cologne were an important factor driving the law reform in the form of establishing a "no means no" principle in the law of sexual offenses (Schmidt, 2019).
[15] Edward Said, whose work "Orientalism" (1978) coined the concept of othering and which is to be understood as a founding document of postcolonial studies, portrays othering as need to define one's own over the other, drawing on historical depictions of the 'Orient' by the 'West' (Dhawan & Castro Varela 2015).

masculinity lies the theoretical assumption that gender is not a fixed entity but socially constructed and enacted (Connell, 1995).

Connell's central assumption is that every society forms a hegemonic form of masculinity, towards which femininity and all other forms of masculinity orientate. Masculinity and femininity are not to be equated with descriptions of 'men' and 'women', but rather seen as cultural ideas[16] which shape the ideal of masculinity, which is supported by institutional and systemic power "that rewards and penalizes those closest to the norm" (Mutua, 2006: 12). Hegemonic masculinity stands for the ideal, normative and most honorable form of masculinity and way of being a man in a given society or context[17] within a gender hierarchy of a patriarchal society, and therefore hegemonic masculinity (not individual men per se) sets certain 'standards' for achieving a position of power. In the context of being a man and the ways of staging masculinity, Connell identifies complicit, subordinate, and marginalized masculinities, whereas hegemonic masculinity depends on the aforementioned[18] (Connell, 1995).

Here, hegemony, drawing on Gramsci, means a superiority and norm that is attained by institutions and cultural ideas (such as e.g. white, heterosexual, upper class), varying from context to context. Thus, for embodying "the currently most honored way of being a man", it requires "all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimate[s] the global subordination of women to men" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005: 832). Since only a minority represents actual hegemonic masculinity, complicit masculinity is

[16] "Masculinity embodies socially valued traits. Men are to be strong, active, aggressive, reasoned, dominant, competitive, and in control. Femininity embodies the less socially valued traits. Women are to be weak, passive, receptive, emotional, nurturing and subordinate" (Mutua, 2006: 12).

[17] Mutua describes a form of normative and hegemonic masculinity in the context of the United States as being "in control of, in charge of, and dominat[ing] over everything else in his environment, including his own emotions, physical environments, women, children, and yes, other subordinate men. Whereas masculinity could of course be defined as caring and heroic, providing and sustaining, and ultimately humane, domination over others nonetheless is the central feature prevailing in notions and practices of normative masculinity […]" (ibid.).

[18]Although it might seems as if the concept tries to reinforce a binary understanding of gender, there is an openness in the concept to see masculinity as a set of norms or ideologies separated from 'male' bodies, and consequently something that any other gendered human being independent from their sex assigned at birth, their sexual orientation or their gender positioning can accomplish. "This then includes cisgendered people as much as butches, femmes, queer men, trans men, trans women and non-binary people" (Gottzén & Straube, 2016).

the strongest in maintaining the notion of the hegemonic form of masculinity. Complicit masculinities are constructed in a way that they enjoy privileges and benefit from patriarchal structures through the standards set by hegemonic masculinities, without having to actually embody a dominant form of masculinity. This profit is called the 'patriarchal dividend'. The privileges can take the form of e.g. a superiority that is attained by institutions and cultural ideas (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Next to this model, other forms of masculinity coexist which which do not follow cultural ideals and do not necessarily benefit from institutional power[19].

Subordinate masculinity is a form of masculinity where a person lacks many qualities affiliated with hegemonic masculinity or even enacts the opposite. Connell gives gay masculinity as an example of subordinate masculinity. Being gay is understood as femininized and it does not fit into patriarchal ideology and hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). On a scale of masculinity according to patriarchal ideology, gay masculinity lands at the bottom due to not fulfilling the ideal of heteronormativity and is constructed as effeminate[20] (Connell, 2005). In the construction of masculinities, sexuality plays a role. Heterosexuality functions as a system to legitimize a perceived complementarity between men and women, and thus reinforces a binary and cis-heteronormative understanding of gender and a relationship of dominance and submission. "Compulsory heterosexuality and hegemonic constructions of sexuality as natural or grounded in biology establish the "naturalness" of the complementary and hierarchical relationship between masculinity and femininity" (Schippers, 2007: 90-91).

The process of marginalization, on the other hand, involves the intertwining of gender with other categories, such as race/ethnicity and class. Marginalized masculinity points to social marginalization and mostly refers to ethnically marginalized masculinities. In a white-

[19] The differentiation and recognition of multiple masculinities is important while taking into account the interdependencies of categories such as race and class. The social gender, race and class influence the male experience and the concept of masculinity. Within these categories, simplifications should be avoided (e.g. black masculinity or working-class masculinity), because these also include various forms and intersections of different categories (Connell, 2005).

[20] As mentioned above, it is important to keep in mind intersections of different categories. Connell's example of effeminate gay subordinate masculinity does not mean that all gay men are constructed as subordinate or that all subordinate masculinities are gay masculinities. It is to be understood as one mechanism (among several) of how masculinities are constructed in relation to hegemonic masculinity.

dominated society, the construction of black (or racialized) masculinities has a symbolic meaning for the construction of white masculinity. Thus, hegemonic masculinity does not solely operate through the subordination of femininity in relation it, but also through the subordination and marginalization of other masculinities (Schippers, 2007).

Masculinity constructions often take place in certain situations and are therefore changing according to the power structures and constellations[21]. The different descriptions of masculinity are not to be understood as character traits or descriptions of men, but as patterns of actions that arise in certain situations within a changing setting. Thus, the concept forms a framework by which specific performances and enactments of masculinity can be analyzed (Connell, 1995).

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[21] Queer theorist Jasbir K. Puar describes that in the aftermath of 9/11, the United States were portrayed as progressive and modern by e.g. celebrating "gay heroes" in order to construct an opposite image of the Taliban (and the Middle East in general). "[T]he Orientalist invocation of the terrorist is one discursive tactic that disaggregates U.S. national gays and queers from racial and sexual others, foregrounding a collusion between homosexuality and American nationalism that is generated both by national rhetorics of patriotic inclusion and by gay and queer subjects themselves: homonationalism" (Puar, 2007).

3. Literature Review: Terrorism and its Media Coverage

"That terrorism has become synonymous in the public imagination with Muslim violence is now a well-documented fact. It's no wonder the public makes this connection; acts of terrorism receive significantly more media coverage when the perpetrator is a Muslim" (Kazi, 2019: 20).

This chapter is a literature review on the media bias surrounding far-right terrorism. For understanding the case which is analyzed in this thesis, it is important to start with definitions. Different definitions of terrorism exist, which are context-dependent and not universally valid. The word "terrorism" derives from the Latin word *terror*, meaning "fear" or "horror" (Pfahl-Traughber, 2016). The sociologist Peter Waldmann defines terrorism as planned, shocking violent attacks from an underground against a political order. Above all, these attacks are intended to spread insecurity and terror, but also to generate sympathy and support (Waldmann, 2011).

Definitions play a key role in the media coverage on terrorism. Studies have shown a tendency of certain attacks being faster and more easily defined as acts of terrorism by the media. Whereas the definition of terrorism does not state a religious motivation, a general tendency in the media is to label attacks with a so called "Islamist" motivation as acts of terrorism. According to a 2019 study that compared the media coverage on several Islamist attacks and far-right attacks in Europe and North America, "Islamist extremists were labelled terrorists 78.4% of the time, whereas far-right extremists were only identified as terrorists 23.6% of the time", 2019 (Moore, 2019).

In her book "Islamophobia, Race and Global Politics" (2019), the anthropologist Nazia Kazi describes the word terrorism being racially charged, while at the same time appearing neutral. The term 'dog whistle politics' describes the practice of using these kinds of code-words, and "to talk about race without ever actually mentioning it" (Kazi, 2019: 20) in order to suggest or imply certain ideologies or mindsets. One of these 'dog whistles' is the word terrorism, as "to talk about terrorism in politics or the media is to talk about *Muslims* – without explicitly doing so" (Kazi, 2019: 21). Several attacks by White supremacists have been attempted or carried out in the USA, yet the ideology and motivation behind these attacks has not attracted

the same amount of attention and reached the level of instrumentalization, as attacks conducted by so called Islamists. Kazi states that "White supremacist terrorism is all but invisible in the American social imagery" (19).

As the American social imagery is very much dominant in the Western world, Germany is no exception from this view. A study about the coverage on terrorism in four major national tv-channels between 2007 and 2009 finds a certain pattern: the threat of Islamist terrorism in Germany is described as omnipresent and should be fought against with stricter laws and stronger security measures. As a key event the authors identify 9/11, after which terrorism has strongly been linked with Islam (Frindte & Haußecker, 2010). According to a Pew-survey in 2016, 61% of Germans believe that refugees (who are perceived as Muslims) increase the risk of terrorism (Wike et al., 2016). The socially constructed fear of "Islamist" terrorism is linked with anti-Muslim racism and places Muslims and people perceived as Muslims under a general suspicion (Bock, 2017).

Critical Terrorism Studies were established in the early 2000s to problematize the biased research on terrorism, since especially after 9/11 it tends to follows state or governmental perspectives and is "mostly focusing on groups which were pre-defined by Western political interests; in the early stages it was mainly left-wing and after 2011 mostly terrorism by Islamic groups, while right-wing, Christian or Jewish terrorism was seldom treated" (Schraut & Weinhauer, 2014: 9). This thesis focuses on a specific case of far-right terrorism and thus the following subchapters will focus on it in greater detail.

3.1. Far-Right Terrorism

After having given a brief overview of media bias and terrorism, I will now focus on far-right terrorism, as it characterizes the case that is studied in this thesis.

The political scientist Daniel Köhler states that research on far-right terrorism contains a problem with definitions. The confusion stems from a lack of clear definitions and further blurs the lines "between arguably different phenomena, such as 'hate crimes', 'terrorism' or 'political violence'" (Köhler, 2017: 74). Whereas these labels share similarities, the practice of deliberately dividing acts of violence in these separate categories can result in minimizing the threat of far-right terrorism. Another label which is frequently used to describe far-right terror attacks is that someone "runs amok". An attack, where a far-right extremist shot nine People of Color in a shopping mall in Munich in 2016 was first labeled as someone running amok but recognized three years later as a right-wing extremist attack due to pressure by representatives of the victims' relatives (Bernstein, 2020). The term 'amok' strips the attack from its political context and suggests that it is an attack conducted by an individual. By reducing violence against ethnic minorities to someone running amok, the specificity of racist victim selection is ignored (Quent, 2019). Köhler introduces his working definition of right-wing terrorism as

"the use or threat of specific forms of middle to high distance violence (e.g. arson, explosives, shootings) executed on the ideological premise of inequality between human beings and in order to challenge the political status quo, – that is, the monopoly of force – through the act of violence as a form of psychological and physical warfare. Typical additional motives can be to demonstrate the authorities' weakness, to cause chaos favoring 'law and order' based politics, frame left-wing groups and cause a government crack-down, annihilate key individuals of the 'enemy,' destroy infrastructure perceived to be vital to the enemy, prove the movement's stamina to members, and gain political or social power through a reign of fear" (Köhler, 2017: 75).

Some scholars define (right-wing/ far-right) terrorism as 'message crimes' which often include a "manifesto", and hate crimes as rather spontaneous acts of violence, and since there is a lack of a clear definition, the term 'hate crime' is often used instead, or parallel with the term 'terrorism'. This "has led to significant under- reporting, under-investigation and lack of

prosecution as well as lowering the threat perceptions" (Köhler, 2017: 82). The academic and public confusion, or "definition problem" as Köhler frames it, turns into right-wing milieus' and perpetrators' profit: "As a result of this unclear terminology, hate crimes – used to describe right-wing terrorism and vice versa – have been called a lesser or poor man's terrorism compared with 'real and dangerous' terrorism, for example, that perpetrated by jihadi groups" (Köhler, 2017: 82).

The sociologist and far-right extremism researcher Matthias Quent explores the reasons for this tendency. He states that the "National Socialist Underground" and the current escalation of violence against refugees, asylum shelters and their supporters indicate a far-reaching conceptual deficit with high scientific and socio-political relevance. Because far-right terrorism is neither directly directed against the state nor exercised by the state but directed against members of socially weak and/or marginalized groups in society, it raises questions about how it should be classified in the context of international terrorism research. Quent argues that the term 'far-right extremist' (or synonymously "right-wing extremist') implies in public and official understanding social marginalization and political hostility to the state, which analytically is not applicable to these people (Quent, 2016b).

Instead, the concepts of "vigilantism" or "vigilant terrorism" portray a form of system-stabilizing self-justice of non-state actors with ostensibly protective motives (Quent, 2016b). Drawing on the vigilantism researcher Ray Abrahams (1998), Quent defines vigilantism in several aspects as "homegrown". Firstly, since its actors are citizens, and secondly, because of their ideological self-image, which consists of 'defending' their home. Thirdly, vigilantism is often not recognized or adequately connected to the radicalization of the perpetrators, as they come from and are affiliated with the national "community" and play ambivalent multiple roles (e.g. as an arsonist *and* neighbor) (Quent, 2016b). The violent activities of vigilants are divided into three categories: the first targets socially marginalized and minority groups; the second targets political enemies who are seen as a threat to the success of the vigilantist campaign (e.g. staff of the red cross); and the third targets the state and it's representatives (ibid.).

A prominent example of vigilant terrorism of the first category is the case of the "National Socialist Underground". The motive of the murder series was to protect the German nation against an alleged threat from 'foreigners'. This ambivalence of vigilant terrorism which does

not attack the state, but weak groups in the society, is the main reason why the NSU has been able to conduct murders, not be detected by investigating authorities and stay underground for over 13 years. According to the prevailing understanding of terrorism, it is directed against the state and justifies its attacks on the system by means of confessions in order to legitimize violence and to generate popular support (ibid.).

3.2. Lone-Actor Terrorism

As mentioned above, far-right terror attacks often enjoy the privilege of being labeled as attacks by lone-actors or lone-wolves. Below, I will focus on the meaning and function of this label.

The term "lone-wolf terrorist" has originally been used when referring to far-right actors in the USA, but since the mid 90s the definition has been broadened to describe different terrorist ideologies (Parker et al., 2018). In their research about the "lone-wolf" typology, Schuurman et al. problematize the usage of the term as it "perpetuates a sensationalist term that originated with American right-wing extremists" (Schuurman et al., 2017: 772) and therefore use the term "lone-actor terrorism". By this is meant an "individual (or a small cell) who perpetrates political violence, acting independently, with no clear connection to the leadership of a terrorist group and/or outside an organizational hierarchy" (Hamm & Spaaij, 2015: 169).

9/11 and the following "global war on terror" heavily influenced the world in which we live today. Parker et al. describe a shift in the "post-9/11 threat landscape" (Parker et al., 2018: 1) in the USA and Europe from external threats (like Al-Qaeda) to local forms of lone-actor terrorism, marking an ""after, after 9/11" world" (ibid.). Due to the "unique features of lone-actor terrorism, including the challenges of interdiction and the potential of copycat attacks" (Parker et al., 2018: 2) the role of media coverage is of particular importance.

The criminologist Hamm and sociologist Spaaij point out ambiguities of narrow definitions of lone-actor terrorists. The definitions vary from one academic text to another, which makes it difficult to map the increasing problem and find coherent solutions. What does it mean to act

alone and not be affiliated to terrorist groups? Who is described as a lone-actor terrorist and who isn't? Therefore, "lone wolf terrorism must be placed within the broader context of the individual's personal history, social relations, and political or religious struggles. A degree of external social influence is often employed during the terrorist attack cycle, notably at the level of ideological formation and (online and/or offline) communication with outsiders, including engagement with extremist materials or "terrorist PR."" (Hamm & Spaaij, 2015: 170).

Schuurman et al. (2017) conducted a research in which they analyzed in total 125 cases in Western Europe and North America between 1978 and 2015 and found out that social ties played a crucial role in radicalization processes and acts of terror by individuals labeled as lone-actors. "Arguably, truly lone attackers are so uncommon as to be anomalies, rather than the basis for a distinct typology of terrorism" (ibid.). Other than the terms 'lone-wolf' an 'lone-actor' suggest, "loneness is not an inherent quality of these individuals" (ibid.) and "simply overstates the degree of isolation that most of these individuals actually experience" (774). Some individuals simply have failed to recruit others for their terrorist actions and are therefore declared as 'lone-actors', others are part of larger radical ideological movements. Therefore, one should speak of "varying degrees and types of "loneness"" vis-à-vis radical milieus and groups in on- and offline settings" (Schuurman et al., 2019: 772). The authors classify the label 'lone-wolf' as inappropriate and point out a tendency in counterterrorism discourse to often detect new forms of terrorism and "talk ourself into reinventing the wheel as a first course of action" (Schuurman, 2019: 775), which prevents the use of existing tools and explanatory frameworks.

Perceiving a terrorist who is acting 'alone' merely as an individual, prevents a painful confrontation with societal structures which enable radicalization, which would further evoke feelings of powerlessness. Beyond the investigative implications, "terrorism is a perception game: undermining the narrative of the lone undetectable terrorist is part and parcel of resilience building, which hastens attack recovery and empowers citizens who find themselves recast from powerless victims or bystanders to active participants in the counterterrorism agenda as those most likely to perceive (and hopefully report) the "weak signals" leaked by lone actors" (Schuurman et al., 2017: 775).

3.3. Media Coverage of (Far-Right) Lone-Actor Terrorism

After having introduced concepts that are useful for understanding the present case, I will now proceed to a more concrete level and view these concepts together.

In the context of terrorism media coverage matters, as it plays a role in how opinions are formed. The information and the frames through which it is chosen to be presented for the audience actively shape public opinion and discussion (Kearns et al., 2019). Parker et al. (2018) characterize the relationship between media and terrorists as symbiotic, as the media can function as a mouthpiece for terrorists. How the media frames and represents these kinds of attacks and perpetrators plays a crucial role in the formation of the so-called public opinion. Similarly, Kearns et al. (2019) define the relationship between media and terrorists as mutually reinforcing. Accoring to a study by Frey and Rohner (2006), media and terrorism share a "common-interest game", where each profits from another.

In the European context the media framing of immigration-related topics since 1990 has been mainly negatively connotated and linked to e.g. unemployment and criminality. The outcome of this has been a legitimizing effect on certain racist views of right-wing parties: "As the recent media coverage of the so called refugee crisis in Europe suggests, media coverage of immigration does not occur in a contextual vacuum" (Ellinas, 2018: 3). Media coverage of any kind of right-wing political action influences the possibility of further actions. "Through editorial decisions regarding the coverage and framing of political activism, the media can facilitate or hinder further mobilization by providing information to social movement activists about the reactions of institutional and social agents" (Ellinas, 2018: 4).

"The way the media relate to radical right-wing actors remains one of the least studied areas in the now voluminous literature on the radical right" (Ellinas, 2018: 11). As for far-right terrorism the political scientist Antonis A. Ellinas comments: "Media coverage raises questions about the degree of tolerance societies should display when it comes to the often intolerant ideas of right-wing radicals and, more generally, questions about the limits of the freedom of expression democracies grant to groups and individuals" (Ellinas, 2018: 2).

Quality journalism has suffered due to the competition for bigger audiences and revenues and that the selection of news content follows a market-based logic. Therefore, stories with "sensational, simplified, and dramatized content" (Ellinas, 2018: 9) are increasingly produced. Ellinas calls this a "'dumbing down' of news and the turn to 'infotainment'" (ibid.) and writes that this is how media contributes to "help create a political environment conducive to the rise of radicalism" (Ellinas, 2018: 4). The media can give "political outsiders the image of being important" as well as give them "momentum, signaling not just their importance but also their growing political clout" and grant them legitimacy (Ellinas, 2018: 5). The ways in which media outlets decide to frame far-right terror attacks offer discursive opportunities which can, in some cases, inspire copy-cat attackers or increase levels of sympathy towards right-wing ideologies among the population. "The issue of discursive opportunities is linked to the role played by mass media as the main arena for the public expression of opinions and opinion formation" (Della Porta & Diani, 2006: 220).

The media should be careful about quoting the attackers directly: "Once we have labeled the attacker's ideology, for instance 'white nationalist', there is no need to continue quoting from their manifesto. This can play into the hands of extremists who want their ideology spread to a wider audience." (Burton, 2019). Additionally, quoting the perpetrator directly makes the article work as a mouth-piece for the terrorist. Whereas responsibility in relation to copy-cat attackers plays a big role for the creators of media content, it is also important to think about whether sharing these quotes is crucial or beneficial for understanding the societal impact of these kinds of attacks.

3.4.   Who is the Perpetrator?

"[W]hite nationalists are currently enjoying the most hospitable political environment they have seen in decades" (Berger, 2019).

After having looked at how far-right terrorism, which is often labeled as lone-actor terrorism, is constructed in the media, I will now proceed with a clearer focus on the perpetrators behind these attacks. Below I will refer to previous literature on how far-right perpetrators are portrayed in the media.

The findings in Powell's analysis of U.S. media coverage of terrorism from 2011-2016 show that "domestic agents" often get labeled as troubled or mentally ill. Domestic agents are described as ""terrorists" who were domestic born without international ties" (Powell, 2018: 4). In addition to that, families and friends of perpetrators are often cited as not having thought that the perpetrator could or would commit such a crime. The perpetrators not affiliated with ethnic or religious groups are "in some way 'excused' for their behavior due to mental illness and access to guns, or in cases of hate crimes, seen as fueled by irrational anger; whereas Muslims committing terrorist acts were connected with a larger network of terrorist groups with a goal of attacking America" (Powell, 2018: 8). Thus, attacks perpetrated by an "Islamist" and a far-right lone-actor are often depicted as distinct from each other, with the emphasis on ideology or culture in the first case and mental health problems in the latter (Parker et al., 2018).

Professor of law Caroline Mala Corbin calls this "the presumption of white innocence", as "we look to mental illness for explanations in a way that we do not for nonwhite terrorists" (Corbin, 2017: 469). She presents two false narratives about terrorists in the media: "The first is that "terrorists are always (brown) Muslims." The second is that "white people are never terrorists."" (Corbin, 2017). In the context of terrorism, "[w]hile unconscious discrimination helps explain the "terrorists are Muslim" narrative, white privilege helps explain the "white people aren't terrorists" narrative. Discrimination and privilege are two sides of the same coin, that coin being a racialized hierarchy" (Corbin, 2017). White privilege is defined by Peggy McIntosh as "as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks" (McIntosh, 1990).

The political scientist F. Hartleb writes about a "psychological trick in portraying the actors as "sick"" (Hartleb, 2020: 24): "It is too painful to discover that terrorism grows in our midst, develops in quiet little rooms and then explosively unleashes its powerful effect—on innocent people, who are in the wrong place at the wrong time" (ibid.). What the sociologist Daniels (1997) calls a "lunatic fringe" (Daniels, 1997: 137) portrays the consequences of demonizing the white supremacist movement and pushing it further away from the mainstream society

and ignoring their interconnectedness. Professor of Sociology Abby Ferber calls this a "mainstream/white supremacist opposition" (Ferber, 1989: 10).

According to Quent, terrorism in the German context has been for a long time considered an attack against the state, mainly through left-wing and Islamist terrorism, whereas (far-right) attacks on individual groups were at best seen as rare "escapades" of a few extremists that wouldn't represent the society as a whole (Quent, 2019). The tendency of reporting violence by a constructed 'out'-group as more threatening that violence from the 'in'-group portrays a bias (Quent, 2019). The framing of Islamist attackers as different to other attackers or as representative of an ethnic or religious community "may further antagonise Muslims who already view press depictions of Muslims as discriminatory and negatively shape public perceptions of this affected community. Indeed, some research suggest that such reports can act as a contributing radicalising influence by fueling existing perceptions that Muslims are treated as an out group" (Parker et al., 2018: 14).

In the context of the 'anti-terror-discourse', professor of educational sciences Astrid Messerschmidt writes about (anti-Muslim) racist resentments transforming into a fear of a threatening superiority and a simultaneous projection of cultural backwardness on the category of 'Muslims', which are constructed as posing a terror-threat (Messerschmidt, 2014). There is a resistance towards acknowledging that 'our' culture, which is influenced by racism can also produce violence and terror, and not just the culture of 'others' (Quent, 2019).

3.4.1.   Gendering Media Coverage on Terrorism

As outlined in chapter 2, masculinities are oftentimes surrounded by invisible norms. Therefore, in viewing media coverage from a gendered perspective I want to highlight these norms and investigate how masculinity is indicated. Below, I will briefly refer to previous literature regarding gendered constructions of terrorism as well as masculinity constructions of perpetrators in the media.

In their comparative study on the press coverage of lone-actor terrorism in the UK and in Denmark, Parker et al. found out that in the framing of Islamist actors the category of manhood or masculinity played a greater role than in the cases of a far-right actor (Parker et

al., 2018). The post-9/11 'war on terror' discourse is reported to have reinforced orientalist and racialized discussions of 'toxic' masculinity constructions (Amar, 2011), enabling the construction of the Western 'self' as its opposite:

"Islam and Muslims are associated with an "inherent," uncivilized propensity for violence, which is connected to the Orient as something to be both feared and controlled for this reason. This fear of the violent potential of the Muslim Other takes its contemporary form through the trope of "dangerous Muslim man" who evokes fear through terrorism, anchored by the civilized, white, "good", heroic American on the other side" (Jamil, 2014: 32).

According to the sociologist Michael Kimmel, in the context of Islamist terrorism the intersection of gender and racialization make masculinity hyper-visible. The common projection of hypermasculine traits onto the perpetrators result in a further collectivization of the phenomenon and stigmatization of Muslim men (or men perceived as Muslim) in general, as well as an increase of fear (Kimmel, 2017).

3.5. Media Coverage of the "National Socialist Underground" Murder Series

Before moving to the empirical part of this thesis, I would like to give a practical and specific example of media coverage of far-right terrorism in Germany. In the following I will discuss the media coverage in the case of the "National Socialist Underground" [referred to as "NSU" in the following]. Due to the NSU having "caused the most severe crisis of the German internal security system after the Second World War – a process called by the Federal Prosecutor General Harald Range Germany's "September 11" in March 2012 (FAZ 2012)" (Köhler, 2017: 21) and because the deepening serves to better understand the news reporting today, I consider it important to proceed with a further introduction of this specific case. Furthermore, I will return to this case as it has a bearing on the attack in Hanau discussed in this thesis.

In November 2011 the far-right German neo-Nazi cell "National Socialist Underground" [NSU] was uncovered. The terrorist cell murdered 10 people, conducted 3 bombings and 15 robberies between 1998 and 2011. The victims of the murders that happened between 2000

and 20006 included 9 men from migrant families[22] (Quent, 2016a). The murders were attributed to the NSU after years of unsuccessful investigations. The widely used term "NSU-Komplex" describes the complexity of the case of the neo-Nazi murder series. The uncovered group consists of three people, however a whole nationwide neo-Nazi network exists behind these murders (Karakayali et al., 2017; Köhler, 2017).

In his book *Right-Wing Terrorism in the 21st Century*, Köhler conducts "the first comprehensive in-depth analysis of German right-wing terrorism, the NSU (National Socialist Underground) case, its support network and the nature of right-wing terrorism in general" (Köhler, 2017: 22). "But even more sensational and disturbing than the NSU and its hundreds of behind-the-scenes supporters were the levels of state involvement in the terrorist circle, constituting the biggest scandal in the history of the post-war German intelligence services" (Burschel, 2016). The case of the NSU is highly relevant for seeing the relationship of far-right extremist and terrorist networks with the German state and its institutions, and cannot be captured in its full complexity in this thesis.

More recent cases related to the NSU have been a series of threatening letters including death threats sent to public figures and signed with "NSU 2.0". Seda Basay-Yildiz, the lawyer who represented the families of the victims of the NSU murder series was the first one to receive such a letter in 2018. In 2020, several other people (mainly women) including the cabaret artist Idil Baydar and politicians from the Left Party received such letters. In addition to the letters being similar in their content and all signed with "NSU 2.0", it has been made official that in at least three cases the recipients' personal data have been called up from police computers located in the state of Hesse. On 14th of July 2020, the chief of Police in the state of Hesse resigned ("German politician receives death threats from neo-Nazi group", 2020; "Hessens Polizeipräsident Münch zurückgetreten", 2020).

In the case of the "NSU", both media and the criminal prosecution had a significant impact on how the case was perceived by the public. A 2015 study about the media coverage of the NSU-murders published by the Otto Brenner Foundation identified, that the media coverage uncritically reproduced the representational patterns used by the police and other authorities and thereby was complicit in the othering-processes of the victims, their families and the

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[22] Eight of the victims were of Turkish origin and one of Greek origin.

(ethnic and religious) communities associated with them (Virchow et al., 2015). For over ten years, victims and their families were criminalized as the perpetrators were actively searched among them. These were speculations about drug and extortion related reasons such as protection money, and a setting of organized crime structures, mainly located outside of Germany. Far-right structures were not considered as a relevant direction for investigation and references and connections to other cases of violence towards People of Color and possible racist backgrounds were not made, and the lone-actor narrative was reproduced. (Karakayali et al., 2017; Virchow et al., 2015). The speculations of the involvement of drug cartels and criminal foreign milieus and parallel worlds shaped the public discourse around migration and integration, stigmatizing not only the victims and their families, but a larger group of racialized people and ethnic minorities (Virchow et al. 2015).

Before the NSU was discovered in 2011, the ascription of otherness when referring to the victims characterized the media coverage. The word *'Döner-Morde'* [Kebab murders] was widely used by journalists in the media coverage to describe the murders of People of Color (most of them being of Turkish and one of Greek origin), further dehumanizing the victims and their families and reproducing a misleading image of the motives behind the murders. After the discovery of the NSU, the word was declared as the 'Un-word of the year' 2011[23] (Virchow et al., 2015).

[23] "The Un-word of the year or Inappropriate word of the year refers to an annual action, in which a German linguists' panel chooses one new or recently popularized term that violates human rights or infringes upon Democratic principles. The term may be one that discriminates against societal groups or may be euphemistic, disguising or misleading" (Wikipedia: Un-word of the year).

4. Methodological Framework

4.1. Data Collection and Selection

The primary data used in this study comprises of news articles published on the websites of two most read German nationwide newspapers: Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ) and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)[24]. Süddeutsche Zeitung is the largest nationwide quality newspaper in Germany[25], followed by Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, which also classifies as nationwide quality paper. Both are published from Monday to Saturday. Whereas Süddeutsche Zeitung is classified as a left-liberal newspaper, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung is classified as conservative[26]. I chose the newspapers due to their popularity, and since they represent different political leanings.

The criteria for article selection mandated that each article chosen for this study be explicitly about the attack in Hanau and had been published from February 2020 (when the terror act occurred) through April 2020. All articles containing references to this topic were screened for relevance and a smaller number of articles was retrieved for closer analysis. I followed the strategy of criterion sampling and prioritized articles which contained more analytical accounts rather than articles which reproduced factual descriptions on what had happened. In total, 25 articles were selected for closer analysis, sixteen from SZ and seven from FAZ. The articles were analyzed together, as there was no intention of doing a comparison between the newspapers. Article references are presented in the bottom part of chapter 7 (References).

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[24] "Überregionale Zeitungen in Deutschland" 2020
[25] "Süddeutsche Zeitung und Süddeutsche Zeitung am Wochenende", 2019
[26] Eurotopics.net

4.2. Reflexivity and Positionality

Whiteness, as outlined before, is hegemonic, which means that it orients epistemic, cultural and political discourses. Therefore, centering whiteness does not automatically mean deconstructing its dominant position. I am aware that, as a white person, I profit from white privileges and am complicit in a structure of white supremacy. "Even whites who are willing to acknowledge that whites are the problem of racism and who are sensitized to the ways that whiteness works through its invisibility are not exempt from being implicated in racism" (Applebaum, 2015: 1-2). Therefore, I can only strive to make a contribution towards unlearning and dismantling oppressive structures in society, while keeping in mind that one can never "arrive". This means that being critical of racism (or an anti-racist) is not a label one can acquire, but a constant (learning) process.

4.3. Delimitations

My aim is not to make generalized statements about society or broad discourses (such as right-wing extremism/ far-right terrorism in Germany), but rather analytically examine thematic patterns conveyed by the articles I studied, through a theoretical perspective which is described in the chapters above. I have had to limit the amount of data I collected due to the scope of the research. Surely, a broader research can be conducted by using more articles and various newspapers. However, a smaller and more compact set of data makes a more detailed analysis possible. I deliberately considered specific aspects of the data which correspond to my research question.

At this point I would like to reflect upon certain choices made regarding the focus of this thesis. It is no coincidence that the analysis will mainly consist of references to the perpetrator. This is justified by the specific theoretical interest being of deconstructive nature, meaning that the focus on the perpetrator does not aim to center him as an individual but rather challenge this practice. I am aware that the lack of victims' voices and perspectives can be problematized[27].

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[27] After a racially motivated attack, often the focus is on the perpetrator. It is however important to highlight the consequences of the attack on those affected by it, as well as the effect of it on the society as a whole, without further offering the perpetrator a platform (Burton, 2019).

Another reason (besides the theoretical focus being directed towards the perpetrator) is that in the corpus of data which was gathered prior to sampling, I could identify voices of victims not being as much represented as politicians, experts or the perpetrator himself (through quotes). Even though this classifies as a finding, I will not further elaborate on it in my analysis, as it does not concern the sampled data set. However, I find it important to mention it in this chapter which problematizes the focus on the perpetrator and reflects upon the meaning of de-centering victims, and therefore reproducing a problematic pattern.

4.4. Thematic Analysis

For conducting the thematic analysis, a step-by-step guide on doing thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used. The collected data was read and reread several times in preparation for the thematic analysis. During this process, notes were taken and initial codes were identified. Reflexive Thematic Analysis is a method used "for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 79). Themes are characterized by Braun and Clarke as important aspects of the data which relate to the research question, and which represent a pattern within the data. However, clear rules do not exist for determining what is a theme. A theme might appear to a varying extent in the individual data items, or when looking in the entire data set, it might appear comparatively little. The authors speak of 'researcher judgement' in relation to the determination of themes. Thus, "the 'keyness' of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures – but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 82).

As stated above, I decided to approach this topic from the theoretical perspective of Critical Whiteness and thus coded and analyzed the material in correspondence. The coding was targeted towards finding connections to the previous research and with an openness towards generating new codes and themes. Therefore, the data was coded and themes were identified deductively, meaning that the analysis was driven by a specific theoretical and analytical interest (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition to that, the data was analyzed and interpreted on a latent level. This means that instead of just describing and organizing the data in relation to its thematic patterns, "underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations – and ideologies

– that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 84) were identified.

4.5. Data Analysis

I examined 25 articles from the newspapers Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, which have been introduced above. A thematic analysis was conducted that identified themes common to each article. In order to identify themes in these articles, I read each article multiple times, coded, took notes and looked for common patterns. Due to the news articles containing many informations outside of the scope of the research question, I limited the usage of the data by concentrating on data segments which contribute to the research objectives. After reading the articles several times and conducting first rounds of coding I set up an analysis plan according to the thematic patterns (frequent codes and themes with the most salience), as well as codes and themes that were less frequent but considered relevant.

As this is a qualitative research, I will not attempt to quantify code or theme frequencies. However, I will use quantitative descriptors like *many, most, some, few* which show that some sort of "closeted quantification" (Guest et al., 2012) has been done during the analysis.

All data extracts are translated to English by me. For the purpose of transparency, the original quote is given after each translation in squared brackets.

5. Media Coverage of the Terror Attack in Hanau

Before proceeding with the thematic analysis, I will provide an introduction on how the attack was dealt with in the media. The following subchapter does not contain the data which was introduced in the earlier chapter.

In the first hours and days after the terror attacks in Hanau there were already similarities with the news coverage of the murders of the NSU. Around 2,5 hours after the attack, the tabloid newspaper Bild published a live broadcast in which a reporter shared his speculations regarding the perpetrator and motives for the attack. Terms like 'organized crime' and 'protection money' were used speculatively and related to the owners of the bars and kiosk in which the terror attacks took place. Another speculation was that 'Russians were behind the attack'. The reporter said that people were afraid it could be a right-wing extremist attack due to having taken place in shisha bars 'which are often visited by Muslims', but that the attack most probably leads back to a 'criminal milieu'. Another reporter by Bild also stated that it is most likely that the attack happened in a 'criminal milieu', but that a right-wing extremist background should not be excluded (Niggemeier, 2020). The relatives of the victims were described as aggressive, and the city of Hanau as having high criminality rates and a 'not good middle class' (*nicht gutbürgerlich*) and 'socially weak' city, referring to its 'social classes' and 'certain milieus' (Tschermak, 2020). The newspaper FOCUS used the word '*Shisha-Morde*' [Shisha Murders], heavily reminding of the usage of "Döner-Morde" [Kebab murders] in the case of the National Socialist Underground, but it was removed afterwards after receiving critique (Herdeanu, 2020)[28].

Definitions became a strongly debated topic, as several articles were published about an alleged report by the German Federal Criminal Police Office– stating that the attacker was

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[28] Hans-Georg Maaßen, who was until 2018 the chief of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Germany's domestic security agency), tweeted that the attack in Hanau shows similarities to the 'lone actor' attacks with a 'self-made ideology' in Christchurch, El Paso and Halle (Maaßen, 2020). German right-wing party AfD's federal spokesman Jörg Meuthen shared in his tweet the link to the Hanau terrorist's propaganda site (which was still online at that time) and in another tweet denied the possibility of right-wing extremism and described the attack as a 'delusional act of a lunatic' (Leistner, 2020). Sigmar Gabriel, who was the Vice-Chancellor of Germany from 2013 to 2018 and the leader of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) until 2017, tweeted that "the enemy of the democracy is on the right side", but proceeded with "it cannot be disputed that left wing chaots flail on police officers, light cars and trash cans on fire and repeatedly cause material damage. Everything is bad enough and not to be trivialized" [my translation] (Gabriel, 2020).

mainly driven by conspiracy theories, not far-right extremism, because he didn't radicalize in a way which is typical for far-right extremists (Haschnik, 2020). This claim faced criticism, among others by the "Initiative 19. Februar Hanau"[29], which was founded as a space of solidarity and for the victims and which demands investigation and political consequences (ibid). However, the attack has been described by many journalists as being a racist attack and carried out by a terrorist. The cultural scientist Mithu Sanyal refers to Angela Merkel's usage of the word "racist" to describe the attack as a "quantum leap"[30], as it varies heavily from how the case of the National Socialist Underground was first presented to the public.

The 2019 annual report of the German press council (Deutscher Presserat), which includes data from the start of 2020, thematizes the media's responsibility in the coverage of terror attacks and perpetrators. The attacks in Christchurch, Halle and Hanau are mentioned, since the perpetrators sought attention online and uploaded videos. The appeals committee of the press council has issued complaints in relation to Halle and Christchurch to different media outlets for publishing parts of the videos that the perpetrators had live-streamed during the attacks. The parts included more than a justified amount of information and rather served sensational interests. The press council evaluated this as a violation of a guideline of the press code, according to which media is not allowed to turn itself into a tool of the perpetrator (Deutscher Presserat, 2019).

The media coverage on the attack in Hanau has received complaints, since a tabloid has published parts of the script of the perpetrator on the title page and thus offered him publicity. The media council published a statement on 5th of August 2020 saying that the "manifesto" of the perpetrator is of official interest and that the tabloid which published extracts from it also classified those extracts as forms of "racist argumentation". Therefore, a violation of the press code was not acknowledged ("Manifest des Hanau-Attentäters ist von öffentlichem Interesse", 2020).

The Hanau perpetrator's script includes parts and ideologies shared with the incel subculture, such as white supremacy, misogyny, racism and anti-Semitism. On Twitter, an expert on

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[29] https://19feb-hanau.org

[30] Sanyal, M (March 3, 2020). The Hanau terror attack shows the need for honesty about racism in Germany. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2020/mar/03/hanau-terror-attack-germany-racism-angela-merkel

right-wing extremism labeled the perpetrator as an incel (Jasser et al., 2020a) and the same was done by journalists (Koch, 2020). Incels, or Involuntary celibates, form a radical online community[31]. The network comprises of predominately white boys and men from western countries and the shared ideology of the incel community and subculture roots in white supremacy, misogyny and anti-feminism, making it a recent phenomenon[32] (Prior, 2019).

Examples of the form of "misogynistic violent extremism" perpetuated by incels include the attack in California in 2014, where a white man killed six and injured fourteen people. The perpetrator is referred to as a 'martyr' in the incel community, and other attacks being 'inspired' by him, including an attack in Toronto, where another white man killed ten people and injured sixteen in 2018 (Tomkinson et al., 2020). The attack in Halle, Germany, where a white man killed two people at a failed attempt to attack a synagogue filled with Jewish worshippers in 2019 is also considered an attack by an incel. In a video that he shot he criticized feminism as being the cause of the low birth rate in the west[33] (Koch, 2020).

However, researcher fellows at the Institute for Research on Male Supremacism suggest 'male supremacism' as a more appropriate label as it would be simplistic to label him as an incel, since he did not explicitly use incel-vocabulary and was not a member of incel online communities (Jasser et al , 2020b).

After having provided a brief overview on media reactions to the attack in Hanau, I will conduct the analysis of the data collected from Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung in the following subchapter.

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[31] The incels' worldview is fed by numerous anti-feminist and misogynistic blogs, websites, and forums that spread traditional gender related prejudices. In their narrative which is fueled by feelings of male sexual entitlement, the incel perceives himself as a supposed victim, whom the women 'ruined' by feminism wrongly despise and 'deny' his 'natural right' to sex, a relationship and being cared for (Malburg, 2020). Some incels thus seek a return to a patriarchal order in which women are subject and subordinate to them. The desire to enact violence as a revenge has, drawing on Connell, the intention of restoring subordinate masculinity (Prior, 2019). Some members of the incel community put these fantasies of violence into action: with knives, machine guns and vans, accompanied by live streams and confessional tweets, celebrated by their competitors online and showing similarities with far-right terrorism of recent years (Malburg, 2020).

[32] In May 2020, a teenage boy was charged in what is officially labeled as Canada's first incel terror case ("Teenage boy charged in Canada's first 'incel' terror case", 2020).

[33] In addition to that, the perpetrator wrote about wanting to kill Jewish people and as many 'non-white' people as possible ("Angriff auf Synagoge", 2019).

5.1. Key Findings and Analysis

Below, the key findings of the selected material will be presented. I have organized the identified patterns in the form of themes, which will be presented in the following. Further in the discussion I will elaborate on the function of these descriptions and patterns of representation, and what they mean on a broader societal and political level.

Four main themes were identified:

1. Racism and Far-Right Extremism
2. Dual Character of the Perpetrator
3. The Question of Belonging
4. "Is the weak man the dangerous one?"

Within some themes, sub-themes were distinguished. In the following, the themes and sub-themes are presented and discussed.

5.1.1. Racism and Far-Right Extremism

5.1.1.1. Recognizing Patterns

In contrast to the aforementioned tendency to write about far-right attacks as isolated attacks conducted by lone-actors, some articles viewed the terror attack in Hanau in a bigger picture. In several articles a connection is drawn to other attacks perpetrated by white supremacists and/or Neo-Nazis both in Germany and globally. An SZ article says that "there is much to suggest that in the future Hanau will be mentioned in the same breath as Christchurch and Halle" [Vieles spricht dafür, dass Hanau künftig mit Christchurch und Halle in einem Atemzug genannt wird] (Drobinski et al., 2020). Other attacks mentioned are the National Socialist Underground murder series; the 1980 Octoberfest terror attack in Munich, where a far-right extremist killed 13 people and wounded more than 200; the terror group "Group

Ludwig", that killed in total 15 people between in the late 70s and early 80s; as well as a 2016 attack in Munich, where far-right extremist shot nine people in a shopping mall (OEZ) (Bernstein, 2020).

Some articles signaled that the German state has not done enough to uncover Neo-Nazi and far-right groups and worked against this phenomenon. One SZ article wrote about the insufficient investigation of the National Socialist Underground murder series from the perspective of the victims: "They were not believed; they were even treated as suspects. The murderers were pathologized and declared as psychologically ill lone-actors. Receiving help either failed or came too late" [Dass ihnen nicht geglaubt wurde, dass sie sogar selbst verdächtigt wurden. Dass die Mörder pathologisiert und zu psychisch kranken Einzeltätern erklärt wurden. Dass Hilfe versagt wurde oder zu spät kam] (Bernstein, 2020). Also, "in Munich the relatives of the victims of the OEZ, their lawyers, and finally the city fought three years for the obvious to officially be recognized: that the perpetrator David S. was a racist, a right-wing extremist and an admirer of Adolf Hitler" [in München kämpften auch die Angehörigen der Opfer vom OEZ, ihre Anwälte und schließlich die Stadt drei Jahre lang darum, dass das Offenkundige offiziell anerkannt wurde: dass der Täter David S. ein Rassist war, ein Rechtsextremist und Bewunderer Adolf Hitlers] (Bernstein, 2020). An SZ article critically portrayed the treatment of the Hanau victims' families by the police: "Their families were outraged when the police showed up and gave them a kind of warning to cause trouble: they should not take revenge on the father of the perpetrator - as if they were dangerous and not victims" [Ihre Familien waren empört, als die Polizei bei ihnen auftauchte und eine Art Gefährderansprache hielt: Sie sollten nicht Rache nehmen am Vater des Täters - so als seien sie Gefährder und nicht Opfer] (Ramelsberger, 2020d).

In another article the "security architecture" of Germany is questioned, as far-right extremism "has not been fought against with the same meticulousness as Islamist extremism" [dass Rechtsextremismus mit derselben Akribie wie der islamistische Extremismus bekämpft werde] (Kohrs, 2020). Through referring to previous attacks and how the authorities have done an insufficient job, the terror attack in Hanau is portrayed as a potential turning point, after which far-right extremism- and terrorism should be seen as a real threat.

5.1.1.2. Conceptual Variety

In most of the articles it was acknowledged that the attack is a part of a larger and growing problem in the German society. There was, however, not a common pattern relating to how the attack was defined. Just a few articles used the words 'terrorism' and 'racism' to describe the attack. For example, an article in the SZ labeled the attack in the introductory paragraph as a "supposedly right-wing radical and racist attack" [mutmaßlich rechtsradikalen und rassistischen Anschlag] and stated that the attorney general investigates the attack due to suspicion of terrorism ("Hanau: deutscher erschießt zehn Menschen", 2020). Other examples include the attack being depicted as a "racist terror attack" [ein rassistischer Terrorangriff] (Drobinski et al., 2020) and the President of Germany was cited saying it was an "act of terror" [Terrortat] ("Rassistischer Anschlag in Hanau: Deutscher tötet 10 Menschen", 2020). As mentioned earlier, due to media coverage having largely concentrated on "Islamist" terrorism, the word "terrorism" is associated with "Muslim violence" (Kazi, 2018). With this tendency in mind it can be assumed that because the attack in Hanau was not an "Islamist" terror attack, the way it is labeled in the articles varies so heavily.

Several articles labeled the attack as "a terrorism motivated amok-run" [ein terroristisch motivierter Amoklauf] (Bitz, 2020) and used terms like "person running amok" [Amokläufer] (Bullion, 2020). Other labels were a "murderous act in an increasingly racist climate" [eine mörderische Tat in einem zunehmend rassistischen Klima] (Drobinski et al., 2020), "a horrible multiple-killing" [schlimme Mehrfachtötung] ("Kriminologin: Behörden müssen teilweise wacher sein", 2020), "the alleged tenfold murderer" [der mutmaßliche Zehnfachmörderer] (Haaf, 2020), and "the phenomenon of a murderous lone-actor" [Das Phänomen des mörderischen Einzeltäters] (Käppner & Schwinn, 2020).

Avoiding labeling the attack as 'far-right terrorism' portrays a wider issue around definitions. As discussed by Köhler (2017), in the context of far-right terror attacks other labels which signal politically motivated violence or hate crimes are used. As an effect, these labels minimize the threat of far-right terrorism. This portrays a tendency of right-wing terrorism being seen as a 'lesser threat' than terrorism executed by Islamist groups (Köhler, 2017). The label amok-run has a depoliticizing effect on the attack in Hanau and ignores the racially motivated selection of the victim group (Quent, 2019). Similarly, referring to the attack as a

multiple-killing or the perpetrator as a tenfold murdered does not signal a political motive, but make it sound rather rationalized.

Some politicians were quoted who framed the attack as targeting the German society as a whole: In an SZ article the Minister of the Interior of the state of Hesse described the attack as "an attack against our free and peaceful society" [Anschlag auf unsere freie und friedliche Gesellschaft] ("Hanau: Deutscher erschießt zehn Menschen", 2020), and another article quoted Germany's President Steinmeier saying: "We stand together as a society, we do not let ourselves be intimidated, we will not drift apart. […] This ist he strongest remedy against the hatred" [Wir stehen als Gesellschaft zusammen, wir lassen uns nicht einschüchtern, wir laufen nicht auseinander. […] Das ist das stärkste Mittel gegen den Hass] ("Rassistischer Anschlag in Hanau: Deutscher tötet 10 Menschen, 2020).

A concrete expression of the difference in the classification of the attack can be seen in many articles referring to a debate over an alleged report by the German Federal Criminal Police Office. The report is said to describe the perpetrator primarily having believed in conspiracy theories (which is linked to a mental illness) and only used a racist justification for his attack, and thus not fitting the classic description of a right-wing extremist (Flade et al., 2020). However, apparently such a report has never existed. Some articles quoted the president of the Federal Criminal Police Office saying that the attack is classified as clearly far-right extremist and having racist motives ("BKA-Chef: Anschlag von Hanau rassistisch motiviert, 2020). For the objectives of this thesis it is not of that much importance whether this report has existed or not (or whether the journalist who first reported about the alleged report made it up, or if it was based on actual and later denied statements by the Federal Criminal Police Office). What is interesting is that after such an attack, it stands up for debate whether the attack was purely racist and done by a far-right extremist (with racism and white-supremacy as an underlying ideology) or whether "racist justifications" were used for the attack which was mainly driven by conspiracy theories. A restraint towards using certain labels shows that the political dimension of the attack is perceived in different ways. Depicting the motivation in this way creates a hierarchy between mental illness and racism and prioritizes the first over the latter. Viewing the far-right ideology as "only a justification" for exercising violence ignores the form of the attack (he specifically chose his victims with a racist motivation), and thus depoliticizes the attack.

Parts of the script of the perpetrator were said to have a racist content and other parts a conspiracy theorist content, meaning that these types of content were distinguished from another. After referring to the "racist content" of the "manifesto", one SZ article continued with: "But next to the racist parts there are completely different ones as well" [Aber da sind neben den rassistischen Stellen auch ganz andere] (Drobinski et al., 2020) and followed with referring to the parts in which the perpetrator writes about being surveilled by a secret service. Just the "explicitly racist" content is labeled as racist and there seems to be a need for showing that racism is not the only motivation behind the attack.

When looking closer at the paragraphs referring to the "racist" content and to the "conspiracy theorist" content, I noticed that the former paragraph is half of the size of the latter. In both paragraphs, the verbs are conjugated in the subjunctive 1 (not existing in English grammar), which is common for referring to indirect speech, especially in newspaper articles. The former paragraph is made up of five sentences of which four contain a signifier for expressing one's opinion (due to the focus on grammar choices the relevant content of the sentences is given and, in some cases, shortened):

"in his opinion" [seiner Meinung nach];

"based on […] he got an idea about […]", [aus […] habe er sich ein Bild gemacht];

"in his view", [seiner Ansicht nach];

"he could imagine […]", [er könne sich […] vorstellen] (ibid.).

Whereas these descriptions seem neutral, it becomes interesting when looking at the paragraphs together. When referring to the alleged secret service and conspiracy theories, the content is represented without clearly stating that this is his opinion, but rather as direct statements. The sentence "Tobias R. writes about an ominous secret service which is said to surveil thousands of Germans, read their thoughts, and enter and manipulates these", [Tobias R. schreibt über einen ominösen Geheimdienst, der Tausende Deutsche überwache, ihre Gedanken lese, sich in diese einklinke und sie manipuliere], can be seen as an example for this. This paragraph does not contain signifiers of opinion, but of causality (Due to the subjunctive 1 not existing in the English language, I will translate it as "it is said to"):

"The reason, why he is said to be alone" [der Grund, warum er alleine sei];

"A main consequence" [Eine Hauptkonsequenz];

"The surveillance is said to have ruined his family" [Die Überwachung hätte auch seine Familie ruiniert];

"dates back to […]" [gehe auf […] zurück] (ibid.).

In addition to distinguishing "racist" content from other types of content in his "manifesto", the "racist" content is narrated by the journalist. This can be a good strategy as to not let statements where the perpetrator aspires to eliminate certain parts of the population stand alone. However, the high levels of modality in the context of conspiracy theories imply that these portray a chain of causalities, whereas racist speech remains an opinion. Using varying labels and descriptions for the attack, the perpetrator and the motivation behind the attack not shows that these are perceived and understood differently by the journalists. As mentioned above, describing the attack as a multiple-killing vs. a terror attack reflect varying degrees of seriousness attributed to it. The word-choices of the journalists can signal whether the attack is considered political or not.

There were also differences in naming the written and visual propaganda-material that was uploaded by the perpetrator. Examples of different labels are: "document", [Dokument] (Van Lijnden & Winter, 2020), "written executions" [schriftliche Ausführungen] (Truscheit, 2020), "pamphlets" [Pamphlete] (Drobinski et al., 2020), "Konvolut" [bundle] (Haaf, 2020). Others used descriptions like "a kind of manifesto", *"einer Art Manifest"* (Drobinski et al., 2020; "Rassistischer Anschlag in Hanau: Deutscher tötet 10 Menschen", 2020) but there were also articles in which the word manifesto could be found, without 'censoring' or covering it with another term.

5.1.1.3.   Externalizing Racism

In some cases, racism was depicted as a somewhat external force or substance. A popular quote was the German chancellor Angela Merkel comparing racism with poison. "The chancellor speaks of the poison of racism" [Die Kanzlerin spricht vom Gift des Rassismus] (Drobinski et al., 2020). Another example of this can be the quote: "Perpetrators like the attacker of Hanau feel supported by a right-wing radical environment that increasingly spreads in Germany", [Täter wie der Angreifer von Hanau fühlen sich von einer rechtsradikalen Stimmung getragen, die in Deutschland immer weiter um sich greift] (Ramelsberger, 2020a). Both quotes metaphorically depict racism as something abstract which can spread (like a disease) and can be uncontrollable.

Messerschmidt also discusses the tendency to relocate racism in the field of right-wing extremism. Racism and right-wing extremism are associated with Nazi-Germany and touch upon a somewhat 'taboo'-topic, as these phenomena are widely believed to have stopped existing after 1945 (Messerschmidt, 2014). In several articles this tendency occurs, with the following quote from a FAZ article summing up this popular understanding of racism:

"In Germany there is racism, which becomes increasingly threatening and horrifying. Racism, which can be seen in right-wing extremists building networks and planning attacks on mosques so that a civil war can begin; also, when members of a party which is represented in the parliament ranting about "headscarf girls" and "knife migrants" and saying that we asked for guest workers and instead, scum arrived; and that municipal politicians are insulted, threatened and killed if they are friendly towards migrants; or when a man enters bars and kills people there"

[[…] gibt es in Deutschland einen Rassismus, der immer bedrohlicher und furchterregender wird. Einen Rassismus, den man daran erkennt, dass Rechtsextremisten geheime Netzwerke bilden und Anschläge auf Moscheen planen, damit demnächst der Bürgerkrieg beginnen könne; daran, dass Mitglieder einer im Bundestagvertretenen Partei auf „Kopftuchmädchen" und „Messermigranten" schimpfen, davon sprechen, dass wir Gastarbeiter gerufen hätten und Gesindel sei gekommen; daran, dass Kommunalpolitiker beschimpft, bedroht, getötet werden, wenn sie zu freundlich zu Migranten sind; oder eben daran, dass ein Mann in Bars eindringt und dort Menschen tötet] (Seidl, 2020).

Although the journalist gives different examples of racism, very explicit forms of racist discrimination are presented. Here, racism is identified among right-wing extremists as well as among the right-wing party AfD. Topics that are touched upon are related attacks, such as the assassination of the politician Walter Lübcke in 2019 by a Neo-Nazi. Other than that, a reference to so called 'guest workers' is made in the context of the right-wing AfD's racist depictions about them as "headscarf girls" and "knife migrants". The label of "guest workers" stand as symbols for people perceived as Muslims. The journalist gives examples of "racism" in Germany and resorts to always extreme or extremist contexts, such as extremists or politicians of the AfD-party.

As previously outlined, the terms 'racism' and 'far-right extremism' are associated with Nazi-Germany and do not fit into the self-perception of post-national socialist Germany. Therefore, racism is not acknowledged as a structuring power in all levels of society but is seen as a form of individual action. The relocation of racism to (far-right) extremist structures serves as a practice of distancing oneself (and the "regular" society) from it (Messerschmidt, 2014).

5.1.1.4. Updating the Outdated Profile

It seems to be a common understanding that the stereotypical profile of 'the right-wing extremist' does not apply to everyone committing crimes with a far-right motive. An SZ article criticized that the Nazi-reference is being used in defining who is far-right extremist or terrorist and that expectations around the picture of classic Nazi are outdated. "There is no need for a Führer, a leader anymore" [Es braucht keinen Führer, keinen Anführer mehr] (Ramelsberger, 2020c). The aforementioned debate surrounding the alleged report by the Federal Criminal Police Office BKA can be viewed in connection to certain expectations of how a far-right terrorist 'should' be.

Whereas many articles acknowledged that contemporary phenomenons require updated definitions, another article stated that the staging of the Hanau attack does not fit into the picture of the recent attacks in Halle, El Paso and Christchurch. It was said that the attack in Hanau was not streamed live unlike the others and that the perpetrator was not rooted in the "Chan-subculture" or "Image-board-scene" (Hurtz et al., 2020) of so called imageboards like 8chan and 4chan. It is also said that users in such imageboards are mocking and making fun of the perpetrator. The journalist paraphrases one such comment from an imageboard: "He is said to be a useless loser because in his confused pamphlet he does not mention any of the right-wing radical conspiracy theories that many of the users on imageboards support. He will not inspire copy-cat attackers and he makes white terrorists look like idiots" [Er sein ein nutzloser Versager, weil er in seinem wirren Pamphlet keine der rechtsradikalen Verschwörungstheorien erwähnt, denen viele Nutzer auf Imageboards anhängen. Er werde keine Nachahmer inspirieren und lasse weiße Terroristen wie Idioten aussehen] (ibid.).

Considering the fact that the perpetrator of Hanau did upload a script and a video of himself dedicated for the "people of America" in which he spreads his hateful ideology and that this is mentioned in the vast majority of the articles, the motivation behind the argument of the attack not fitting into the picture of recent similar attacks seems unclear. Is the journalist trying to make the attack look like a separate form of violence and thus reinforce the narrative of a lone-actor? At a closer look, however, one can see that the 'scene' and 'subculture' could imply the incel community which was briefly introduced before. With this understanding once can interpret the journalist saying that the attack was not conducted by an incel and can thus not be viewed together with the other attacks conducted by incels (without, however,

explicitly mentioning the word incel). Additionally, incels are referred to as online "users", which reduces them to online-actors. It becomes confusing when the journalist paraphrases a comment in which the perpetrator is mocked as a useless loser and as making white terrorists look like idiots by the incel-community, as if he did not 'do a good enough job'.

A couple of articles contained accounts of the incel community and drew connections between other incel far-right perpetrators and the Hanau perpetrator. In these articles, the incel community is described as a community of outcasts, due to e.g. problems with their self-image or pressures related to (hetero-)sexual expectations, who have formed a collective (Bullion, 2020; Haaf, 2020). In the following chapter I will focus more on how the perpetrator is depicted in the articles.

5.1.2. Dual Character of the Perpetrator

FAZ has published one article with the headline "Bank clerk, conspiracy theorist, racist" (Van Lijnden & Winter, 2020). The perpetrator is described using characterizations which refer to him in different contexts. This list of descriptions is insofar characteristic to the news coverage of the perpetrator, as he is presented in different contexts and thus presented as a person with a more complex identity. The fist characterization is located in a work context – signaling class and educational background. The job of a bank clerk can be viewed as a regular, or 'normal' job and has a humanizing effect on the perpetrator. However, the second characterization suggests a mental context which deviates from a 'normal' mental state and creates the effect and perception of a (mental) transformation. The last characterization can be located in an ideological context and posits an extreme ideological position. The contrast between being a bank clerk, implying somewhat of a perhaps boring, but very normal identity and a mentally ill as well as being a political extremist is rhetorically effective. It creates somewhat of an intriguing puzzle for the readers.

In the subchapters below I will focus on the depiction of the perpetrator as sick and mentally ill as well as a normal person. Moreover, I will discuss the implications and functions of these depictions.

5.1.2.1. Sick and Mentally Ill

In many articles the perpetrator was reported to be suffering from hallucinations and having a mental illness. A pathologization occurred predominantly through directly or indirectly quoting his script, which contains his thoughts on multiple topics, the most frequent being his paranoia/ conspiracy theory of being surveilled by a "secret service".

Such examples are: „Already as a small child he was occupied with the thought that others would be able to enter his thoughts" [Schon als Kleinkind habe er sich mit dem Gedanken befasst, dass andere in seine Gedanken eindringen können] (Bullion, 2020). In the FAZ article with the headline "A perpetrator with "delusional symptoms"" [Ein Täter mit "wahnhafter Symptomatik"] (Kehler, 2020) the perpetrator is depicted as having a paranoid schizophrenia. Additionally, the journalist described his "manifesto" suiting such a clinical picture. Similarly, in another FAZ article the perpetrator is being described as having a paranoid-hallucinatory schizophrenia and being a narcissist (Truscheit, 2020). Another FAZ article calls the attack a "psychosis that has become a mass phenomenon" [zum Massenphänomen gewucherten Psychose] (Von Altenbockum, 2020). In an SZ article the perpetrator is described to be "possessed by his conspiracy theories and hatred" [der von seinen Verschwörungstheorien und seinem Hass so besessen war] (Drobinski et al., 2020). Another SZ article included a quote by the parliamentary leader of the right-wing party AfD, describing the perpetrator as "obviously completely mentally confused" [diesen offensichtlich völlig geistig verwirrten Täter] ("Rassistischer Anschlag in Hanau: Deutscher tötet 10 Menschen", 2020).

The variety of mental illness labels – from mentally confused, to possessed, to being delusional to being in a psychosis – make it seem as if labels are deliberately chosen. Additionally, it can be questioned whether journalists are in the position of using names of psychological diagnoses to describe a terrorist. Previous literature has found a correlation between white, far-right terrorists being more frequently labeled as mentally ill as for example Islamist terrorists. Corbin (2017) frames the practice of highlighting mental illness in order to look for excuses, as "the presumption of white innocence". This practice can be viewed in a larger context of white privilege (McIntosh, 1988).

In order to increase credibility and seriousness, in some cases experts were used to 'diagnose' the perpetrator: An article in the FAZ interviews a criminologist, who described the perpetrator being mainly a right-wing terrorist lone-actor, "but having elements of an amok-runner and additionally, with a high probability having paranoid schizophrenia", [aber mit Elementen eines Amoktäters, noch dazu mit ganz hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit einer paranoiden Schizophrenie] ("Kriminologin: Behörden müssen teilweise wacher sein", 2020). In an SZ article a psychiatrist was quoted describing that some schizophrenic patients pick up politically charged fears, which become a part of their symptoms (Käppner & Schwinn 2020) In another article a forensic psychiatrist was interviewed who as well spoke of schizophrenia (Truscheit, 2020).

Pathologizing the perpetrator not only constructs him as sick, passive and distinct from the norm but also avoids an understanding of the attack as a part of a continuity and indication of structural and institutional racism. Having mental health experts speak of the mental condition of the perpetrator aids in constructing this image of the perpetrator. The numerous labels that are used to describe the perpetrator as mentally ill convey a message that he radicalized and conducted a terror attack primarily as a symptom.

Some articles thematized the ambivalence of the aspect of mental health in the context of the guilt of the perpetrator. In an SZ article the journalist asked: "Is he a poor crazy person or a dangerous ideologist?" [Ist das nun ein armer Irrer oder ein gefährlicher Ideologe?] (Ramelsberger, 2020b). The article proceeded in discussing that if the perpetrator was still alive, it would be possible to classify "whether his admiration for fascist race-ideology prevailed or rather his irrealistic fantasies of omnipotence" [Ob seine Bewunderung faschistischer Rassenideologie überwog oder doch eher seine irrealen Allmachtsfantasien] (ibid.). Another SZ article stated that "the attack in Hanau shows how difficult it is to distinguish between conspiracy theory, delusion and terrorism" [Nach dem Anschlag in Hanau zeigt sich, wie schwer die Abgrenzung zwischen Verschwörungstheorie, Wahn und Terrorismus ist] (Drobinski et al., 2020). Again, speculations like these can be perceived as a kind of justification for the attack, since the perpetrator who is constructed as mentally ill can be understood as suffering from his condition and conducting the attack as a symptom.

All in all, constructing the perpetrator as mentally ill (and making this sound factual by using different labels for mental illnesses and interviewing psychologists) has a double effect.

Firstly, these depictions make the perpetrator stand as a troubled individual, reinforcing the misleading lone-actor narrative common for reporting on far-right terrorism. Secondly, through weighing the options whether the main reason behind the attack was the perpetrator's mental illness or his far-right ideology, the attack can be perceived as a possible symptom, reducing the agency of the perpetrator. This kind of discourse resonates with the comparison of racism to a virus/poison/disease that was touched upon in the chapter above. The first one works at a more general and societal level—distancing the 'healthy' and 'normal' majority from the 'sick' and 'deviant' individuals. The second portrays practices of racism as enacted by individuals and justifies them under the label of disease/mental illness.

As a contrast to the general pattern, a few articles contained statements against pathologization, which portrayed the intersection of terrorism and mental illness in a more complex way. A political scientist who researches lone-actor terrorists was interviewed in a FAZ article. He speaks of a "mix of right-wing extremist political motives and psychological disorders" [eine Mischung aus rechtsextremen politischen Motiven und psychischen Störungen] (Burger, 2020). Then he adds: "Not everyone with such a clinical picture becomes a terrorist. What we should also see: "lone-wolves" with psychological disorders proceed in a planned way. There is rationality in the irrational. Also, the perpetrator of Hanau concentrated on his individual actions" [Nicht jeder Mensch mit solchen Krankheitsbildern wird zum Terroristen. Und was man auch sehen muss: Psychisch gestörte „einsame Wölfe" gehen sehr planhaft vor. Eine Rationalität des Irrationalen liegt also vor. Auch der Täter von Hanau hat sich auf seine Einzelhandlungen konzentriert] (Burger, 2020).

5.1.2.2.   An Ordinary Person

In addition to depicting the perpetrator as a mentally ill individual, some articles highlighted his ordinary characteristics, as the mentioning of being a bank employee discussed above. Below I will give a few more examples.

A *FAZ* article had included statements by a neighbor of the perpetrator, who described him as "restrained and discreet", [zurückhaltend und unauffällig] Lijnden & Winter, 2020). The neighbor continues to explain that the perpetrator took good care of his care-dependent

mother and recounts seeing them frequently taking walks. This is followed by the quote: "the neighbor assumes that Tobias R. shot his mother before his own suicide in order to not leave her alone", [Die Nachbarin nimmt ihren Worten zufolge an, dass Tobias R. seine Mutter vor dem eigenen Suizid erschoss, um sie nicht alleine zu lassen] (Van Lijnden & Winter, 2020). This quote almost seems to imply that Tobias R. continued to be a good son to his mother by killing her. What seems to be a sincere description of the perpetrator by a person in his immediate surrounding can create the effect of legitimization and humanization. The quoting of the neighbor has been put in a separate box at the very end, as if to portray spatial distance from the rest of the article.

When citing the propaganda material that the perpetrator has spread online, he was referred to in the *FAZ* as an author three times in three consecutive sentences (the words [Verfasser], [Autor] and [Schrieb] all mean author) (Van Lijnden & Winter, 2020). The effect of this is not only a further humanization and complexification of the perpetrator's identity, but also viewing his written propaganda as a legitimate piece of text. The label 'author' carries a certain seriousness.

In addition to that, several articles addressed the perpetrator with the term "sport shooter" [Sportschütze] ("Hanau: Deutscher erschießt zehn Menschen, 2020; "Rassistischer Anschlag in Hanau: Deutscher tötet 10 Menschen", 2020). This reference is made since it is publicly known that the perpetrator owned "legal weapons", [legale Waffen] (ibid.) and was a member of a shooting club. "Tobias R. was a sport shooter and thus legally owned weapons", [Tobias R. war Sportschütze und besaß damit ganz legal Waffen] (Drobinski et al., 2020). It is interesting to look at the effect that the widely used term sport shooter has. Depicting the perpetrator as a sport shooter makes him seem active in what he was doing and adds a sense of responsibility, which the construction as mentally ill has taken away. Also, connecting the word sport and shooter – the first referring to a free-time hobby (healthy) and the second to the act of killing, a strange message is conveyed. It seems as if killing was a sport and a casual thing to do.

As a contrast to labeling the perpetrator as mentally ill and searching for a 'reason' for his attack, some articles highlighted the possibility of there being no reason at all.
In an SZ article the perpetrator is described as being "no classic right-wing extremist, not having a long history in the far-right scene and thus not having already appeared in records of

the police and the Office of the Protection of the Constitution" [kein klassischer Rechtsextremist, niemand mit einem langen Vorlauf in der rechten Szene, der deshalb schon bei Polizei und Verfassungsschutz aktenkundig war] (Drobinski et al., 2020). In another SZ article the perpetrator is said to not be previously known by the police: "The suspected perpetrator has previously not been a target of the investigators. He has been neither known as hostile towards strangers, nor is he known by the police", [Der mutmaßliche Täter sei zuvor nicht im Visier der Ermittler gewesen. Er sei weder als "fremdenfeindlich" bekannt gewesen noch polizeilich in Erscheinung getreten] (Hanau: Deutscher erschießt zehn Menschen, 2020). Other articles, as mentioned above, highlighted his 'regular' life as a bank employee. In a FAZ article the perpetrator is depicted as "a rather inconspicuous bank employee" [ein eher unauffälliger Bankangestellter] (Truscheit, 2020).

These examples seem to support the claim that the perpetrator is a 'regular' person and that something like this could not have been expected from him. This shows a contrast to the depiction of the perpetrator as mentally ill, in which responsibility for the attack is mainly seen in the mental illness. In the depiction as an 'ordinary person', any responsibility is taken away from the people who knew him and his immediate surrounding, since he apparently did not show suspicious signs.

5.1.3. The Question of Belonging

Many articles referred to the Hanau perpetrator as a German national, which can be interpreted in different ways. In many news stories about any sort of criminal activity it has been common to inform the audience about the perpetrator's nationality, especially when it is not German. This information is often not relevant for the story and has the risk of being instrumentalized for political/racist agitation. Mentioning the perpetrator's nationality in the present case case could be a strategy to work against this tendency. The normalization of highlighting a perpetrator's German nationality and thus creating a balance might result in the label of nationality not playing a role in the future. Another interpretation is that the highlighting of the perpetrator's nationality aids to show that far-right attacks are explicitly carried out by Germans (who are perceived as white), highlighting the actual problem itself.

In the context of racism and far-right terrorism it does make sense to inform the audience about the group affiliation of both victims and perpetrator. This makes it easier to detect patterns and connect the attack to other similar attacks and uncover underlying ideologies.

The headline of a SZ article "Hanau: German shoots ten persons" ("Hanau: Deutscher erschießt zehn Menschen", 2020) contains both of the aforementioned interpretations. By giving the perpetrator's nationality and referring to the victims as people, the intended focus on the perpetrator becomes clear. However, when looking closer at this example it does make sense to ask what is actually meant by "Germanness"? In the following chapter of the same article, the victims are described as "people with foreign roots", [Menschen mit ausländischen Wurzeln] (ibid.). Further in the article the Minister of the Interior of the state of Bavaria is quoted describing the victims as "people coming from abroad", [aus dem Ausland stammende Menschen] (ibid.) and that hostility towards foreigners [ausländerfeindlich] (ibid.) was the motive of the attack. Here the information that is given is misleading, as the word "foreign" implies something else than what it stands for. Another article contains the quote "xenophobic motive", [fremdenfeindliches Motiv] ("Rassistischer Anschlag in Hanau: Deutscher tötet 10 Menschen", 2020), although the German word for xenophobia is directly translated as 'stranger hostility' and does not contain the word 'phobia', which implies fear. The word "stranger" can be seen as a similar code as mentioned before, signifying someone who is not white. A white person with Finnish or Swedish 'roots' also has 'foreign roots' and would never be the target of a racist and far-right attack.

In this context, labeling the perpetrator as "German" can be assumed to function as a code for him being white. Not only does this imply an underlying homogenous definition and understanding of Germanness, but also replacing race or ethnic affiliation with the category of nationality. This being accompanied by labeling the victims as having a "migration background", [Migrationshintergrund] ("Rassistischer Anschlag in Hanau: Deutscher tötet 10 Menschen", 2020), suggests that the social categories affiliated with the victims are not being acknowledged as part of Germanness.

In a FAZ article three politicians from the right-wing party AfD are interviewed. All of them are quoted condemning accusations that their party would be co-responsible for what happened in Hanau, due to spreading racist speech. The following quote contains the voice of an AfD politician and the journalist. The journalist is narrating the interview that he has

conducted: ""Shisha-bars are places that displease many. Me too, by the way. If someone is permanently disturbed by such an establishment, it could somehow also contribute to such an act." He says that shisha-bars have "significant disruptive potential". But the perpetrator's murders were "not monocausal events," the AfD Member of Parliament added. "If I am bothered by a shisha-bar, I don't go there with a gun in my hand and shoot indiscriminately". He says that in Hanau, however, it was the act of a mentally disturbed person. Anger at such an establishment could be "one of the factors, and at some point the barrel will run out"" [Shisha-Bars sind Orte, die vielen missfallen, mir übrigens auch. Wenn jemand permanent von so einer Einrichtung gestört wird, könnte das irgendwie auch zu einer solchen Tat beitragen."Shisha-Bars hätten „ein erhebliches Störpotential". Die Morde des Attentäters seien aber „kein monokausales Geschehen", sagte der AfD-Landtagsabgeordnete weiter. „Wenn mich eine Shisha-Bar stört, gehe ich nicht mit der Knarre in der Hand dahin und schieße um mich." In Hanau handele es sich aber um die Tat eines psychisch Gestörten. Da könne der Ärger über eine solche Einrichtung „einer der Faktoren sein, und irgendwann läuft das Fass über] (Hetrodt & Rösmann, 2020)

Interviewing right-wing politicians was not a common pattern among the material. However, due to the tone of this quote and the symbols it contains, I believe it is important to include into the analysis. In the media coverage the word "shisha bar" is emphasized a lot. It might not seem odd, as it counts as a factual description of one of the places the murders happened. In the given example, the quote presented above is chosen to be published and is cited without further commenting on it or distancing from it by the journalist. Therefore, I will go deeper into its details. Being annoyed by shisha-bars is presented as one of the possible reasons for a terror attack; an emotion, which the interviewed politician also shares. The quote "at one point the barrel will run out" can be seen as a kind of a relativization and even legitimization for the attack.

In Germany, shisha-bars have a symbolic value as safer spaces for People of Color and are at the same time stigmatized by the dominant group. Many, especially young men perceived as Muslims are denied access to other kinds of nightlife-establishments systematically and thus the shisha-bars remain accessible and sometimes the only places to go to (Ohanwe, 2020; Gökkaya, 2019). As this portrays a wide-spread and structural problem, the Federal Anti-discrimination Agency offers support and consultation for people who are denied access to

nightclubs due to racial profiling[34]. The journalist Seyda Kurt tweets one day after the attack in Hanau: "The discursive stigmatization of these places is violence – violence towards people who already experience racist violence. And now this violence has reached its climax" [my translation] (Kurt, 2020). By 'discursive stigmatization', frequently occurring police razzias and the demonization as well as stigmatization of shisha-bars as locations related to gang-criminality (Haarbach, 2020) are implied.

With the understanding of the negative connotation of 'shisha-bars' in the contemporary debate around racial profiling and belonging, it can be assumed that – going back to the quote of the AfD-politician – the word is intended to trigger associations. More explicitly, it sounds as if "shisha-bar" and "such an establishment" could be replaced with a word that describes people who are associated with said establishment.

The usage of the metaphor "at some point the barrel will run out" can be interpreted as legitimization of the attack, as well as implying a causality between feeling bothered by a shisha bar and conducting a terror attack. Again, the word shisha-bar seems to suggest the people associated with it.

5.1.4. "Is the weak man the dangerous one?"[35]

It might not come as a surprise that the perpetrator in this case (as in so many other cases) is a man. Although being such a frequent phenomenon and thus an interesting aspect, just a few articles picked up the gender of the perpetrator, connected it to a pattern and included an analysis of masculinity. Following up on the depictions of the perpetrator as a puzzling, sometimes "normal" as well as a "mentally ill" person, I would now like to proceed with a gendered focus on the construction of the perpetrator.

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[34] Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes [Federal anti-discrimination agency]. *"Du darfst rein" – gegen Rassismus an der Clubtür.* May 22, 2015. Retrieved from https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/publikationen/Flyer/Diskotheken_20150522.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3

[35] [Ist der schwache Mann der gefährliche?] (von Bullion, 2020).

When the gender of the perpetrator was mentioned, it was mainly in the context of misogyny and in relation to women (Burger, 2020; von Bullion, 2020; Käppner & Schwinn, 2020; Haaf, 2020). This seems to support Kimmel's (1997) argument that white men and masculinity portray 'norms' and are not seen as relevant categories of analysis. In this case, the category of man was made visible in the relation to women. This can be connected to the findings in previous literature that there is a tendency of highlighting gender and masculinity, when the man in question is of a marginalized or oppressed group (Kimmel, 1997).

With this in mind, although the script of the perpetrator contained a whole chapter about women, only a couple of articles picked it up. One article directly cited a part of the perpetrator's script, where he is talking about the consequences of the 'secret service' that is supposedly observing him: "A main consequence is for example, that I have never had a woman/wife/girlfriend, the past 18 years solely because I don't just take a woman/wife if I know that I am being observed" [Eine Hauptkonsequenz ist beispielsweise, dass ich ein Leben lang keine Frau/Freundin hatte, die letzten 18 Jahre ausschließlich deshalb nicht, da ich mir eben keine Frau nehme, wenn ich weiß, dass ich überwacht werde] (Drobinski et al., 2020). An SZ article circumvented the perpetrator's perception of entitlement to write about 'women' and described the chapter as 'private life': "In his statements about his private life the increased narcissism of the perpetrator becomes visible. R. explains himself being single as: "I wanted to have the best or nothing at all" [In seinen Ausführungen zu seinem Privatleben zeige sich ebenso der gesteigerte Narzissmus des Täters. R. erklärt sein Single-Dasein so: „Ich wollte das Beste haben oder gar nichts] (Truscheit, 2020). Similarly, another SZ article indirectly referred to the part about 'women' in the perpetrator's 'manifesto': "The perpetrator of Hanau apparently had an unresolved problem with his mother and no intimate life"[Der [Attentäter] von Hanau hatte offenbar ein ungelöstes Problem mit seiner Mutter und keinerlei Intimleben] (Bullion, 2020). Extracts from SZ articles, in which the perpetrator is described to have a "neurotic image of women" [neurotisches Frauenbild] (Käppner & Schwinn, 2020) and "biopolitical obsession" [biopolitische Obsession] (Haaf, 2020), contain metaphorical depictions of misogyny as a form of mental condition or illness.

With the examples given above I aim to show how the perpetrator's misogynistic views are framed in the context of mental illness or a personal failure. The topics of anti-feminism and misogyny portray a wider societal issue and could have picked up by the journalists. Instead,

the perpetrator being single is depicted as something that has happened *to* him, somewhat making him look like a victim of his life's circumstances.

In addition to mental illness, depictions of personal crises helped to construct subordinate portrayals of the perpetrator. For example, (Haaf, 2020) writes that radicalized far-right actors exchange their thoughts with like-minded people in online platforms about women: "there frustrated young men exchange views on their lacking contact to attractive women. Hereby the common frustration towards the woman becomes a "gateway" for right extreme ideology constructs" [[D]ort tauschen sich frustrierte junge Männer über ihren mangelnden Kontakt zu attraktiven Frauen aus. So werde der gemeinsame Frust auf die Frau zu einer "Einfallsschneise" für rechtsextreme Ideologiekonstrukte]. In this example it can again be seen that a frustration and a personal crisis related to women are portrayed as underlying reasons for the perpetrator's misogyny. Problematically, the bottom line of this argument can be interpreted in a way, that since women can't seem to be approached by these men and which causes their problems, the unapproachable women and generally negative experiences with women are to blame.

In a similar way, one SZ article identified the motive of "hurt/offended masculinity" [gekränkte Männlichkeit] (Bullion, 2020) for the terror arrack in Hanau (here: amok-run) and connected this to previous life events: "In our research projects we have also noticed perceived bullying experience among many amok-perpetrators. There are quite a lot of perpetrators who feel socially outcast. They always wanted to be part of society, they say. But they have the feeling that they are not being let" [Bei vielen Amoktätern haben wir in Foschungsprojekten auch wahrgenommene Mobbingerfahrung festgestellt. Es gibt eine ganze Menge Täter, die sich sozial ausgestoßen fühlen. Sie wollten immer Teil der Gesellschaft sein, sagen sie. aber sie haben das Gefühl, man lässt sie nicht] (Bullion, 2020). Again, personality traits and negative experiences are portrayed as root-causes, but this time it is depicted as a form of hurt masculinity. Being outcast and feelings of powerlessness are connected to various far-right perpetrators' masculinity constructions.

Perpetrators seem to be portrayed as victims of their lives' circumstances, which might increase sympathy among readers. Surely personal crises, failures and feelings of powerlessness are factors which can contribute to a person's radicalization, but in the context of news coverage these forms of portrayal can work as distractions. Far-right extremism and terrorism are underestimated and widely dealt with as 'new' phenomena which, in turn, do not

reflect the increasing statistics on cases of far-right extremism (Köhler, 2017). Therefore, one can argue that there is a bigger need for viewing the attack and the ideologies behind it on a broader, societal level rather than externalizing it to individuals who deviate from the 'norm'.

In the examples above, the perpetrator was in several occasions depicted as suffering from mental illness and personal crises. In this context, some articles speculated about whether he was more led by his far-right ideology or his mental illness, weighing one against the other. When looking at the theme of mental illness from a gendered perspective, one can see that, in terms of hegemonic masculinity, mental illness threatened a successful gender performance of masculinity. In the context of mental illness, the perpetrator was constructed as expressing fear, irrationality and submissiveness, all of which threaten traditional understandings of masculinity as rational, stoical and unemotional (Ferster, 2019). This could suggest that some of the portrayals of a mentally ill person contradict portrayals of a successfully masculine man. A further example of a non-hegemonic masculine portrayal of the perpetrator can be the depiction of perpetrator as an outsider, single, having hardly any contacts, being compulsive, and living with his parents (Käppner & Schwinn, 2020). Another article referred to him as one of "losers, who stage themselves as winners", [Verlierer, die sich als Sieger inszenieren] (Käppner & Schwinn, 2020).

Since a dominant and hegemonic form of masculinity is often heteronormative, it is associated with heterosexuality. It is also mentioned that the perpetrator failed to "take a woman/wife" (Drobinski et al., 2020), which has an emasculating effect. Portraying a rather subordinate form of masculinity when constructing an image of the perpetrator supports the depictions of him being 'mentally ill'. According to previous literature, assigning hyper-masculine traits to terrorists (mainly in the case of Islamist terrorists) have had the effect of increasing fear (Kimmel, 2017). Here, the effect seems to be more of a victimization of the perpetrator and thus the opposite effect.

6. Concluding Discussion

In this chapter I will summarize the main findings of the previous chapter, discuss them in a larger context and connect them to the parts of this thesis that built a foundation for the analysis.

This thesis aimed to analyze the role of the categories of whiteness and masculinity in the context of news media portrayal of far-right terrorism- and perpetrators. After having located the terror attack in Hanau in a wider context of far-right extremism and terrorism in Germany, the theoretical perspective was presented. Critical Whiteness Studies and Hegemonic Masculinity served as a point of departure from which the topic was approached: making visible the (what is treated as) invisible. Previous literature showed tendencies to label far-right perpetrators as lone-actors and showed deficits in the conceptualization of far-right attacks. As a contrast, terrorism is widely associated with Islamist extremism, which is connected to its depiction in the media as dangerous, after 9/11. Moreover, in the context of Islamist extremism, gendered and racialized/culturalized depictions played a role in constructing a social 'out'-group. This was reported to increase threat perception and stigmatize larger amounts of people due to racial/cultural ascriptions.

In the empirical part, articles from two German newspapers were analyzed. The attack was seen in connection to other far-right attacks and critical perspectives pleaded to authorities for learning from the mistakes of the past. Despite this, there was no general conceptual consensus in terms of how the attack is to be labeled. This conceptual uncertainty and variety were not only evident in the lack of proper definitions, but in the perception of the attack as part of a structural vs. an individual problem. The tendency to individualize certain elements became more concrete in the form of societal distancing from racism and far-right extremism and externalizing these phenomena to 'extreme' milieus. Lastly, it was pointed out that outdated profiles and expectations of far-right terrorists exist and that these require updates and modern approaches.

In the portrayal of the perpetrator, an ambivalence was identified, as the perpetrator is depicted as both a regular, unpredictable citizen as well as a mentally ill and disturbed person. As outlined by Quent (2019), there is a biased tendency of reporting violence by a constructed 'in'-group as less threatening that violence from the 'out'-group. In this example, constructing

the perpetrator as an 'ordinary person' places him in the 'in' group and lowers the threat perception of far-right terrorism. The masculinity construction of the perpetrator did not contain hegemonic traits or portrayals, but rather signs connected to weakness and forms of subordinated masculinity, which support the aforementioned tendency.

In the coverage, practices of distancing as outlined by Messerschmidt (2010) were evident. A popular distancing practice was the relocation of racism to far-right extremism and the declaration of racism as a problem of 'extremist' milieus and thus marking a distinction between the 'regular' society and 'deviant extremists'. This was intensified through depicting the perpetrator as mentally ill. An effect of this is a further individualization of the attack, because it is depicted in the context of a personal crisis. The subordinate masculinity construction aids in individualizing the perpetrator and reinforces a narrative of personal crisis and an understanding of conducting the attack as a symptomatic reaction of a 'sick' person. This corresponds to the previous literature about the media coverage and framing of Islamist attacks as more dangerous[36].

The intersection of whiteness and masculinity produce a position of structural advantage, and is considered as a 'norm' and is unmarked (Frankenberg, 1993). Whether the categories of whiteness and masculinity can provide tools to detect possible bias in the news coverage, served as a research question for this thesis. Perhaps because the perpetrator is a white man, there is no highlighting of his specific belonging to a social category associated with this crime, as these categories are largely being seen as represented by individuals. It is considered whether the perpetrator's mental illness is the main reason/motivation behind the attack. Hereby, a radicalization potential is seen in the category of mental illness and the political effect and threat of far-right extremism is minimized. It also depoliticizes far-right terrorism and does not view it as a political expression of a collective.

To conclude, individualizing the perpetrator and making the attack appear as distinct from other attacks can be interpreted as avoiding and bypassing a hegemonic self-critique- and reflection of a society which is, like many others, shaped by colonial power structures, with

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[36]This is done by viewing a radicalization potential in Islam through generalization and constructing dangerous masculinities through hypermasculine attributions, which leads to a stigmatization and criminalization of an entire ethnic/religious group.

the notion of whiteness being a structuring property (Owen, 2007). A differentiated examination of various forms of racism is particularly difficult if racism is treated not as a structural phenomenon, but only as a phenomenon based on individual attitudes. In the German context, racism is associated with the national socialist past, which hinders a societal confrontation of racism in the present. Thus, aforementioned practices of distancing serve as a form of defense and preservation of a positive self-image (Messerschmidt, 2010).

Given the serious threat that far-right extremists pose in Germany, the outdated profile of the 'classic' far-right extremist needs to be updated. Moreover, the white privilege of the 'lone-wolf' should be addressed and the narrative be dismantled, because what lies behind these constructs is male dominated white terrorism and white supremacy. Therefore, further research is needed that addresses the intersection of race and gender and investigates the implications of the biased perception and depiction of far-right actors and terror attacks.

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